

Councilman Callahan explains more about the ethics issue to Councilman Reynolds (us)

The Bethlehem Gadfly City government, Ethics, Serious Issues December 5, 2019

 *Latest in a series of posts on Ethics and City Government* 

Let's see, can you follow this ethics controversy without a program?

Hey, you guys in the back of the room — you got this?

We better back up a moment. Councilman Callahan has made two claims of possible unethical behavior against AMK, what Gadfly has called the permit issue and the Parking Authority issue.

(Remember, if you need refreshing, [click “Ethics”](#) on the righthand sidebar to get past posts.)

The permit issue is still up in the air. BGC wants the Mayor to call in AMK's staff and quiz them. There's been no forward motion to settle this issue. BGC focused just on this issue in his November 25 press conference.

The Parking Authority issue is the one about BGC calling out AMK at the November 6 City Council meeting for unethical behavior relating to the the Polk Street Garage decision.

Got it? With me?

The Mayor wrote BGC a 4-page memo on this Parking Authority issue that seemed to clarify the situation and absolve AMK of bad doing. It is

this memo that Councilman Reynolds referred to in his statesman-like statement covered in our previous post.

So in this next step at Tuesday's City Council meeting, BGC takes JWR up on elaborating more on his unethical behavior suggestion in regard to the Parking Authority issue. He doesn't take the apology-to-AMK option.

BGC says he already knew the nuance on which the Mayor focused in his absolution of AMK. He says the problem was not that AMK made a phone call to one of the parties bidding on the Polk Street project but that she suggested with BPA Board members (was it one phone call or more?) renegotiation with only one of the bidders — which happened to be her preference bidder — and not both bidders.

In addition, BGC claims that the decision of the Mayor's ad hoc committee (did AMK chair it?) assessing the bidders and favoring AMK's preferred bidder in an evaluation report provided to the BPA was not unanimous (thus, he claims possession of inside knowledge), and, moreover, that the report itself is obviously biased. No evidence given on that last claim.

Thus, the Mayor's explanation did not address BGC's specific concern, and BGC indeed complies with JWR's request by providing more information about his position.

BGC sees a phone call to Board members on the day of the vote suggesting renegotiation with one — her choice — but not both bidders as unethical.

BGC keeps the issue from closure by moving the goal posts, as it were, in his explanation.

Think on this.

And where do you think the conversation will go next?

<https://youtu.be/f7zr1WDSq28>

- I think that in the aftermath of Allentown and Reading, there was a little bit of spotlight . . .
- I know it wasn't a bid process.
- You [the Mayor] appointed an ad hoc committee [on the Parking Authority design] to look in to it.
- I think if you sat down and you looked at each individual item, it's probably one of the most biased reports I've ever read if you really look at it.
- It's clear that that category of grading was very slanted.
- I also know that it was not a unanimous decision on that ad hoc committee.
- Is that correct, Ms. Karner? (pause, silence) That answers the question.
- After the ad hoc committee was formed they wrote up their summary . . . but the thing that's upsetting and disturbing, especially in the aftermath of Allentown and Reading, is that Ms. Karner, and I know this is factual because it was told to me firsthand, called two people on the Parking Authority Board to try to convince them . . . to renegotiate . . . not with both entities, that's the problem.
- In my opinion, that's extremely unethical.
- That phone call was made the day they were voting on it.
- Why the additional phone call?
- I didn't vote on it, I didn't even talk at the meeting.
- They [the BPA] were done with it in seconds.
- In the aftermath of Allentown and Reading, for a department head, after she released her report already, . . . for her to make that phone call on the day of the vote . . . I find that in my opinion unethical.
- I don't think the phone call should have been made.

to be continued . . .