

Council Candidates – 2-year seat – Prompt 6 (35)

The Bethlehem Gadfly Candidates for election, Gadfly's posts May 4, 2019

(35th in a series of posts on candidates for election)

BCDC is hosting a candidates' forum May 6, 6PM,

at Steelworkers Hall,

53 E. Lehigh St.

Election Day is May 21

2 candidates

(status of Ashley Daubert is uncertain)

vote for 1

6th in the series of candidate statements

statements in alphabetical order this time

*Candidates are invited to alert the Gadfly about where they are
appearing*

Prompt #6, 1 & 2

1) Climate change

There is an urgency among Gadfly followers over the destructive forces of climate change. Other cities have legislated as part of their planning codes mandatory “green” initiatives such as green roofs where feasible. What changes in the existing City of Bethlehem zoning, planning, building codes, etc. are you willing to propose and support to more effectively battle climate change on a local level?



Will Carpenter

Climate change is real, and urgent action is required to address the costs to our health, our environment, and the economy. If our government is to act in the best interest of its citizens, there can be no higher priority than protecting our environment. This is the perspective from which I will view each project or initiative that comes before Council. We have an Environmental Advisory Council whose input too often goes unacknowledged. This must change so that we seek and value their conclusions and input. We must also strengthen our commitment to the Climate Action Plan and receive regular reports on progress made.

While I believe that action is necessary, I also believe that this action can positively impact our economy. Clean energy and sustainable development attract business and residents. It also requires skilled labor. There is no choice between economic growth and climate action. We must have both.



Grace Crampsie Smith

I am definitely in support of facilitating as many changes as feasible to battle the effects of climate change and promote environmentally friendly practices, and believe it imperative to start at the local level. I would first and foremost propose a ban of single-use plastic bags. Several municipalities have done so with what appears to be minimal resistance. I would support mandating “green” initiatives in zoning, planning, and building codes as feasible. I would assure all city-owned properties utilize “green” construction practices for new properties, as well as in renovations of existing properties. We must assure we are efficiently using energy, water, and other resources while reducing waste, pollution and [environmental degradation](#). I would support increased legislation and enforcement relative to littering and would explore enhancing and expanding our existing curbside recycling efforts. In addition, I would promote open space to the extent possible in future development initiatives. I believe our future lies in our children and thus would propose increased initiatives/programs within the city targeted at our school age population to increase their “green awareness.”

2) Development

Development is a major source of tension and controversy among Gadfly followers, many of whom are professionally knowledgeable, interested in preserving the historical nature of the City, and disturbed by poor and subjective decisions. What is your view of recent and current development projects in Bethlehem? Possible foci include the rapid neighborhood change in South Bethlehem, the Martin Tower site, the need for affordable housing, the role played by City Administration, the role played by Council, the role of citizen input, adherence to Historical District codes.



Will Carpenter

Development is good and necessary in a vibrant city, but it should be done on our terms. It is good to see the proposed redevelopment at Martin Tower, the Armory, and on Third and New. We should seek

productive use of these parcels and the tax base and jobs that come with it. It is wrong that these projects were given parking garages and variances, HARB violations excused, questionable zoning variances, and, worst of all, that public input was too often trivialized.

No one has all the answers, and no project is perfect. We need to start with a commitment to the environment and have a comprehensive plan and a vision of where we want to be in ten years. Then we can have a robust debate to determine the best outcome for our community.



Grace Crampsie Smith

As a school counselor, within the past 2 years I have seen an astoundingly significant increase in the number of students and families facing homelessness. This is a direct result of the lack of housing that is affordable and suitable throughout our country and within our communities such as Bethlehem. The disparity between housing costs and income has grown considerably and has received national and local media attention.

Families who pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing are considered cost-burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care. An estimated 12 million renters and homeowner households now pay more than 50 percent of their annual incomes for housing. A family with one full-time worker earning the minimum wage cannot afford the local fair-market rent for a two-bedroom apartment anywhere in the United States. Within

the Lehigh Valley, 34,000 people pay more than 50% of their income on housing costs.

While development of residential properties is essential, let's examine the disproportion between the development of high-end luxury apartments and condos versus affordable residential units. We are interdependent upon one another and thus must assure that our neighbors have the basic needs of life met, first and foremost, housing that is affordable and suitable.

As I have noted previously, Council members must be mindful that our community is made up of people from all walks of life who have varied incomes, educations, and skills, and we all want the same thing – to provide for our families and have a good quality of life.

Recent initiatives such as the partnership between the Community Action Development Corp. of Bethlehem and the City of Bethlehem to rehab homes on the South Side is promising and needs to be expanded upon.

To further address this issue, I would propose developing a task force of public and private entities as well as securing grant monies. After all, assuring our community members have affordable and suitable housing promotes stronger, safer neighborhoods, which benefits the community at large.

