

# Bethlehem Moments: A Proposal

## (6)

The Bethlehem Gadfly Bethlehem Moments, Fun Stuff, Gadfly's posts October 19, 2018

*(6th in a series of posts about Bethlehem Moments)*

Ok, Ok, Gadfly has to explain himself. He promised the “inaugural Bethlehem Moment” would be last Tuesday’s Council meeting.

Some of you were watching, waiting.

Have mercy.

You saw Gadfly sweating out those 7 “Exhibits” supporting his rather negative view of the Bethlehem Parking Authority. I mean, it’s obvious (right?) that Gadfly just doesn’t toss off (right?) those tightly argued (right?) and finely crafted (right?) mini-essays .

And he had the runs all Tuesday anticipating the parking issue at the Council meeting.

So Gadfly didn’t have time to pull together a “Moment.”

But we’ll do it next time: Wednesday, Nov. 7. A Wednesday because of elections on the regularly scheduled Tuesday.

And granddaughter Riley, apprentice Gadfly, will do the reading (*wave hello to the good Gadfly followers, Riley!*) so Gadfly can use his public comment time for something to scorch in his usual fashion.

But I said last time that there was “*One more thing to chew on.*”

In bits and pieces over the last several posts on this theme, I have actually been writing a proposal to Council for incorporation of a “Bethlehem Moment” into the opening meeting ritual. There is one piece left: the content and purpose.

What should the moments be about and why?

Let’s just talk about that.

Look at Peter’s tough comment on my #2 post. And look at Barbara’s #4 post. Not everybody agrees that even opening with a prayer and the pledge is a good thing.

And I do believe that I have used the active verb “celebrate” to describe the “Moments” — that we would *celebrate* Bethlehem history.

I may need to put an asterisk wherever I may have used that verb.

If I know anything about history from my professional life, I know it is controversial, in fact, should be controversial. Once again, note that my last major project was called “[History on Trial.](#)” If I have done anything

of value in my professional life, I have encouraged, demanded critiquing history.

Open up any one of those projects, and take a look. For instance, go to the “[episodes](#)” page of the [Jefferson-Hemings Controversy](#). A profoundly meaningful issue in our history brilliantly represented recently in this painting by Titus Kaphar entitled “[Behind the Myth of Benevolence](#).”

Browse down the chapter headings. Note the wonderful images done by one of my students — click in and get them in larger size.

We must celebrate the good, the great things in our history.

But I do not believe in mindless, thoughtless allegiance and patriotism. I do not believe in history as a collection of pious genuflections.

We must also “celebrate” the darker moments in our history.

They are formative too.

If history doesn’t make you think, it is not doing its job.

So I see the “Moments” as varied in content (as varied as the nature of the possible Momentors” I outlined last time) but unified in purpose: to help us know where we came from, where we are, and where we might be heading.

That’s the way I see this project.

So let me try out a few so you can see what you think. And what suggestions you have.

One thing: Ha! I’m finding 30-seconds is tough!