

# Two Councilpersons respond to the Bethlehem Residents for Responsible Development

The Bethlehem Gadfly 1st Terrace, Affordable Housing, Neighborhoods, Southside July 18, 2019

*(Latest post on such topics as Neighborhoods, Southside,  
1st Terrace, Affordable Housing)*

*Contact for the Bethlehem Residents for Responsible Development is Seth Moglen: [moglen@lehigh.edu](mailto:moglen@lehigh.edu). This group is open to all, not just 1st Terrace area residents. The more membership, the greater the power. And the issue here is not limited to one neighborhood.*

So Gadfly has [covered in detail the forceful first appearance](#) of what he thinks we can now call the “Bethlehem Residents for Responsible Development” at City Council Tuesday night. A group that he feels can accomplish much good.

But there were two meaningful responses by Council members that we should note as well.

First, Councilwoman Van Wirt.

In reference to the 1st Terrace issues that the residents spoke about, PVW wants data and seemed to get into a slight bit of tangle with the City rep over getting it. Nothing serious. But I don’t think the rep got the importance of what PVW was asking.

PVW has described herself as data-driven. She’s a doctor. A “fixin’ doctor,” a term Gadfly’s kids used to differentiate their father’s degree.

Data-driven — Gadfly likes that.

PVW wanted “firm data,” a “firm study” to show “actual need” for housing around Lehigh. She wanted “something to refer to.”

(Ha! Gadfly would “fix” that ending preposition to “something to which she could refer.” See, kids, your dad is a “fixin’ doctor” too!)

Gadfly likes that. Glad we have a person like that on Council.

Second, Councilman Reynolds.

JWR thanked the Mayor for weighing in strongly on the 1st Terrace proposal, but his more general point was the power that Mayor has in such situations, implying, Gadfly thinks (he almost literally talked directly to the Mayor at one point), that the Mayor/Administration should wield that power more often.

*“One of the lessons going forward here is the power the Administration has to weigh in on these projects publicly and privately. . . . when Administrations take positions on any of these things, it is extraordinarily rare for these Authorities, these Commissions, these Boards to necessarily say no, no, no, we disagree with what the professionals say, we disagree with what the full-time people say, we disagree with what the elected officials say about this. . . . and I want to say thank you to the Mayor for weighing in on this, but at the same time it’s also a model. We can pass all the ordinances we want. But the strongest thing that we have is that we have an Administration that will stand up and say we like this project, we understand some people disagree, we understand some people don’t like elements of it. . . . I just think that going forward . . . as we talk about other development projects throughout the City, all of our voices are important, but the*

*most important one is siting there [the Mayor], and I have confidence, I have faith, and I just want to say thank you.*

Gadfly [thanked the Mayor too](#). He didn't trust the Zoning Commission to have any more "No" than the Planning Commission in this 1st Terrace proposal that seemed so obviously wrong. Gadfly liked that the Mayor saw it his way.

But how would he feel in the opposite case.

Which, Gadfly feels, has happened in the not-so-distant past.

JWR seems to literally argue for a strong Mayor (Administration). But does that tilt the ABCs toward puppet rather than independent status?

Gadfly needs to chew on this some more. You are welcome to help.