



“Will you incorporate residents into some of the final decision-making process?”

The Bethlehem Gadfly Lehigh University, Southside February 22, 2020

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

Gadfly has had occasion to say several times over the course of his tenure that “done deal” is one of the most terrifying phrases in the English language.

Gadflies have a penchant for exaggeration.

But “done deal” is the death knell to citizen participation.

You are invited to participate, you participate, then you find out the decision has already been made or that the decision is made without you.

Screw it, you say, and turn into one of those who lose faith in the democratic nature of city government.

There is still some concern about genuine and widespread community knowledge of and involvement in the “conversation” so far. Of course that will change big-time March 9 when the barriers go up!

Breana Holland and Kim Carrell-Smith are familiar and, Gadfly jokingly says, “professional” commentators at Council meetings. Otherwise, though Carrell-Smith presented the results of some polling she did of neighbors, there was only one near-by resident voice at the meeting — Gail Domalakes.

While attracted to the uses that Lehigh might make of that space, Domalakes “uses Packer Ave. a lot” both car-wise and walk-wise and finds the street “very pleasant” and does not “feel unsafe.” *Au contraire*, where she feels “on very high alert, adrenalin-rush” is at Brodhead and Morton and Vine and Morton, and to push more traffic down there might not be a “responsible thing to do.”

<https://youtu.be/jThVmx25-fQ>

Holland and Carrell-Smith (and Domalakes too) support the pilot study. But both women make the clear point that data collected in the pilot study be shared with the community before a decision is made to go ahead with a permanent closing of that section of Packer.

<https://youtu.be/w01AJFjFOHY>

The Mayor himself was clear at the January 23 Broughal meeting that he wanted the widest range of information he could get. So we're hoping/expecting that there will be an open meeting for the public to share data and ideas about it and other salient and significant issues with Mayor and Council before any final decision is made.

https://youtu.be/qwGW9gctJ_Q

Let's try very hard to avoid the mutterings of "done deal."