

What's new on 2 W. Market? (32)

The Bethlehem Gadfly 2 W. Market St., Gadfly's posts, Serious Issues November 26, 2018

(32nd in a series of posts on 2 W. Market St.)

Ok, did you use Gadfly's "study guide" for your homework?

The December 4 Council meeting is just over a week away. Time to get crackin'.

There were the two long meetings on 2 W. Market. Planning Commission Nov. 8, City Council Nov 20.

Similar formats, and some of the same voices.

Gadfly covered the PC here pretty well (start at post #14 in this series).

So, the first question he was thinking about is, was there anything new presented at CC?

As far as content/evidence, there were two major additions, one by Atty Preston and the other by Bruce Haines for those opposing the petition.

Here Atty Preston (the numbers are to the time on the meeting audio provided in post #31, of course – go listen) :

0:15:05: *Here's the new part. One of the objections to the text amendment at PC was lack of information about the impact citywide. Atty Preston provided information on that in material presented to Council. Bottom line is the claim that there are but 8 properties – an over-inclusive number – that might be impacted, according to research done by him and his team. Bottom line: impacts will be relatively minor.*

Gadfly didn't get the packet given to Council, but Atty Preston mentioned two specific properties (both food establishments) as examples: 1124 Linden and 834 Linden.



So, as Gadfly understands it, these properties (both food establishments) are examples of ones that could become office uses under the proposed text amendment.

Mr. Haines provided a spreadsheet on sales in the Historic District: [HD Sales 3000+sqft 11-18 Update](#)

2:48 Bruce Haines

HD resident. Hasn't abided by ZB, has violations: fire escape + Green buildings still have retail use. So haven't followed all rules. City inappropriately allowed them to do so. 27 sales in area between 2010-2018 were single family when sold and remained so. Consistent with other houses in HD, Way of life for new owners to come in with resources to update. Nothing new in what they did. All spend hundreds of thousands to renovate. Real estate agent Kelechava testified earlier

to demand for houses. Backlogs. 17/27 needed updating. Only commercial there are grandfathered and dwindling. Prevent commercial creep. City should be standing up, not engaging in irresponsible city planning.

As far as content/evidence is concerned, Gadfly doesn't remember being struck by anything else especially new.

But he was surprised by what to him were several new ways of looking at the issue.

Supporters of the petition boldly saw the owners as benefactors giving gifts to the City

2:16:58 Jim Kostecki

Bethlehem resident but not HD. Rij's contractor. Has spent over 2 x estimate. Insisted to do right. Rij a "Benefactor" at work! Has presented a gift to the city. Remarkable. Stunning transformation. And he's moving on to the Green buildings, which are in abominable shape. Will deteriorate. His commitment deserves to be recognized. Property values have gone up. Added impressive class to the HD. Dignity. Denial defies logic.

2:22:08 Jerry Kindrachuck

Allentown tax planner. Quality is unparalleled. Cost of \$400,000 to renovate Green Bldgs. Will be a gift to Bethlehem. Rentals wouldn't pay this off. A gold nugget in the city of Bethlehem.

And the analogy of this situation to the football replay process rippled through several responders, for and against the petition:

1:45:05 Rick Penskie

Office in HD. State level overturned local decision. Higher level ruling made a controversial decision. Football analogy. Like replay. Need overwhelming evidence on the ground or ruling stands. This a replay. Made decisions locally at first (ZB). Unless overwhelming evidence not fair for you to overturn your decision. Pretty even. Controversial for sure. Not overwhelming, though. So decision should not be overturned. City made a commitment to them + they spent a mill \$\$\$\$\$. Should approve.

On the other hand, this cancer analogy was striking and also rippled later:

1:57:58 Stephen Antalics

A Bethlehem Gadfly. Quality of city based on residential community. Historical precedent with what happened in the Southside. For money interests, City defined a family as 5 students. Vibrant Southside went down house by house over the years. Quality of life done. Cancer. Started with one property allowed by Zoning. Precedent. Will cancer cross the bridge into Northside? Drives out single families. Precedent. Beware.

Ok, onward to more questions and analysis!