

Why . . . Why? (2)

The Bethlehem Gadfly Budget, Serious Issues November 14, 2018

(2nd in a series of post on the Budget)

Steve Melnick has had a career in economic development for over 35 years in several states, with the last 20 years here in Bethlehem and the Lehigh Valley.

Gadfly: The city has uncovered a three million dollar shortfall in the budget. and taxes are proposed to be increased 3.8%. Why, then, did the Redevelopment Authority give away \$800,000 to a private developer for unspecified environmental issues? Why wasn't the state ISRP (Industrial Site Remediation Program) used to provide assistance to the developer so the RDA could have reprogrammed that money for other more public uses. I realize that in the context of a \$78,000,000 budget, \$800,000 is small potatoes, but it still irritates me that that money wasn't somehow reprogrammed to help the city close it's shortfall while our taxes will increase. Incidentally this \$800,000 grant was given to the same people who sold a parcel of vacant land to the same Authority for 2.1 million dollars. Does it make sense to buy a piece of land for 2.1 million and give the same people an \$800,000 grant? Parking and development in Bethlehem is being hijacked by a few individuals who have little or no regard for the overall public good.

Steve