

# The Significance of 2 W. Market for All of Us (44)

The Bethlehem Gadfly Uncategorized December 8, 2018

*(44th in a series of posts about 2 W. Market St.)*

So, in routine Gadfly fashion, we don't jump into judgment.

We take it slow. Reflect. Simmer.

Gadfly posted the audio of the Council decision-making earlier today.

Relax. Listen. Consider.

Then we'll come back and analyze.

Let's remember some of the reasons why this "case" is so important, even for those of you followers not directly involved.

- It's about close to home. It's about what's outside your front door, what's off your back porch. It's about who is next door. It's about neighborhoods, so it's about all of us. It's about who controls a neighborhood. CM Reynolds nailed it when he said the disputants hold a "different definition of what it means to live in a neighborhood."
- It's about "law." Gadfly put "law" in quotes because he is not quite sure that term covers exactly what he means. We have city ordinances — laws (see the links on the sidebar). But we also have city plans — like the Comprehensive Plan (see the link on the sidebar). Are city plans like law? What existential status do they have? Do the plans have power? Or are they guides on the shelf, as it were — persuasive only, not potent in the real world? Can city officials ignore "plans"? Can city officials ignore the intent of laws? Can city officials free-lance?
- It's about seeing our elected officials performing the essence of their office: deciding, making judgments, legislating. Gadfly had said to himself at the beginning of this now year-long observation of city government that one of the things he wanted to achieve was the ability to vote in a more informed way next time. The mayors had faces for Gadfly — Callahan, Donchez. But Council members were faceless. I never really knew whom I was voting for. Gadfly got some giggles at a Council meeting public comment a few months back recounting what I knew of the members in order to vote for

them. CM Colon engaged me in a pleasant chat at the polls one year. CM Waldron was door-to-dooring on my street — gumshoe politics 101 — and charmed me onto the porch for a chat (I usually retreat, lock the door, pull the shades, talk through the mail slot!). CM Reynolds jogs half-naked through my back alley since he lives down the street. My kids went to school with the Callahans; my grandkids wrestled with Callahans (and not so successfully!). A Martell gave two of my kids work; a Martell was a Lehigh colleague. CW Negron — well, her name is legend. CW Van Wirt — strong recommendation from a trusted colleague. There you go! Is that enough knowledge to make an informed vote? If voting is meaningful, it must be informed. If we want the best city leaders, we must “know” them better. Going to meetings is a way. Getting inside their minds at decision-time is the best. And the audio files in the previous post enable you to do that. Take advantage. See how they think when confronting a tough, complex issue.

- It’s about democracy. I quipped that the last couple big meetings were “democracy in action” — a phrase that struck some meeting-goers enough to repeat it back to me. I tell you, those full houses packed with passionate interplay filled me with pride. Yes, sensibilities were getting frayed, but sensibilities were not even close to being outraged. But, having said that, the true test of, the final exam of democracy in action is the final act, the closing curtain — the decision. Ha! Not to put too much pressure on Council members, but we want to watch closely how this issue resolves. We want them to know we are watching.

So start doing some homework on the Council statements available in the last post. And we’ll start digging a little deeper tomorrow or Sunday. For diversion, I’m going to read around in the Climate material I posted yesterday. And rest — Peace Walk for the Gadfly tomorrow.