You've Got Me thinking about "Neighborhoods" (1)

Gadfly seems to be thinking a lot about neighborhoods.

- people concerned about Airbnb in the north Historical District
- people concerned about 2 W. Market in the north Historical District
- concerns about my own neighborhood listening to the concerns of others
- my consciously subscribing (paying) to the *Bethlehem Press*, a community paper
- Northside 2027 starting
- discussion of improvements for the Rose Garden
- Streetscaping yesterday
- concern about "Lehigh sprawl" just expressed on these pages
- to name a few of the recent mental dots

Bethlehem is actually a pretty big town, isn't it?

But Gadfly chooses to think about it as a small town. Gadfly chooses to look at the town through Norman Rockwell paintings, which he has said several times in these pages from the very "About" page onward. Gadfly chooses to look at Bethlehem through Frank Capra movies – I think of Greg With-No-Last-Name who showed up at a Council meeting and extolled the "Capra-esque" quality of the town.

Gadfly wants Bethlehem to have the feel of a small town. Gadfly wants Bethlehem to have a neighborhood feel.

Bethlehem is actually a pretty big town. But it is made up of neighborhoods. Gadfly is getting to realize that more and more.

Southside. Streetscaping yesterday was wonderful. I guess I missed presentations. But when I stopped in the place was bright, colorful, full of buzz and chatter. People giving ideas about the Southside Gateway area. Helping to create their space. Exciting. Empowering. Kudos to the organizers. (Gadfly, whose bladder is out of warranty, offered the need for public restrooms for walkers and tourists. I was politely told the dark place where I could post my stickie with that idea!)

Northside 2027. Councilman Reynolds talking about the importance of William Penn and "TJ," drifting me back to the Highland Ave. playground in Lansdowne, Pa., where Gadfly (he was then known as "Gig" or "Giggy" – you can't make this stuff up!) learned about life (like how to open a contraband quart beer bottle without an opener). Reynolds and Gadfly #2 Bill Scheirer reminding us how certain major

streets are configured to get traffic "through" neighborhoods and thus detract from, even destroy neighborhoods.

West Bethlehem – wow! Gadfly caught a whiff of the neighborhood bonding when the Armory issue was hot earlier in the year, and then in the last couple Council meetings the Rose Garden discussion has really opened his eyes. O, my, take a look at the Mount Airy Neighborhood Association https://mana18018.wordpress.com/mission/. Councilman Callahan has remarked several times that the City has not done enough for the west side, but the residents certainly haven't been sitting on their hands.

It pains Gadfly that people may be quietly worrying about "Lehigh sprawl." Gadfly remembers Seth Moglen at Council eloquently describing developers swallowing up the properties in his section of the Southside.

Gadfly #1 Antalic's lamentations over Montclair Ave. and thereabouts return as regularly as the full moon.

Gadfly is not being very coherent here. He's just recognizing that for him an important theme is percolating that may result in some coherent thoughts later. Think of this post as Notes on Neighborhoods for Future Writing.

But maybe I can bring this ramble to a point by asking for a census of neighborhoods.

If we had a map (maybe there is one, maybe somebody could do one) that clearly shows our neighborhoods. You can look at a Philadelphia map, for instance, and see Old City, Society Hill, Fish Town, Strawberry Mansion, Brewerytown, and so forth. What is our town like looked at that way?

Do people still talk of "The Village"? If you are going past the Sands toward Hellertown, what is that area called if you turn right on Lynn? I've never been there. And when the street was closed for a while, I wondered if supplies had to be helicopter'd in.

Help me think about neighborhoods in Bethlehem.

There's some homework.