

“Developers, leave this park alone”

The Bethlehem Gadfly Gadfly's posts, Local Color, Modest proposals, Serious Issues November 16, 2018

*We don't need no office building
We don't need no more congestion
No money grubbing on the Southside
Developers, leave this park alone
Hey, Developers, leave this park alone*

sing to the tune of Pink Floyd's “Another Brick in the Wall”

I know a beautiful vantage point in our town.
And I usually have it all to myself.
You know it too.

That open area above Perkins, between
Perkins and Wyandotte.

I've seen it called Triangle Park. And the Hub
Tract.

Some sensitive City planner (whose decision
was it? I need to know. I want to high-five!) put three benches there.

Looking right down the spine of the Southside.

The view is beautiful.

Straight ahead you might not be able to see forever but certainly as far as
the Antalics homestead on the Ridge.

But it's the Cityscape you want to look at.

The Banana Factory is dead ahead.

And in one sweep from right to left, you can

pick out all our major landmarks from the
slender Packer Chapel spire through the
grimy nest of stacks to the hulking Hotel B.

And you are in the town, can sense it throb,

not ethereally disconnected like you are at the Lehigh Lookout or
Mountaintop Tower vantages.





The thunder of the traffic running but a few feet behind you becomes as natural as waves crashing on a vacation beach.

I love to sit there and take in the hustle and bustle flowing in and out of our Southside.

I even look forward to stalled traffic on Wyandotte offering a moment of urban voyeurism when I am driving.

There used to be a park there. The monument for the 14 Bethlehem draftee “boys” whose lives were snuffed in one demonic swoop on the way to their first military assignment used to mourn there.

Like an archaeologist, you can find the embedded stony ruins left when the monument packed up

and migrated to the Rose Garden.

There’s still an inviting grove of trees, with a rock-stool inviting you to pause, lean back against a sturdy trunk, and let the rest of the world race by, Rip Van Winkle-like.

There’s a developer’s sign. Two actually. One is knocked down, facing the heavens instead of 3rd St.. I’d leave it there. Let it be for the birds to poop on and the space aliens to ponder over.

I fear the developer’s appetite for open space.

Will a dentist’s window frame this view for root-canal’d patients? Will green eyeshades color the view for accountants pausing from stacks and spires of calculations?

When I sit there I hear the ominous, haunting lyric of Pink Floyd’s “Another Brick in the Wall” that I have recast above in the epigraph.

I find myself silently screeching to Pink Floyd’s dark rhythm, “Developers, leave this park alone.”

The park, a news reporter casually concluded twenty years ago, is “too hazardous for pedestrians to reach.”

I guess that’s why I am usually there alone.

But I get there.

Whatever.



A modest proposal.

Can this space be made into a more welcoming strip of land in this gateway corridor? Instead of, on the mid and lower sections, like it was mauled by an angry back-hoe.

That same news story reported on ideas to make that area a park “intended for the enjoyment of passing motorists.”

Now that sounds like at best an oxymoron, at worst an absurdity.

On the other hand, it also sounds like a provocative challenge to our imagination.

Intriguing. What would a park there meant for the enjoyment of motorists look like?

It is open space valuable in ways developers never seem to know.

“Developers, leave this park alone.”

Written on-site on a recent, vibrant fall day

