

Are “neighbors” and “community partners” the same thing?

The Bethlehem Gadfly Lehigh University, Southside March 5, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts about Lehigh University and the Southside* 

We are committed to working together with our campus community, the City, the Bethlehem Area School District, and other community partners to ensure that any and all concerns about the closure are heard and addressed.
Lehigh University, February 20

Lehigh University information page on the Packer Ave. closing

Ed Courrier, “Packer Ave. 45-day closure detailed.” Bethlehem Press, March 4, 2020.

We move closer to next Monday’s temporary closing of a section of Packer Ave.

We see that Lehigh has opened a web page on the closing for their faculty, staff, and students. Which is good. But it does not exactly foreground an invitation to comment on the impact of the closing by the people who use and park on Packer as part of the information gathering essential for the study.

We see that Lehigh made a presentation on the closing to the Mayor’s Southside Task Force last week, that is, after the public meeting at Broughal and, most especially, after the discussion and vote at City Council. It does not seem that this community partner was alerted in an appropriate time fashion to have input on the idea and the decision.

“Community partner” — as one keen-eyed follower has observed to Gadfly — is a curious term. It’s a jargon term, isn’t it? Does it mean the same as “community”? Does it mean the same as “residents”? Does it mean the same as “neighbors”? Who knows? Remember that there was some skepticism about how and how vigorously the surrounding

neighborhood community was advised of the January 23 “community” meeting at Broughal. Lehigh really kinda skipped over a question about that there.

But maybe there are no “neighbors” left around Lehigh. Maybe only “community partners.” At City Council Tuesday a lady recounted looking for housing in that area for months but only finding student housing.

Sigh.