

Has Council succumbed to the heat?

The Bethlehem Gadfly Lehigh Valley Good Neighbors Alliance, Police November 12, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts about the Bethlehem Police* 

ref: **Putting the Heat on City Council (1)**

ref: **Putting the Heat on City Council (2)**

Gadfly is not a regular Facebook user.

He has a personal Facebook page as well as a page for the Bethlehem Gadfly.

But he rarely goes to either.

It just so happens that he went to his personal Facebook page last Thursday November 5 and found the “Betrayal of Bethlehem by Our Own City Council” post plus the “Coffee Cup” brochure from the Lehigh Valley Good Neighbors Alliance dated November 2.

(Yiii, November 2, Election Day eve, Gadfly gives the LVGNA a tip o’ the hat for the ability to think about anything else at that time.)

Gadfly doesn’t understand how that post got there. The workings of Facebook are truly a mystery to him. But he’s glad it got there.

For he wonders if it explains something that has been puzzling him.

Followers will recognize that Gadfly has been impatient with the pace and the indirection with which the City and City Council have been playing their part in the national reckoning with race that has characterized the post-GeorgeFloyd era.

And he has been trying to understand why that is.

Gadfly really doesn't know anything about the internal politics of our City.

But he knows there is a meaningful election coming up. He knows 4 Council members will be on the ballot (should they choose to run again, of course) — Councilpeople Callahan, Crampsie Smith, Negron, and Waldron). He thinks he knows that at least 2 Council members may be running for Mayor.

So Gadfly has been playing with the idea that the reason for the slow pace and indirection he has been whining about is . . . “politics.”

Perhaps, thought Gadfly, who is totally ignorant of these matters, the Police are a powerful political force in the City, that candidates benefit from the “endorsement” of the Police, that candidates would want to be viewed as pro-police, and that any questioning of the Police is dangerous politically because it could tag you as anti-police.

Perhaps, thought Gadfly, who is totally ignorant of these matters, questioning of the Police is a political minefield on which any Councilperson mindful of self-preservation would want to tread lightly.

(Is Gadfly mistaken when he says he seems to have observed a significant proliferation of those “Support your Police” yard signs around town lately.)

He remembers that right out of the gate two Councilpeople pledged that they would never “defund” the police. Gadfly thought that odd to do before any discussion — a clear indication that minds were already made up, an indication that minds were closed. Never a happy thought for Gadfly.

Gadfly remembers that one Council member kind of went out of his way to remind “us” that another Council member had entertained the idea of “defunding” — a sign that the issue was hot.

So, could politics be the answer to Gadfly’s puzzlement? He hated to think so — holding idealistically to the belief that Councilpeople are independent thinkers.

But, being totally ignorant of these matters, he hesitated to raise the question of the part that “politics” was playing in inquiries about the way we do public safety.

And then he finds LVGNA is orchestrating a political campaign claiming their “political activism” has “temporarily stopped [City Council’s] police defunding scheme in its tracks.”

Wow! Could this be true? Is the LVGNA political campaign the reason for the Council silences, the lack of urgency, the feet dragging that Gadfly has been whining about?

If so, Gadfly is a bit sympathetic, for, though he feels that LVGNA is pretty much totally off-base and misleading, that “Coffee Cup” brochure is a classic of its kind! It is a work of high art in the genre of rabid partisan politics. Gadfly cannot help but recognize the skill of its construction. The brochure will be effective. And Council has no ready means to combat its message.

We will come back to look at LVGNA's post and brochure in more detail, but Gadfly's day job is going to consume most of his day.

In the meantime, Gadfly invites you to spend a good bit of time on the LVGNA material and comment on what you see.

The Bethlehem Gadfly