

# Community and economic development are different animals (7)

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*(7th in a series of posts on city government)*

*Steve Melnick has had a career in economic development for over 35 years in several states, with the last 20 years here in Bethlehem and the Lehigh Valley.*

Gadfly:

Community and economic development are, indeed, different animals. Council people who focus on one without considering the other continue to make the same mistakes that spawned the great urban renewal experiment that decimated many cities across the country. Some have never recovered. Developers want to make money, and that's their right. What is missing from the equation is just how much they are willing to commit to making their presence in our community of positive force. Be it reconfiguring an intersection to alleviate increased traffic, to providing pocket parks in the neighborhood, or developing an infill sight that blends into the existing neighborhood are all things a municipality can require without jeopardizing a private company's bottom line. If our community is desirable enough for a developer to want to build here, they should be required to take the extra steps to make sure they preserve what we already have created.

Steve