

The Bethlehem Food Co-Op: the question of Council members' conflict of interest

The Bethlehem Gadfly Bethlehem Food Co-Op, Co-Op, Bethlehem Food, Serious Issues November 25, 2019

 *The latest in a series of posts on City government* 

The first question Gadfly had was whether a for-profit like the Bethlehem Food Co-Op could qualify for a federal CBDG grant. All good, as he indicated last time.

The other threshold question about approving the Bethlehem Food Co-Op for the \$100,000 federal grant was that of the possible City Council conflict of interest in voting since 6 of 7 members of Council are members — “owners” — of the Co-Op.

<https://youtu.be/HcnSNWBfbhg>

Solicitor Spirk parsed the legality of the Council members' position and found no problem.

Council members' proportionate ownership is extremely small, the dividends will be extremely small, and membership would not be an issue anyway, since Council could not act if the 6 members recused themselves. Sayeth the Solicitor.

To top things off, Council members spoke of not taking dividends but turning them back to the BFC.

Case closed on the question of conflict of interest.