

Bethlehem Moments: A Proposal (1)

The Bethlehem Gadfly Bethlehem Moments, Fun Stuff, Gadfly's posts, Then 'n Now September 23, 2018 2 Minutes

(1st in a series)

The Gadfly can sometimes be impetuous. You don't often associate impetuosity with a person of tender years, a person of senior seniorness. But there the Gadfly was on the night of April 17 being impetuous — and in public, right before City Council. [The minutes tell the story.](#)

(By the way, do you know that [City Council minutes are online](#), both in print and audio versions? Far out! How can you resist taking a gossipy peek to see which of your neighbors has taken advantage of the 5 minutes of free time at the top of the meeting? Check it out. THAT TIME IS A GIFT. And while you are there, see what the Council is up to. Democracy in action.)

The Gadfly was reflecting on Bethlehem history and the role it plays (or should play) in our urban identity. “We are a town that values history,” Gadfly said, “We have Historic Districts. . . . you will always hear people talking about how history enhances livability.” So there the Gadfly was verbally embracing the wonderful comment by Greg (Greg, who are you, where are you? I want a hug) at a previous meeting that “Bethlehem has a Capra-esque kind of quality.”

With gadfly gland fully smokin', the Gadfly mourned the sometimes lack of the Capra-esque quality and the sense of history in our architectural actions (he whose architectural qualifications don't extend further than the structure of sentences). Picking on the Gateway building (no doubt recklessly raking old wounds and thoughtlessly scorning the hard work of scores of sincere people to get a long-standing eyesore corner developed), Gadfly whined, “where was history when that building was decided on [couldn't figure out how not to end with a preposition], where was the Capra-esque quality then.” Verbally embracing a fellow gadfly's

plaintive rhetorical question in the *Morning Call*: “What does this building have to do with Bethlehem?”

In full crescendo mode, Gadfly suggested standing in front of Lehigh Pizza looking south across the street at two older buildings probably from the era embraced by our historical code rubbing shoulders with the new big one that seems to have poked its head through the historical code. “History was not at the table when that building was designed,” the Gadfly solemnly intoned.*





By this time fully adrift in a gadfly high, the minutes record that the Gadfly “mentioned the idea of adding a 30-second vignette on the history of Bethlehem beginning every Council Meeting. Maybe young kids or teachers could get a bright student to come every meeting like a Minister or Pastor does and give us 30 seconds of history just to remind us of much of what we value in our town.”

O, god. What was Gadfly thinking? Ideas are like babies. They cry and clamor. They must be paid attention to (damn preposition again). Gadfly will talk in a later post of how this idea-baby has grown.

**Gadfly does, of course, have no architectural creds, but he would like to come back and discuss these comparison pictures at a later time.*