

Marijuana arrest the subject of a dispute between the police and a judge

[The Bethlehem Gadfly](#) [Drugs](#), [Marijuana](#), [Police](#), [Southside](#) February 12, 2020

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

On November 20, 2019, Bethlehem Police Chief Mark Diluzio wrote to Northampton County Court Administrator J. Jermaine Greene about a conversation District Judge Nicholas Englesson had with two Bethlehem Police officers relating to a traffic-stop arrest of an Hispanic man for possession of a small amount of marijuana, an arrest that revealed an outstanding warrant for a man with the same name as a deported felon. Deputy Chief Scott Meixell co-signed the letter with Chief Diluzio. Further investigation at headquarters indicated that the man was not the subject of the warrant.

Chief Diluzio was concerned about the racial character of the Judge's conversation with the officers in, it was claimed, such remarks to the arresting officer as "I don't want you hassling citizens because they speak Spanish." The arresting officer said he felt that he was being accused of being racist. The two officers present at the conversation with the Judge gave statements about the conversation.

The letter signed by the Chiefs and the statements of the two officers can be found here:

[DiLuzio and Meixell to Greene 11 20 19](#)

The Chief writes that "The Bethlehem Police Department serves a diverse population which includes a substantial number of citizens from the Hispanic community. The Department has always fostered a positive relationship with members of that community."

Judge Englesson responded to the Chief's concerns in a letter to Court Administrator Greene dated November 29, 2019. That letter will be printed here tomorrow.

The Mayor has provided a statement to Gadfly as follows: "The City Administration is well aware of the matter. It has been thoroughly

reviewed internally. The matter is the subject of an ongoing non-criminal investigation. We caution you not to speculate as to the nature of the ongoing investigation. We caution you that it would be inappropriate to assume the truth of the allegations. We caution you that it would be inappropriate to assume there is good cause for the allegations. The City Administration will have no further comment because the information and evidence are subject to confidentiality under Pennsylvania law. ”

By “allegations,” Gadfly assumes the Mayor means allegations from both sides, for Judge Englesson has a side of the event too, as we will see tomorrow.

As usual, Gadfly recommends going to the primary sources. Withholding judgment till you hear all sides is a good thing.

There’s a significant Public Safety committee meeting March 3 at 5:30 in Town Hall on questions about the police application of our relatively new marijuana decriminalization ordinance. Both the Mayor and committee chair Michael Colon have indicated to Gadfly that the subject of Chief DiLuzio’s letter will not be discussed there.

Judge Englesson’s response tomorrow.