

# Exhibit 6: Feedback on the Feedback (46)

The Bethlehem Gadfly Gadfly's posts, Parking, Serious Issues October 15, 2018

*(46th in a series of posts on parking)*

Gadfly's big on public participation.

Gadfly's big on public involvement.

One way to kill public participation is to ignore it when people do participate.

BPA/Desman certainly checked the public participation boxes.

Gadfly believes that there were 1-2-3 public meetings at the beginning of the Desman Study, that is, a year ago.

Then there was a public meeting April 12 on the draft Desman report.

And then there was the Sept. 20 public meeting on the final Desman report.

So BPA/Desman did check the boxes, but, at least in one major instance, they could/should have gone further, in Gadfly's humble opinion, to properly respect the public input.

On pages 77-78 of the Desman final report there are 21 bullets of "[Feedback from Final \[should be draft\] Report Presentation.](#)" April 12.

Mark it Exhibit 6.

With this explanation: "Throughout the course of the meeting, a number of the questions posed by the public were answered by DESMAN and/or the Authority. All of the questions and feedback have been memorialized here so that the Parking Authority and City can refer back to this document as the recommendations are implemented and as future plans to change parking in Bethlehem are developed."

Gadfly appreciates this memorializing of the questions and comments very much. But he believes answers could/should be given here as well. Along with references to sections in the report that reflect public questions or comments or which were changed/revised as a result of public input.

Even if some questions were answered there and some comments addressed there before the gathered public on April 12, those important answers and addressings are not "memorialized" at this later time when the report is distributed to a different and much wider audience.

And though a "number" of these questions were answered there, what about the rest?

The assumption seems to be that BPA/Desman responses are only important internally at some time in the future and privately.

*You can ask questions, but in some cases you will not hear our replies. Trust us. We heard you and will consider your comments at the appropriate time.*

Gadfly finds odd (though not impossible, I guess) that there is not one change between the draft report and the final report. A cynic might say, then, that the public participation had no impact and that no further thinking was done.

It is just a tad hard to believe that in the approximately four months between the draft and final reports that not even one thing was changed – as the result of public comment or simply from further discussion and thinking internally on the material. But, ok, not impossible, Gadfly has to admit.

Gadfly would have respected the public comment a bit more by adding a paragraph to each bullet with either the response given at the meeting, with a response developed after the meeting, or an indication to where in the report the comment would be picked up when “recommendations are implemented.”

As is, the public has to trust that BPA will act on the public comments, a trust that Gadfly must admit would be a bit shaky for him after putting this list of “Exhibits” together.

Gadfly would love to see such important questions/comments as these made in April and that are still “hot” right now addressed in the final report:

- There is concern about the Authority’s debt load
- The idea of new garages on both the Northside and Southside is a good one, but there is concern that garages will be built and the expected development will not occur to occupy and pay for those facilities.

In other words, some of the same major basic questions were asked in April. Why didn’t BPA/Desman address them for the final report so that they didn’t leave the exact impression that they weren’t listening at all.

And a feeling in the public that we are back at Square One. Never left Square One.

Trust?

And if BPA/Desman is concerned about memorializing for future consideration, why not the comments at the Sept 20 open meeting on the final report? Your peace-loving, yoga-going, meditation-minding Gadfly got sweaty wing pits noting that BPA/Desman was not memorializing public comments there. [You can see your Gadfly having an anxiety attack on video \(esp. mins approx. 4:20-5:30\)](#). The impression given Gadfly by BPA/Desman was that the Sept 20 meeting was for the Mayor's benefit, not theirs – he was taking notes – and that, in effect, their job was done. No more thinking on their part. Thus, no need to record what was said by a dozen residents over the 90 minutes.

Well, that was the impression I got.

Frustrating.

Trust?