

Bob Mollette

3rd Ward Councilman

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Kevin Johnson, kevin@theemporiums.com
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Re: Redeveloping Downtown Portsmouth – Revisited 11/17/05

Kevin,

I read your thought provoking article referenced above and posted on the RiverCities eZine website, which included responses from Jeff Barron, Carl Daehler, Chip Maillet, and Craig Gilliland. I noticed in the article there may be some concern or questions regarding my position on the Marting Building. So, in an effort to expand the information and understanding between all parties I would like to take this time to clarify my position.

I appreciate the time and effort you spend making Portsmouth a better place to live and work by getting involved because actions do speak louder than words and communication is a must. You continue to demonstrate a “*can do*” attitude, which I admire and I would hope to be contagious.

I am seeking to understand why the City lacks a *program* to assist small businesses through the navigational processes required to secure permits, licenses, and fees that might give our City an edge in a very competitive retail market. If any assistance is needed to accomplish an objective in the retail market for our community I would be very interested in discussing these goals and ideas with you.

I appreciate Jeff Barron’s continued attendance at City Council Meetings every 2nd and 4th Monday of each month at 6:00pm at the City Building. Although, I do not always agree with the Portsmouth Daily Times coverage of the issues, I welcome his participation. The City has many challenges ahead and communication is essential. Relevant information and complete communication is critical to making good decisions. You have to do your homework to be prepared. I believe there is a lack of available information surrounding many of the issues in Portsmouth and I will continue to better organize my website (www.mollette.info) to educate and encourage all to participate in moving Portsmouth ahead with the support of all.

I want to thank all the media involved; Chris Blume @ Scioto Voice, Mike Deaterla @ Community Common, Mistie Cook @ WNXT, and a special thanks to Lorenzo Bentley at WPAY for his efforts broadcasting the City Council Meetings on 1400 AM. This service provides for those citizens unable to attend Regular City Council Meetings the opportunity to be informed. I am also encouraging and working towards the broadcast of Scheduled Public Meetings on the government channel, supplied by Adelphia, to enlighten and communicate with the public.

I share similar views with Carl Daehler concerning our old/historic structures. Just recently Carl and I discussed our concerns over the demolition of the charismatic architecture of the Portsmouth High School. Carl stated in your article *"we need our local and state government to help with the development and revitalization of our downtown livable and work spaces such as loft apartments and studios for our growing digital and graphic arts degree programs at SSU."* I am interested in discussing this issue further and to recognize how our local government would be involved.

I will address Chip Maillet's concern with my position on the Marting Building by first stating that I am interested in exploring different views and options for the building. The City does own the building and is a liability setting empty. I believe the purchase of the building involved criminal acts by some and negligent actions by others who lost their objectivity. The lack of accountability of Public Officials has continued to spin the issue. The lack of planning with current Council members and the community, and imposing a tax solely on the property owners has continued the conflict. I am not for or against the renovation of the Marting Building....I require a plan and justification.....Council needs to do their homework. I ask that the final decision on the building be critically evaluated considering various options and gaining the support of the voters. I will make myself available to discuss this issue with Chip Maillet and members of the Portsmouth Area Chamber of Commerce and Retail Merchants. Keep in my mind; I am motivated by a *plan* consisting of relevant facts and pertinent information.

I applaud Craig Gilliland's dedication and involvement to continue to *"fight the fight"* to make Portsmouth a better place to live and raise a family. I recently updated my website to include a similar commitment to our community, *"I am committed to improving the quality of life in the City of Portsmouth by strengthening our neighborhoods, delivering superior services, embracing the diversity of our citizens, and making Portsmouth a desirable, safe City in which to live, work, raise a family, shop, study, play, and grow old."*

With that being said, I wish to express my disagreement with Craig's comment on the issue, in the past, bigger department stores were not interested in the Marting Building. I am aware of at least one developer representing Elder Beerman Department Stores who made an offer to purchase the building, inventory, and to maintain jobs in our area, but this offer was refused by the Marting Brothers stockholder. I believe, the building would make a better retail business than City office space, but again, I have asked and as of yet not received any pertinent information for making a responsible decision.

I agree, Portsmouth suffers from a lack of manufacturing jobs just like the rest of the United States. I feel this is due to deplorable federal government policies concerning outsourcing and trade agreements. The City must develop a *plan* to utilize our limited resources to fulfill the community commitment previously stated and we, as a community, must continue to strive to attract good paying jobs to our area.

Thanks for your time and please feel free to contact me should you have any questions or comments.

Respectfully,



Bob Mollette, 3rd Ward Council, mollette@adelphia.net

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cc: Jeff Barron, Portsmouth Daily Times, [in care of editor@portsmouth-dailytimes.com](mailto:in_care_of_editor@portsmouth-dailytimes.com)
Carl Daehler, Southern Ohio Performing Arts Association, cdaehler@shawnee.edu
Chip Maillet, WIOI-AM Radio, chip@wioiradio.com
Craig Gilliland, Southern Ohio Medical Center
Chris Blume, Scioto Voice, info@thesciotovoice.com
Mike Deaterla, Community Common
Mistie Cook, WNXT
Jim Kalb, Mayor, portsmouthmayor@yahoo.com
Jo Ann Aeh, City Clerk (Record)
Council (5)