

Councilwoman Negron: “I’m not the only one who is appalled”

[The Bethlehem Gadfly](#) [Community Engagement Initiative](#), [George Floyd killing](#), [Ochs, Holona](#) July 13, 2020 3 Minutes

 *Latest in a series of posts responding to the George Floyd killing* 

original resolution “Resolution urging the creation of a Community Engagement Initiative in the City of Bethlehem”

Councilwoman Negron’s impatience did have effect.

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I’m not the only one who is appalled by [the 2nd and 3rd paragraph]. We want to try to make the Administration accountable and push an agenda that the community wants. [Paragraphs 2 and 3] must go

Councilman Reynolds made two amendments to the resolution.

I thank you Councilman Reynolds, that’s very honorable. . . . You are saying to all the people . . . that they are not invisible.

Amended resolution:

Adding this line (might not be exact wording): “The Administration should work with and incorporate recommendations by research experts including Lehigh University’s Core Grant team who recently conducted a large research project on policing in the Lehigh Valley.”

NOW THEREFORE BE IT:RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Bethlehem urges the Mayor and his Administration to collaborate with the City of Bethlehem Police Department to create a public space and

forum for the long-term discussion of issues surrounding systemic racism, discrimination, race-based inequities, social justice, mental health, addiction, poverty eradication, inclusionary housing, education, and fair policing practices (“Community Engagement Initiative”). The Community Engagement Initiative might include and/or interface with any individuals or entities that the Mayor and his Administration think appropriate such as citizens, human service organizations, the medical community, school leaders, social justice organizations, police officers, and Police Department leaders. **The Administration should work with and incorporate recommendations by research experts including Lehigh University’s Core Grant team who recently conducted a large research project on policing in the Lehigh Valley.**

Amended resolution:

Deleting two paragraphs

WHEREAS, following the murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, and during a period of justified outrage and anger, people across the nation and around the world have engaged in massive and sustained protests against persistent patterns of racial injustice and inequity in the United States and other countries. In the United States, a primary focus of these protests has been on policing practices affecting Black, Latinx, and other minority communities;

~~WHEREAS, Bethlehem City Council thanks our Police Department and its officers for facilitating and protecting peaceful protests and we recognize our Police Department’s successful efforts in protecting public safety and property while at the same time protecting the community’s vital right of free expression. Our community has come together to grieve, talk, mobilize, and peacefully protest racial injustice in cooperation with our Police Department and not as adversaries against our police;~~

~~WHEREAS, Bethlehem City Council commends the Mayor and our Police Department for being the first City in the Lehigh Valley to release its unredacted police use of force policy and further recognizes that our Police Department proactively incorporated many of the 8 Can’t Wait police use of force directives into their operations many years prior to~~

George Floyd's murder, as part of the Police Department's accreditation process, and further recognizes that the Police Department has been receptive and responsive in recently making additional changes to strengthen the 8 Can't Wait use of force directives in Bethlehem. Moreover, we recognize our Police Department's current community engagement efforts. We also recognize the need for further re-evaluation and review of our Department's use of force policy to achieve compliance with all federal and state guidelines, current case law and the best standards and practices available in alignment with 8 Can't Wait;

WHEREAS, Bethlehem City Council believes we must and can do better as a city to build stronger bridges and trust between our Police Department and our community, and that working together, we can avail ourselves of this opportunity to work collaboratively and self-reflectively to improve the relationship between our Police Department and our diverse ethnic and racial communities, that together, make up the City we all love;

The resolution, as amended, passed 7-0.

Gadfly will introduce you in some depth to the research of Prof Ochs and the team at Lehigh University in upcoming posts.