

With candidate Reynolds your neighborhood is in danger

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Latest in a series of posts on candidates for election 

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Gadfly:

I believe Councilman Reynolds' voting record and vocal support for commercial development in residential neighborhoods represents a radical departure from traditional zoning that will be detrimental to Bethlehem's future. (All statements below are supported by audio archives.)

"I wouldn't mind more commercial uses in my neighborhood," exclaimed Mr. Reynolds in a December 4, 2018, City Council meeting regarding a change in the zoning code to help a favored wealthy member in the community convert a historic residence on Market Street into his business headquarters. This change, which was vigorously opposed by residents, now permits business operations that were previously not permitted in the RT zone.

Voting in favor of this change, Mr. Reynolds referenced many times the fact that his neighborhood includes businesses, and he believes other districts should also welcome businesses. The fact that Mr. Reynolds resides in a neighborhood zoned for commercial and institutional uses is not relevant. In casting his "yes" vote for commercialization in a residential zone (RT) that does not permit those operations, he was altering the established zoning that in effect is a threat to Bethlehem's residential neighborhoods.

Furthermore, Mr. Reynolds inappropriately questioned the motives of residents who opposed creeping commercialism in their neighborhood. His statement "I wouldn't want all residences in my neighborhood"

demonstrates his lack of understanding. He should have understood that zoning is a covenant between the city and people who invest in a home in a neighborhood. He should have understood that property value is a major source of personal wealth and that a business setting up next door will undermine that investment. He should have understood that residents want neighbors for friendship, safety, and support.

He then finished off his rationale for voting for commercialism with “If you don’t want any commercial in your neighborhood, there are townships everywhere that are built on that general idea. We can drive to our townships, and we can park, and go somewhere else.” As Gadfly remarked in his post on the discussion [CM Reynolds on “the 2” (61)], “The train of thought on commercialism climaxes in what is literally a love-it-or-leave-it pronouncement.”

This is not the appropriate attitude toward residents who oppose such a consequential change to their neighborhoods. In my mind, Bethlehem needs a leader who listens, seeks consensus, and understands that strong neighborhoods make strong cities.

That leader is Dana Grubb.