

Gadfly's insomnia

The Bethlehem Gadfly Community Engagement Initiative September 14, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts about the Community Engagement Initiative* 

Gadfly was up early this morning. Before the paper delivery man, before even the Word of the Day (“purport”) appeared in his in-box.

Part of that has to do with his 80-year-old plumbing.

But the main part has to do with nagging questions about our Community Engagement Initiative.

Gadfly knows you will envy him so smooth and settled a life that during a pandemic, the last 50 days of a nation-gripping-ripping presidential election, and ongoing concern over his sagging mental and physical powers that it's the CEI that makes him lose sleep.

But there you go.

Gadfly's excited about the CEI, very excited. People all over the city, underheard people especially, gathering, speaking, a social spreading of a positive kind, a spreading of dreams, ideas, concerns, problems, energy, enthusiasm. A powerful bubbling up of citizen participation. Democracy in action.

But he still doesn't get it yet.

Forget that in the exact words in the resolution that passed July 7 in the Year of Our Lord 2020, he reads that “the City Council of the City of Bethlehem urges the Mayor and his Administration to collaborate with the City of Bethlehem Police Department to create a public space and forum,” that is, to create the “Community Engagement Initiative.” There is no sign that is happening. There is no sign that “the Mayor and his Administration” is doing that. And it seems it is only the anal-retentive Gadfly that is worrying about this little detail about who is to set up the

CEI, or only the anal-retentive Gadfly who even remembers this little detail.

Sigh.

But the reason the anal-retentive Gadfly is exercising his anal-retentiveness over this detail is that he thinks we need to know who is responsible for the CEI. He thinks we need to know whom we should *hold* responsible, whom we should *hold* accountable for whether or not the CEI happens, for whether or not it is productive. Is it Councilman Reynolds? Is it Councilwoman Crampsie Smith? Is it both Councilman Reynolds and Councilwoman Crampsie Smith? Is it Council as a whole? Is it community organizations?

Where does the buck start and stop?

And something's missing for Gadfly — visible organization, a visible plan.

If it's there, if it's happening, it's not visible, at least to Gadfly. Yet.

So what got Gadfly up early this morning (it's 4:58 as he writes) is the fact that here we are on the brink of another Council meeting, and he is afraid we are not going to hear any more in a concrete way about the extremely exciting notion of a Community Engagement Initiative.

Gadfly's putting this in the queue for 8:00AM posting. No sense disturbing your sleep as his has been disturbed.

to be continued . . .