

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL
For Candidates for City Council Vacancy
Seat of Eric R. Evans – Resignation Effective February 4, 2018
Vacancy to be Filled from March 6, 2018 to January 6, 2020

January 28

1. What uniquely qualifies you to serve on Bethlehem City Council? While I would hope anyone running for City Council would share my love of the city of Bethlehem and my desire to help make a healthy and fiscally strong city, what distinctly qualifies me is my expertise and experience in multiple areas relevant to the challenges faced by Bethlehem in 2018. As a family, we chose Bethlehem to live, out of all the many areas in the Valley, because we fell in love with it. It represents the perfect mix to us of grace and funk, of a healthy, economically, culturally diverse small city. Bethlehem's urban core is a nationally recognized treasure; Forbes/Milken Institute of best Cities for Successful Aging ranked it as one of the top 25 of the nation, and the Moravian Historic district is in the final stages of applying for designation as UNESCO World Heritage site. Bethlehem's history is an iconic American story, with the loss of Bethlehem Steel and transformation of brownfields into a cultural center. It is a city whose transformation and challenges in re-inventing itself continue, with much success behind it and significant potential yet to come.

I want to be a positive influence in this unfolding story. My career as an urban planner prior to going to medical school was at its basis about creating livable, equitable cities, and understanding what makes a city resilient and a joyful experience for its people and visitors. I was a project manager responsible for low-income infill housing for the City of New York, and I learned one of the basic facts of growing a city- listen to the people first. I took my project out to community boards and listened. I took my projects to city planning, city council, and I listened. I learned to collaborate and compromise, and how to get things done in a big bureaucracy. My love of city life, and of working to making them thriving communities and places led me to complete a Masters in Urban Planning at NYU, and then to gain experience at Moody's Investors Service in New York as a municipal bond analyst, which gave me a strong understanding of how to keep city's finances sustainable and vigorous. My care and concern for the health of people in the places I love eventually led me to medical school and to building a career as a hospitalist. I started my own company here in the Lehigh Valley, now in our 6th year, which cares for our region's frail elderly in nursing homes. My practice partner and I have grown that company; we now employ 21 people and work in 20 nursing homes, caring for over 2000 patients. I have learned how to work with nursing homes administrators, hospital networks (I am on staff at 4 hospital networks in the region) and have built a company that performs to the highest standards in one of the most challenging environments, knitting together opposing interests in order to make the best quality life for our patients. I think this experience has helped me develop skills that will translate well to city council, where there are no easy answers and many opposing viewpoints that have to be balanced and negotiated among.

My campaign to run for city council this last fall was motivated by the passion I feel for about Bethlehem, and the enormous amount of hard work in canvassing, speaking with citizens about their lives and concerns, was worth it to me; I got to know the citizens, as you know, in a way that only getting out there one knocking on doors can do. I have some great ideas and abundant energy and I would like to work with you in helping Bethlehem maintain its identity while building on its strengths.

2. If this were a campaign for City Council, list the top three (3) priorities of your campaign platform. 1) Economic development. There is no question that development is coming to our region and our city. Bethlehem is expected to gain 10,000 residents in the next 10 years. The construction of retirement communities is already underway. Yet the emergence of regional warehousing as another viable economic engine for the valley raises serious environmental and quality of life challenges. The direction in which we guide development in Bethlehem now will have an enormous impact on the future of this city. We must be a city who is willing to say 'yes' but also be very clear about our defining targets and goals and holding ourselves accountable to meeting them. We need more people with disposable incomes living within walking distance of our two downtowns. We desire economic development as it is a healthy way to increase our tax base, offsetting financial obligations incurred as a city, especially a former steel town, ages. 2) A walkable city makes for a thriving community; creating a walkable city means investing in the street-level human experiences, in sidewalks and lighting; ; on a city level, it would be significantly advanced by building out a development plan which creates a walkable route, from Illicks Mill and Memorial pool, down through Burnside plantation, along a safe and environmentally sound Monocacy Way Trail through Johnston Park to the Industrial Quarter, up through Main Street to city hall, down potential city hall steps, across a pedestrian bridge to the southside shopping and arts district, over to Arts Quest and the Sands- this would be a walkable city. Connecting this walkable 'second city' , which has been mentioned in the bridge project, free from traffic, with the D and H canal path, and the Greenway, and then hooking up to the Rail to Trail system in Hellertown is a vision that can be planned and reached through public private partnerships and grants from organizations such as America Walks. We also need to encourage small, walkable grocery stores such as C-town throughout our neighborhoods, partly by zoning for them, and also by fostering their growth through improving the ease of city permitting processes. 3) Increasing citizen engagement with City Hall. There are many ways to increase citizens engagement with City Hall. With the use of social media, we can send out meeting agendas to the citizens, in ways that make them feel more accessible. We can film our public meetings, live-stream them, and archive them for citizens to watch when they desire. We can use twitter and facebook and instagram to encourage citizen participation. We can have issue based public workshops (See Bethlehem NY public workshop in answer #14) . We can host listening town halls a few times a year in different parts of the city. We can show in many different ways that City Hall wants and needs public input and feedback. Please see the answer to #6 and #8 as well, which explains how one community in Kansas engaged the citizens in its budget problems by having citizens help find the answers to hard questions, which circumvented the normal pattern of citizens getting mad at City Council for making the hard decisions. These and other contemporary forms of governance have advantages that maintain a commitment to an engaged citizenry, which is the bedrock of a strong and modern city.
3. As several development projects are considered in the City, do you feel that Bethlehem can honor its architectural history while simultaneously promoting economic growth and business? Bethlehem MUST honor its architectural history. Our historical charm and experience are unique in the state, and are one of the major reasons people relocate here, visit here and retire here. While the competing forces of development and preservation are strong, the right balance has been achieved in other historic cities, and obviously many of the pieces have been put in place to make it work in Bethlehem. There are many models, such as Savannah, Georgia, where I spent my youth, and Chattanooga Tennessee; both have charted a path to development through the maintenance of particular cultural and architectural

identities that are unique to each. The pendulum swings heavily both ways. If a city says “no” to often, it will scare investors away, and keep them away. However, a pattern of wholesale approvals, without input or guidance from city leaders, will create a city devoid of character and charm, not to mention, of lost economic opportunity. I believe that augmenting the existing comprehensive city development plan, with targeted areas prioritized for development, will help make this process cohesive, and in itself provide ballast for investors to have faith that development is desired, and nurtured in Bethlehem. It needs to be easily and widely available to the citizens. It’s a plan that the public will refer to and believe in, with terms that allow them to relate to City Hall’s decision-making. Business people as well want a predictable business climate, with a plan that shows there is a commitment to building both a community that can thrive as well as a plan the City will clearly follow. A city development plan that provides a path towards reuniting the south side with the north side and pulling West Bethlehem into economic growth will help not only to attract investors, but also to provide a viable path to economic stability through increased tourism and residential growth, as well as investment in the City’s core urban neighborhoods.

4. Do you feel that transportation is an important issue for the City of Bethlehem, and if so, how do you envision the City better meeting its transportation needs in the future? The Lehigh Valley currently has an “F” from the American Lung Association for air quality. This is not surprising, given EPA’s documentation of the history of air quality noncompliance in the Lehigh Valley. See the data for Northampton County at this website: https://www3.epa.gov/airquality/greenbook/anayo_pa.html . Transportation is inherently related to air quality and we cannot address one without impacting the other. Transportation, and especially public transportation, is a significant quality of life indicator as well. We must make public transportation something people WANT to use. The best incentives for using public transportation are incentives that make it easy and free; easily said. In some cities, public transportation has been encouraged by creating a “circulator” bus that is painted in bright colors, and goes on a fixed loop, providing transportation that is free or very low cost, easy to use by tourists, our elderly, students, and other citizens on a regular schedule. The circulator in Bethesda, Maryland <https://www.bethesda.org/bethesda/bethesda-circulator> is subsidized through an innovative public-private partnership called Bethesda Urban Partnership, which could be done through our Chamber of Commerce. Solutions like this help to knit together the separate areas of a city, making transit not only quick and easy, but fun. Businesses contribute to the subsidy via the Chamber, as it brings additional customers who now have the whole city at their doorstep. It’s easily used by tourists, is a rolling advertisement for Bethlehem, and improves traffic flow. I don’t know if this would work in Bethlehem, but would love to work on creating this kind of public-private partnership that enables experimenting with such solutions to find one that does work.

Another important issue in addressing transportation in Bethlehem: ensure that public transportation is accessible to areas where affordable housing exists, and where we would like it to be built. Zoning must work with public transportation and vice-versa. We should not be encouraging affordable housing off the beaten track but in places easily reached by public transit. Finally, the age of electric cars is already here. We have a paucity of places where these cars can charge, which inhibits people from making smart choices in purchasing pollution-free vehicles. I hope Bethlehem could take part in a efforts to develop comprehensive transportation plans for the valley; investing in charging stations while at the same time investing in our municipal bus system, including innovations such as incentives to encourage bus use on days with

poor air quality would provide equity in how we address our transportation challenges immediately and set targets for the future.

5. Several Members of City Council have stated it is their preference to select someone who will not seek election next year. If selected for this Council position, would you run for a seat on City Council in the Primary election this spring? Yes X ; No . You may provide additional comments, if any. I believe that the best person available for the job, who has the skills and talents for the opening, should be chosen. I am ready to start working for Bethlehem now. I don't think having an interim person appointed, who can be seen as a placeholder because they do not have an interest in or capacity to run, rather than as part of a cohesive and forward-thinking team, is in the best interests of the citizens of Bethlehem. I don't see this as a coat that you try on for two years to see if it fits. It is a deep and serious commitment. I also believe that the 2 years this appointment will last will give me, if I am chosen, a record on which the voters can decide, good or bad, if they want another 2 years. The record itself, especially when there are tough choices to be made, is not always an inherent advantage. Essentially, I think the reasons to appoint me are: experience, demonstrated public support and vision. The strengths I bring to City Council far outweigh any concerns of inequity.

6. What is one issue you believe Bethlehem is currently not properly addressing and if on City Council how would you help in this area? Public engagement with City Hall. Right now, I think many residents of the city have lost touch with their local government. The outrage over our national politics has not trickled down into an equal surge of interest in our municipal deliberations. I think that can change with thoughtful use of social media. Facebook, twitter, instagram and redeveloped city web interfaces can pull our citizens back into the nuts and bolts of municipal government. We should be filming our public meetings live-streaming and posting them for citizens who can't physically make it down to the rotunda to participate in the process. We should be publicizing city council agenda on social media in timely and regular fashion so citizens can understand what is being voted on, and why. There are lots of examples out there how other cities and towns have started a dialogue with the taxpayers and voters around targeted development, use of tax dollars, and creating walkable, livable cities. I would even recommend that the responses to these appointment questions should be published on-line, so that citizens can see the merits of each candidate and Council's subsequent votes on them. Transparency will improve confidence, and with confidence of the citizens, the foundation of our local government improves even more; it becomes rock-solid.

7. What do you think about the idea of a pedestrian bridge over the Lehigh River, and what are your thoughts for potential funding sources? I am in full support of a pedestrian bridge over the Lehigh. It will bring clear benefits to our citizens, and be a draw for retirees and millennials to relocate here near the urban core. It will serve as a strong tourist attraction and a significant improvement in our City's walkability, which is a major quality of life enhancement for all citizens. The strong work done by the Sierra Club, Lehigh University architecture students and the Southside Initiative (in collaboration with some in City Hall) has resulted in a project that is ready to move into its feasibility stage. The project must now raise \$40k to match city funds in order to do a study that will determine if this project is possibility, given physical challenges such as the width of the Lehigh River, as well as the railroads which must be surmounted. In terms of funding, Penn DOT has funds in their Alternative Transportation Funding Program, which just built a pedestrian bridge in Jim Thorpe. Greenville South Carolina recently completed a pedestrian bridge project; the funding for this pedestrian bridge came from US DOT TIGER

(Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) with a budget of \$16.7 million for the project. US DOT TIGER funds were given \$500 million in 2017 for projects just like the Lehigh Pedestrian Bridge project, projects costing between \$5 million and \$25 million. Charleston South Carolina City Council recently approved funding for an \$18 million pedestrian bridge through a match of city (\$3 million) state and federal funds. The funds are out there; we must go after them before they evaporate in our current climate-change denying national administration. The last option, more difficult but also something that is valuable to discuss, would be to float bonds to pay for part, or all, of the bridge. This is a discussion that should take place large in the public sphere, for the citizens to help decide if this is an acceptable use of the city's leverage.

8. What can be done to encourage more constituent participation in local Government, particularly in the budget process? The town of Hays, Kansas did this by giving a short presentation about some challenging decisions its government was facing as a way to pull the citizens into the process. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/53dd6676e4b0fedfbc26ea91/t/572b740301dbae6fbf18fd03/1462465559339/A+stronger+Hays.pdf> While the issues facing Bethlehem are different than a small town in Kansas, I thought it was a great way to get a conversation started. It allows taxpayers to understand that balancing the City's books is not unlike balancing their own household finances, and that there are really difficult choices to be made. Sell the golf course or invest and renovate it? How many streets do we need to replace each year, and how many tax dollars do we have to do it? How much does it cost to finance our pensions? Why is it important that our bond rating is now A+ and how do we keep it high? All of these are issues for which the web/social media can be used to engage citizens. We can start to simply and directly explain and engage the voters. Dramatically enhancing access to and completeness of minutes and the documents relevant to decisions, tracking follow-up actions on resolutions, and other records of Council Committee and Commission proceedings, are ways to support transparency. See the example set by the city of Riverside CA: <https://riversideca.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>. We can create clear, accessible documents that explain the City's decision process to citizens, like this Venn diagram from Austin Texas City Council: http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Communications/Web_Content/2015/Draft_Ordinance_and_Resolution_Flowchart.pdf. The more the citizens understand the process, the greater their participation will be.
9. What should be done with our golf course? The Bethlehem Municipal Golf Course has, as you know, been running a deficit since 2008. While the average deficit is not incapacitating for a 74 million dollar operating budget, it continues to deteriorate and loses its inherent value through lack of past capital investment. A plan should be created which allows for needed capital investment in paths, sand traps, turf maintenance and equipment. There are 5 options: 1) Do nothing, which I think is viable for at most a year while additional data on the course is obtained. 2) Sell it, which to me is not a viable option as it belongs to the citizens, and it would likely quickly be privatized with unaffordable fees or plowed under for some other use. 3) Lease it, which I think is likely the best option as it would allow capital investment from the lessee, but also allow the City to maintain some control over its future; although the inherent long-term nature of these leases negates some of that control. 4) Find a golf course maintenance operator, which is less viable as it would leave the capital investments required as the City's obligation. 5) Start a 5013c corporation, as the city of Baltimore did with its municipal courses. This was effective as it allowed creative strategic financing through loans for capital expenditures and better control over employees and wages. However, I don't think the scale of Baltimore's

operations (5 courses and 120 employees) translates well to an operation of 27 holes and 9 employees. Ideally it would sustain itself, but it has not been able to run without a deficit, so I feel leasing is the best option.

10. What are your thoughts for the long term best solution for the pools in the City? The City's pools are of unquestionable benefit for the citizens of Bethlehem. They provide exercise, structure and significant quality of life improvement for citizens, particularly in under-resourced areas of the city. The costs of maintaining pools is significant, and any program that allows pools to operate in the future must include both operation and maintenance costs, which can be considerable. I support the finding in the Monocacy Park Master Plan , which advocates for a central destination-type pool at Memorial pool, with other well-used satellite pools as part of the City's pools plan. Maintenance of this more involved pool will need to be closely scrutinized. I support the conversion of some of the less-well utilized pools into splash pads. I would also advocate that children who attend public school be part of a summer-pools promotion program, offering deeply discounted family memberships for kids who attend our public schools, ensuring that even the most disadvantaged children in our neighborhoods have access to this major quality of life benefit. The only reservation I have about the current plan is the difficulty in children biking to Memorial Pool instead of their more familiar and closer community pools. This problem could be addressed through investments in paths, signs and street crossings that would make accessing Memorial pool on a bike a fun and safe journey. The investments in the paths would inherently contribute to Bethlehem's walkability as well.
11. Within the next several years, the Parking Authority will need to replace the Walnut Street garage. How do you think the Authority and the City should plan for the financial and business impact of the construction of a new garage? The replacement of the Walnut Street garage represents an opportunity for thoughtful reuse of the property. In the decades since the construction of the garage, it is now possible to afford and implement technological advancements that make citizen parking easier and more efficient. It also means that the garage may not need to be so big as less people who live in urban centers own cars, and ride services fill in transportation needs. It is likely that the city can innovate on the replacement, building a garage that has a smaller footprint but can handle almost the same amount of cars (if needed) by digging down (bedrock issues notwithstanding) and then reusing the remaining land to bring needed residential development to downtown. Creative financing for the new building can offset obligations incurred in the construction of the replacement garage. However, the loss of such a well utilized garage even temporary, will have significant impacts on a downtown that can't afford to lose any business. I suggest making parking in alternative lots free during the construction period. The City can lease lots down off West Union Blvd and York Street and other satellite operations, with free shuttles to Main Street. I would also explore acquisition and demolition of the poorly used Bethlehem Plaza Mall in conjunction with redevelopment of the Walnut Street garage. It could be used as temporary parking and then reimagined as a City Market or public open space, depending on city finances.
12. One of City Council's most important functions is to pass the yearly budget for Bethlehem. What ideas would you bring to City Council that involve the area of finances? This is a complicated question. I have spent time looking at past city budgets to get an idea of the challenges, including the decision by the Sands to withhold the Host fees last spring. I think the best suggestion I have at this stage is to pay attention. Read the budget. Do your homework. Learn from others who may know more about the City's finances. Respect the people who work for City Hall. I

previously worked as a municipal bond analyst for Moody's Investors Services. I have a strong understanding of general funds, operating funds and expenditures. There is never enough money. Being a leader on Council means being able to make tough decisions, like voting for leasing out the golf course, or closing city pools, or increasing real estate taxes by 2.2%, that are in the best long-term interests of the City but can cause real short-term pain. It means understanding why a healthy bond rating in terms of debt financing is so important to our City. It means being able to have the courage to vote for spending tax dollars on future projects that will enhance our total tax base, but may not pay off for a number of years. It means understanding that incremental tax increases enacted by City Hall have serious painful consequences on many of Bethlehem's citizens, forcing them out of homeownership or deferring needed investments in their homes. As a physician I have a strong understanding of health insurance and the enormity of payments incurred by the City in covering the cost of health insurance for its workers, and how a benefit like good health insurance helps keep our workers invested in a career with the City, and attracts skilled new workers. It means understanding pension obligations, and the costs of honoring those promises. I think one of the best ideas I have is to increase involvement of the citizens of Bethlehem in the discussion around City finances, as they did in Hays, Kansas. What are wise investments for a city to make? Based on our own data, and that of other cities, where are short term cash infusion practices actually warranted and where do they spell financial catastrophe? As you know, being on City Council requires lots of time and reading and dedication to the topic at hand. There are no shortcuts.

13. Making decisions on City Council often involves seeking compromises that balance the individual self-interests of multiple groups of people. How do you feel you can contribute to the culture of compromise that is necessary to a functioning legislative branch of government? I learned the value of compromise first through my experience when I worked for the Boston Redevelopment Authority. The big dig, inclusionary zoning and the intricacies of negotiating in Boston City Hall was a strong education in getting things done in a highly partisan atmosphere. Then as a project manager for the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development, I took my projects out to community boards, city planners and other branches of Government. Listening and making compromises were the only way to get things done. More recently, with my medical practice, I learned how to work in a highly administrative atmosphere, with multiple competing interests that are not aligned. I had to find common ground with nursing home administrators, hospital networks and government regulators. Nursing homes are hard places to work, and to live. There is no one right way to do things, but if you show faith and trust in people's motives and really listen, you find that most disagreements are really about knowledge, rather than motives, and with the right set of common data you can find common ground, and build on that. The experiences I have had in my 17 year career as a physician, interacting with patients and their families, is that it is not important in these relationships to be correct, but it is important to work together towards a common goal; this only works if patients and their families trust you, and know you are working towards what is best for the patient, not the doctor or the hospital or nursing home. I have been very successful with my practice, obtaining sustainable, measurable success in rehospitalization rates, patient satisfaction and nursing home satisfaction. Most important of all, my patients and their families trust me to make

decisions that will help them live better lives. All of this was accomplished through listening, keeping an open mind, and being willing to compromise.

14. 2017 saw City Council create several new initiatives relating to municipal climate action, neighborhood investment, open data and efficient city government. How do you feel you can participate in and add to these initiatives? I have been following Bethlehem 2017 since its introduction and I have seen the steady, and considerable, work being put into these initiatives. The EAC has been a success in citizen engagement with our particular challenges in Bethlehem in terms of actual targets and realistic financing for reduction activities. LERTA was adopted this year, and I think it has begun to help a community that has been fraying along some edges, and challenged by the predominance of landlord-owned buildings. The FAIR ordinance will help the city decide if tax incentive programs are actually working, and if they drive return on the investment. Data should inform our decisions. Open data is one of the platforms I campaigned upon, and I fully support the decision to allow our City's data, combined with data from other institutions in our City to help with decision-making. I have experience in city planning, municipal finance and as a small business owner, I would be eager to help continue to bring these major efforts to fruition. In both my previous career as a city planner and now as a small business owner and physician, I must be able to obtain new data, analyze it for relevance and accuracy, and incorporate it in a flexible and realistic fashion into the realities of day to day needs. This is easier with the advent of electronic data. For example, the town of Bethlehem, NY has done an outstanding job with their open space planning, engaging the citizens in dialogue and vision, and sharing the data online. Here's the link <https://www.townofbethlehem.org/Calendar/Home/SingleEvent?eventID=2318>. and a link to a great land-use map within the plan. <http://www.townofbethlehem.org/DocumentCenter/View/10844>. I'm practiced in taking success stories from other issues/communities and applying them to needs we have here. My medical practice was one of the first in Eastern Pennsylvania to pilot a new Medicare Program called *Chronic Care Management* in nursing homes. It has allowed me to hire 6 new employees, increase quality of life for our residents, deeply improve communications between my team, specialists and hospitals, all relying on innovative technology and what could be learned from success stories in other places. I'm not afraid to try something new if it makes sense, using data to support the decisions. This is a skill set that meshes well with the open-minded planning and vision behind the initiatives mentioned above. I would like to help City Council make Bethlehem the city that is envisioned in the strong work already underway.