

Announcing Gadfly candidate forum

The Bethlehem Gadfly Candidates for election, Election, Gadfly Forum March 9, 2021

 *Latest in a series of posts on candidates for election* 

March 9. Ok, all candidates for office in the May 18 election have to file by sundown (or is it midnight?).

Gadfly saw on Facebook that Kiera Wilhelm filed her papers. Did everybody else get the required number of signatures and complete the other paperwork? I hope so.

Unless some signatures bounce or other documentation is found wanting, we have the fields for Bethlehem mayor and City Council positions.

And remember that the winners in May are *de facto*, because of Bethlehem's one-party dynamic, the winners in November.

Willie Reynolds and **Dana Grubb** for mayor. See comparison chart [here](#).

And Bryan Callahan, Grace Crampsie Smith, Hillary Kwiatek, Rachel Leon, Adam Waldron, and Kiera Wilhelm for 4 seats on Council. See comparison chart [here](#).

Gadfly has always said that one important part of his mission is to provide the kind of information that would help us cast *informed* votes.

It's time to reflect on the basis for our votes.

Yard/street signs? I saw a Van Scott sign over the weekend. Legal? I thought there was some set date for the beginning of the sign barrage. I'm not sure the sign epidemic has been officially unleashed yet.

But signs can get you name recognition, and name recognition can get you elected.

Not the way it should be.

Gadfly got a laugh during public comment at City Council early on in his tenure by detailing his reasons for voting for the good councilors in the previous election.

He voted for Adam Waldron because Adam made a great impression on his porch during a neighborhood canvas, for Michael Colon because Michael struck up a pleasant conversation with him outside a polling place, for Paige Van Wirt because she was fervently endorsed by a colleague, for Shawn Martell because his Dad gave jobs to his kids at the Boy's Club, for Bryan Callahan because he knew Bryan's nephews as great wrestlers from matches against a grandson, for Willie Reynolds because he was a neighbor and a runner who would run half-naked through our back alley to his great delight (and runners are always good people), for Olga Negron because she had a reputation for being a cross between Mother Teresa and Muhammad Ali.

Colorful as they are, there isn't one good reason in the bunch. Sigh.

We need to do better than that. We need to know what these candidates stand for, what they believe, what they want to do.

And Gadfly has tried to help, especially on the current office holders who are running. If you've been following, you can find much information as well as audio and video clips of the incumbents during their term of office. You should have a sense of them in action.

But some of you long-time followers might remember one other thing Gadfly did in a previous election to help us get to know the candidates in a meaningful way.

In the May 2019 election, 7 people were running for 4 Council seats.

Gadfly invited them to participate in a forum in the weeks leading up to the election. 6 of the 7 did so. Each week for 7 or 8 weeks he gave them a prompt to which to respond. The same prompt. And then he published the responses to each prompt together so that followers could easily compare. (See sample [here](#).)

6 of the 7 people running for Council were unbelievably cooperative and responded to all of the prompts, creating a significant collection of

portfolios on which we could do comparison and contrast, on which we could make informed judgments. (The candidate who did not participate did not win a Council seat, not that Gadfly would have you see causation there!)

That forum two years ago went really well. Gadfly followers really appreciated and valued deepened knowledge of the candidates. And the candidates got another channel for getting their “messages” out.

So Gadfly would like to do this again for this election.

He has invited all the candidates to participate.

He would like to post the mayoral candidate responses at noon every Monday beginning next Monday March 15. He sent the first prompt out to Willie and Dana yesterday.

He would like to post the council candidate responses at noon every Tuesday beginning next Tuesday March 16. He will send out the Council prompt to candidates later today.

Gadfly could use your help formulating the prompts. What do you want the candidates to talk about? You could send Gadfly the topics you’d like to see raised in the prompts, or even the exact questions you’d like to see asked.

All this is voluntary. Gadfly doesn’t know who will participate. The forum could be a bust. But he knows from experience this forum can be valuable, and he urges you to urge the candidates to participate, and he urges you to tune in each week and weigh their contributions.