

Some Voices against 2 W. Market (3)

The Bethlehem Gadfly 2 W. Market St., Gadfly's posts, Serious Issues October 26, 2018

(3rd in a series of posts on 2 W. Market St.)

Gadfly likes to think of himself, modestly, as a man of words. A literature prof. With a feel for good language, forceful language.

Gadfly has mentioned how immediately impressed he was at the quality of public comment at the City Council meetings. Not what he expected really. And that he sees one of the functions of the Gadfly blog as archiving those comments, giving them extended life, the chance for more power of influence, rather than just evaporating in the cobwebbed Town Hall attic.

The October 2 City Council meeting was a good example of what I'm talking about. It was a busy meeting – the kissin' cousins Airbnb and 2 W. Market dominating comment.

Here are some slices about 2 W. Market from the [good City Council minutes](#) recently available. But Gadfly always encourages that he be slipped the original text so he can publish the “real thing.”

(Gadfly will capture the public comments in the minutes from October 2 on Airbnb in a future post.)

Steve Diamond, 425 Center Street, stated that what he has to say also is about 2 West Market Street. He mentioned we should think a little bit outside the box for the historic area. He noted that Ms. Diamond and Mr. Boyer presented an overview of how this affects every community in Bethlehem, but he will focus more on the downtown area. Why not take the businesses that are in the historic district and bring them back to residential status when they are up for sale? So he is thinking in another way. For example, he and his wife bought their house in an assisted living property on Center Street and put out funds to bring it back to an early residential charm. Doing that is not unusual and others have also done that to stately old homes. When he mentions that to people who are not from Bethlehem but know of Bethlehem and he tells them where he lives, they will say it is a lovely downtown area that you have, that they love the historic section. Mr. Diamond noted he has never heard them say, it is great because that is where the Attorneys and Financial Advisors are. He believes that we should be focused on fixing up Broad Street and making it conducive for commercial people to move in there. He

explained that 2 West Market Street is only one-half block from your commercial district. Mr. Diamond believes that eventually by making more and more business available to downtown, by allowing commercial creep to occur, you will eventually strangle the downtown. He expressed go to cities that have allowed their downtown to be predominately business and in the evening they are ghost towns. Mr. Diamond and his wife have decided to spend their later years here in Bethlehem because of the wonderful neighbors, the community that they have. The comradery downtown is exemplary with neighbors helping neighbors. Who is there in the evening when your neighbor is a business? It will be nobody; streets will become dark and empty. Please do not allow the historic section to bleed to death by losing one residential property at a time.

Mr. Bruce Haines also wanted to talk about the Market Street situation and refresh people's memories that six years ago when we went through the Zoning Ordinance revision in the City it was a really lengthy process with many meetings. What was done on Market Street was recognized that at that time it was a very vulnerable area. The corner of Market and New was defined as the most vulnerable, but since Market Street backs up to Commercial all the way on the north side what was done to protect the residential was the east side of New Street was changed from Commercial to Residential from Market Street to Walnut Street. This was in order to encourage more residential and to get more people living downtown and force the businesses up to Broad Street. The Dodson Building, for example, on the corner of Walnut and New Street was an office building and subsequently was made into apartments, so it is now all residential. The old Bethlehem Club, the Glemser building, was Commercial, but now it is residential on the top floors and a business on the bottom floor. So that block even on the other side of the property in question is moving to residential and that was done by design in the Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Haines wanted to remind everyone of that because it was a long process to make that happen. He appreciates the support from Council of preserving our residential character of our neighborhoods. He believes that Council believes in that too and hopes that City Council, as the watchdogs to the City, would make sure that what you have approved gets done.