

Follow-up to and fallout from the Zoning Board nomination controversy (1)

The Bethlehem Gadfly City government, Serious Issues September 4, 2019

(The latest in a series of posts on City government)

Gadfly loves to publish resident comments. Democracy in action. Giving our voices life beyond the Town Hall walls. Providing models for our own walks to the podium. Don't be afraid to speak. Don't be afraid to make some noise. It's empowering!

Do you remember the drama at the August 20 City Council meeting over the withdrawn nomination of a person to the Zoning Board? Remember Nominee-1?

Better than an hour it was. Some thought of it as “spectacle,” a “circus” marked by a “mad rant,” but, it turns out, some thought of it, as did Councilman Callahan, as a good debate, as an example of a flourishing First Amendment.

That's America!

Word got around about the norm-busting behavior in usually peaceful Town Hall, and it drew the largest number of youtube views so far. Deservedly so. [See the video here.](#)

Gadfly thought you could learn a lot about Councilmembers from that portion of the meeting and spent 9 posts — a long time — discussing it, [beginning here.](#)

Having spent so much time, Gadfly was kind of “done” with the issue and pretty much put it out of mind — and talked about other things during the public comment at last night’s September 3 Council meeting.

But Gadfly wondered about follow-up or fallout.

For instance, he really expected there would be letters to the editor in the newspapers.

However, two residents addressed that dramatic episode last night during Council public comment: one negative, one positive.

Gives us a chance to test our own reactions again.

Was what happened at City Council August 20 healthy or corrosive?

Do we want more of that kind of thing or less?

(Stick around for a following post on how the Council members followed up at last night’s meeting.)

Negative: Stephen Antalics: <https://youtu.be/DdJdqadcFiE>

- “I find no joy in saying what I’m going to say.”
- “I recall some meetings being very contentious . . . but they were for a purpose. They involved issues.”
- “There were some very strong exchanges here, but, in all those exchanges over the years, the subject never concerned personality of members of Council.”

- “[In the past] that [president’s] gavel would have hit that table so hard, it would have shaken the walls.”
- “At last meeting, I was deeply embarrassed . . . I felt like a child caught with his hand in the cookie jar. But why should I feel that way, because what transpired should not have happened.”
- ‘We do not want to hear petty discussion from one Council member to another.’
- “It is not mature. It is demeaning to people sitting in front of you.”
- “Council owes us citizens an apology for their behavior.”
- “There’s freedom of speech, but there’s also good taste. And the behavior last Council meeting was totally tasteless.”
- “The gavel should have hit that table immediately, but it didn’t.”
- “it might be wise for Council to consider limitations to how long a Council member can continue ad nauseum.”

Positive: Dan Krasnick: <https://youtu.be/95kcsKx1Fk8>

- “The only time I’ve ever talked to you is when a history lesson . . . needs to be taught or learned. And that seems to be an issue here when it comes to open debate.”
- “We once had a colonial representation to decide the fate of the declaration of independence.”
- “Think about the importance that they had when deciding the fate of. . . . These people were needed to decide whether America was going to become America.”
- “It was quite evident that John Adams did not have the support of his representatives.”

- “They would have a vote as to whether to discuss, just merely to discuss the fact of having a vote on whether to talk about whether we could become our own country or not.”
- “And it was not done behind any door . . . this was out in the open with people taking notes.”
- “There is no topic that I have ever seen that is too scary to even just talk about.”
- “If you’re afraid to talk about something then we have a problem with the issue itself.”
- “So they were finally able to convince . . . to vote on the possibility of taking a vote.”
- “We took a pledge earlier today . . . without this open debate there would be no America.”
- “The concept of open debate, the concept of the First Amendment is inherent in who we are and what we do.”
- “Everybody wins and loses in a conversation; when you compromise you are both going to win and lose.”
- “I saw the YouTube, and I was surprised that it had gotten this far.”
- “Please, vote for open debate.”

to be continued . . .