

# Airbnb: Why Should We Care?

The Bethlehem Gadfly Airbnb, Gadfly's posts, Serious Issues October 6, 2018

*(2st in a series of posts on Airbnb/short-term rentals)*

The Gadfly likes to be in at the beginning. And he's not on what for this blog's purposes we are calling the "Airbnb issue."

There was a development in this issue yesterday, and we'll get to that, but hold on for a post or two or three while Gadfly tries to wrap his wings around this issue, wonk fashion, that has been "brewing" (bad pun as you will see) for maybe two years.

In the last post Gadfly provided some basic sources to establish a timeline. Check it out. A wave of the wings to *Morning Call* reporters Nicole and Matt and Daryl for providing the framework for us. The issue centers on neighbors' reacting to a Bethlehem couple in the Northside historical district renting their home (and then homes) on a short-term basis.

First things first, why should the general "we" of the City care? Why is Gadfly spending time on this? Why should you read on if you don't live in the Northside Historical District?

Good question, Gadfly.

And Gadfly answers that it has to do with the perfectly understandable concern over the nature of your neighborhood. Something everybody has or should have. Every time Gadfly uses that word "neighborhood," he thinks with pleasure of Fred Rogers, "Mr. Rogers" (did you see the recent movie "Won't You Be My Neighbor?" and not cry?). It's about the quality of life in your neighborhood, about caring for and about your neighborhood, and "control" of your neighborhood. This is or should be a concern across the City and has much wider implications than just Airbnb.

Mr. Gadfly's neighborhood is changing. Has changed. Of the 15 houses in Gadfly's block, 6 are now rentals. Porch palings are missing. Parking is harder. Some sidewalks want to hurt you. Mother Nature is a sidewalk

snow-shoveler. Glaring, spooky feral cats have taken over the once carnival-like street (40 kids playing there at one point). Yards aren't all that well taken care of. Gadfly's lawn is "crop-circled" by dogs on leashes. Where have all the flowers gone? Some porches have become utility sheds. We were once a tree-shaded lane; now Gadfly's tree ("Secundus," since it is a replacement) stands alone, sole respecter of City ordinance. Poor maudlin Gadfly. He doesn't live in the Northside Historical District. But he gets it. We all should get it. Neighborhoods change one rented house, one dog pee at a time. Often imperceptible change. Till one day it's too late. Gadfly gets it. We all should get it. And be invested in what happens in the Northside Historical District.