

Another opportunity to apply the “Smith Principles”

The Bethlehem Gadfly 14-18 W. 3rd. St., Development March 6, 2021

 *Latest in a series of posts on new development* 

ref: **Establishing Community-Centered Principles for Responsible Southside Development**

ref: **Testing the principles for responsible development on the S. New St. project, part 1**

ref: **Testing the principles for responsible development on the S. New St. project, part 2**

Things stick in Gadfly’s head.

He thinks it was Councilman Callahan who said something to the effect of “we are lucky we have developers who want to build in Bethlehem, but we make it hard for them.”

Yeah, we are lucky. But, yeah, frankly, we should make it hard, especially in the historical districts.

So here we go again on the Southside.

“Another month, another proposal for South Bethlehem,” quips Anna Smith, one of our sharpest heads on local development.

This time it’s 14-18 W. Third St., the two buildings next to the Benner/Zest building at 306 S. New.

The developer has requested permission to demolish those two buildings and has submitted plans for a mixed use building there for consideration at the Historic Conservation Commission meeting March 15.

Now let’s just stop for a minute and reflect on the great thing Smith has done recently to help us, to help everybody focus attention and discussion and think about how to judge this new development plan.

She’s done her own “development,” a set of principles.

“The Smith Principles” for responsible Southside development.

We’ve seen her apply those principles to 319-327 S. New.

In the next post or two on this subject, she will apply those principles to 14-18 W. Third.

Anna Smith’s Community-Centered Principles for Responsible Southside Development:

1. Support projects that incorporate locally-owned businesses into their plans, and that lead to a net increase in small businesses. Examples: Riverport Market, Flatiron Flats
2. Prioritize development of vacant industrial properties over demolition of historic properties. Examples: The Factory, 510 Flats
3. Encourage new development that does not exceed the size of surrounding properties and blends with historic architecture in order to create a cohesive sense of place and encourage walkability. Examples: Polk Street building
4. Support projects that incorporate diverse residential and commercial offerings that are accessible and affordable to South Bethlehem’s population. Examples: proposed Palace Row redevelopment
5. Support adaptive reuse of historic buildings. Examples: Brinker Lofts, Flatiron Flats, Grace Mansion (in progress), Goodman building (proposed), Wilbur Mansion project (in progress)
6. Support projects that incorporate green space and/or the development of public spaces into their design. Examples: Brinker Lofts opening onto the Greenway



7. Support projects that are developed in response to community needs identified by residents and stakeholders, and that engage residents and stakeholders in idea development and the design process
8. Support projects that prioritize sustainable development practices and take proactive approaches to addressing challenges presented by our changing climate. Examples: The Flatiron Building
9. Avoid projects that cause displacement of long-time residents, low-income residents, and locally-owned businesses
10. Do not use projects that are nearly universally considered planning and design failures as precedent for elements of new development (e.g., Urban Renewal projects like Rooney building, Litzenberger House, Lehigh's Brodhead House, Rite Aid shopping center.

to be continued . . .