

Need for a more robust discussion on the state of the City

The Bethlehem Gadfly City government, Gadfly's posts, Serious Issues March 16, 2019

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

In one of [his “modest proposal” posts](#) a few posts back, Gadfly whined as gadflies tend to do (sigh) about the venue for the Mayor’s “State of the City” address, the audience for it, and the dissemination of it.

The content of the Mayor’s address is very positive, very upbeat, as such addresses are wont to be, but, I think, legitimately so. And Gadfly has admitted to wishing that the Mayor seek the spotlight a bit more and foster a widespread positive feeling about the good news among “the people.”

But the dissemination of the address seems better this year than last. Virtually immediately, there was an “announcement” on the top page of the [City web site](#) with a link to the [audio of the address](#) accompanying the Mayor’s slides. And there is a link to the [printed text of the address](#) at the top of the quick links on that page as well.

And the *Call* article that day is a prominent size: “[Bethlehem mayor showcases city’s untold development story.](#)” (The headline of the *Call* print version is “Bethlehem mayor stressed development; Donchez highlights investment numbers in State of the City address.”)

But that’s still not enough.

Gadfly’s whine is basically centered on the venue and the audience: As the *Call* says, “Donchez delivered the remarks Thursday to 250 business people at the ArtsQuest Center at SteelStacks.”

I say again. That just seems wrong to me. Symbolically. Probably not politically.

You aim your speech at your audience.

And, though the Mayor's address contains much more, the *Call* headlines saw the address primarily through the lens of that venue and audience, focusing on the Mayor *showcasing, stressing, highlighting* development – even to the drama of revealing to readers an “untold story” of development.

And astronomical numbers dominate the content of the news story: one imagines an audience of slick-haired Gordon Gekko's salivating at the Mayor's financially erotic language: 190 million, 295 million, 54 million, 370 million, 22 million, 15 million . . . 1 billion! 1.3 billion! Even Gadfly swooned.

And, though there is more in the Mayor's words, the *Call* reports that post-address questions centered, as one might expect in that venue and with that audience, only on “two big projects,” Martin Tower and the Sands.

Gadfly sees the “State of the City” address as an exciting moment for robust wide-ranging discussion from a broad set of perspectives.

We didn't have that.

So Gadfly's been thinking about a “modest proposal” of his own for next year.

Assembling, say, four people to complement the Mayor's address with posts on Gadfly.

Complement not compete with, criticize, answer, or attack like what happens with our national “State of the Union” address.

Complementary views.

Aimed at fostering a sense of community.

The state of the City seen from a variety of angles, through a variety of lenses, using different metrics. Equally valid.

Gadfly hasn't been around long enough to know. Who are the wise heads representing a range of perspectives that he might invite next year to fill this delicate and valuable role?

Give him your suggestions—