

A plea for affordable housing (Originally posted June 12, 2019)

[The Bethlehem Gadfly](#) [Southside](#) October 22, 2020

 *The latest in a series of posts on the Southside* 

[view CDC meeting on YouTube tonight 6PM](#)

call-in number: (610) 997-7963

[sign the letter of support here](#)

Gadfly's not getting much done today.

Feels like a Limbo-day, to coin a phrase.

Just waiting.

Waiting for the presidential debate tonight, of course. Lot of anxiety about that. Hard to focus on anything else.

But waiting also for the Community Development Committee to pass on the student housing reduction ordinance. Important decision there.

Did you decide what you are going to do?

- *add your name to a letter to Council from affordable housing advocates throughout our community: [CLICK HERE](#) to read and sign.*

and/or

- *speak at tonight's Community Development Committee meeting in support of the proposal: you can sign up in advance or call (610) 997-7963 when the chair asks for public comment. If you would like to sign up to speak, email the following information to the Bethlehem City Clerk's office (cityclerk@bethlehem-pa.gov) no later than 2:00 PM on October 22, 2020 (a) name; (b) address; (c) phone*

number; and (d) topic of comments. If you are signed up to speak, the Committee Chair will call you from (610) 997-7963.

If the ordinance passes tonight, the journey is not done. Still has to go to full Council. So the support letter will stay open for signing till then. Pass the word.

In the Limbo mood, I have been thinking about public discussions “we” have had about affordable housing.

There have been some memorable ones.

*Take the City Council meeting of **August 22, 2019**.*

Classic.

Stephen Antalics demands an answer from the “silence of the Lambs” to his argument for a zoning change such as the one that is in front of Council tonight. And Councilwoman Negrón thanks him “for keeping us on track,” confesses that she has lost sleep after hearing residents talk of their problems, and announces that she is “not going to go anywhere till something is done.”

Wow!

Powerful moments.

There is great stuff in the Gadfly archives. He hopes some future Bethlehem historian will use it to learn about who we were at this moment in time.

But Gadfly’s most moving affordable housing memory occurred at the end of the May 2019 Nitschmann School meeting on Martin Tower.

Originally posted June 12, 2019

The scene:

Remember the long night meeting on the Martin Tower demolition at Nitschmann?

30-some speakers. Some very animated.

Things wound down.

Discussion fatigue enveloping the hall.

The Mayor made concluding remarks, thanking all concerned.

There was generous applause.

There was the rustle of exiters.

It was over.

We were done.

When an elderly gentleman — oblivious to the fact that last call had been given and the lights were going out — approached the stage-left mic.

To make a plea for affordable housing.

And received the loudest applause of the night.

Audio Player

00:00

00:00

Use Up/Down Arrow keys to increase or decrease volume.

- I've been here in the Valley since 1965.
- It's getting to the point that we can't afford it.
- We can't afford what the new housing costs.
- I would like to see at least a portion of this property [Martin Tower] be put into something that elderly people who don't have the strength . . . the money . . .

- We could move . . . but then we have our doctors here. We can't afford to drive back and forth.
- You talk about luxury apartments . . .

One minute and ten seconds. But unforgettable to Gadfly.

The sun was setting on his life.

The sun was setting on the meeting.

But the audience was roused from Tower torpor, mightily aroused.

Gadfly wanted to run for office so we could act on that plea.

Let's keep that muffled elderly voice and the vigorous chorus of audience support in mind as we think about what the City can do to remedy the lack of affordable housing.

There is a problem, and "we" know in our guts something has to be done about it.

[sign the letter of support here](#)

ref: ["Important meeting Thursday on regulating student housing to protect Southside neighborhood"](#)

ref: ["Here's how everybody can help protect the Southside neighborhood"](#)

ref: ["More information on the proposal to regulate student housing"](#)

ref: ["Please sign letter supporting proposal to regulate student housing"](#)

ref: ["Need for student housing regulation long recognized — Now's the time — Please "sign on"](#)

ref: ["Southsiders need our support preserving their neighborhood."](#)

ref: ["Gadfly's Tour de Rentz"](#)

