

# What's not coming to committee tomorrow: the marijuana arrest matter

The Bethlehem Gadfly Marijuana, Police March 2, 2020

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

10 days or so ago we posted a November 20, 2019, letter from Bethlehem Police Chief Mark DiLuzio, co-signed by Deputy Chief Scott Meixell, to the Northampton County Court administrator with concern about a November 14 conversation between District Justice Nicholas Englesson and two police officers regarding a traffic stop of an Hispanic male and subsequent marijuana charge, a conversation in which the arresting officer felt he was accused of being racist. In epistolary response that we also published, the Judge said that his purpose in initiating the conversation was to counsel the officer about possibly racially insensitive behavior.

Gadfly has framed the situation this way: what's at stake here is the possibility that we have either a racially insensitive police officer backed by his Chief or a district judge abusing his power, overstepping his bounds.

The City has denied there was any wrongdoing on the part of the officer and is withholding further comment.

In fact, there has been little public comment at all from the City. The newspapers have not picked up on this. It may be that the Mayor's prepared statement at the February 18 City Council meeting is the only public comment. Again, not picked up by the papers as far as Gadfly knows.

Gadfly thinks this a serious matter and did publish private letters.

Gadfly has devoted a half-dozen or so posts laying out the controversy, ending with one in which he says he still has [twenty questions](#), mostly about how the City has handled the matter. (See "[Police](#)" under Topics on the sidebar for the letters, the Mayor's statements, and all the posts.)

Gadfly wishes there was more openness. That's what gadflies always wish. Sigh.

Because charges of ugly racial insensitivity are around us right now.

*Laurie Mason Schroeder, "Man who was punched and kicked by Allentown police in viral video not guilty; judge rips conduct of officers." Morning Call, February 21, 2020.*

*Peter Hall, "Jim Thorpe police accused of racial profiling Latino drivers." Morning Call, February 21, 2020.*

Not the kind of activity we want to be known for.

And Gadfly is not saying we are.

But let's be sure.

Was City Council briefed on this? Was that what the executive session with the Mayor was about February 18? If so, would it be permissible for Council to at least make a statement saying they had been briefed, that they are monitoring the situation, and that they agreed that lip-buttoning was best?