

Bob Mollette

3rd Ward Councilman

1705 Franklin Blvd.
Portsmouth, Ohio 45662

Phone: 740-353-0099
email: mollette@mollette.info
website: www.mollette.info

Correspondence#: 08-021

May 23, 2008

Jim Kalb, Mayor
728 Second Street
Portsmouth, Ohio 45662

Re: Reported Traffic Safety Concerns within Residential Districts

The purpose of this letter, along with those referenced below, is to document previously reported traffic safety concerns expressed by your 3rd Ward residents in an effort to encourage a paradigm shift and solution. The information below was collected and listed sequentially for your convenience. The streets referenced within the residential districts are Lincoln Street from Robinson Avenue to Grant Street, 1600 Block of Grant Street, Franklin Boulevard from Kinneys Lane to 17th Street, Hutchins Avenue from Kinneys Lane to 19th Street, Kinney's Lane from Offnere Street to Baird Avenue, North Hill Road, Coles Boulevard, and Sherman Road.

- On September 25, 2004, while campaigning for 3rd Ward Council representative, residents expressed frustration with the apathy demonstrated by the City to enforce traffic safety laws in their residential districts. I forwarded those concerns October 13, 2004 via letter to the Traffic Committee (Portsmouth Police Department Ms. Ramey) for resolution at their next meeting (October 19, 2004). The streets reported with motorist traveling above the 25 mph speed limit were Kinney's Lane, North Hill Road, Bihlman Drive, and Thomas Avenue from 17th Street. It was suggested possible solutions may be police enforcement, physical calming devices, and a portable radar speed display. *[Constituents Listed]*
- On May 1, 2005, residents of Forrest Heights Subdivision expressed a safety concern attempting access on Coles Boulevard at Forrest Drive because of the increased traffic due to construction and elevated speed of vehicles (estimated 50 to 55 mph instead of 25) combined with Gilbert Avenue traffic light malfunctioning. I reported the above problems with a phone call to the Public Service Department and Police Department. *[Constituents Listed - Phone Call]*
- On August 11, 2005, I documented safety concerns from Sherman Road residents to the Traffic Committee. It expressed a concern over the lack of traffic speed enforcement in a residential district with children and suggested a four-way stop at the intersection of 28th Street and Sherman Road. *[Constituents Listed]*
- On November 10, 2005, residents on Hutchins Avenue reported a safety concern due to vehicles exceeding the speed limits of 25 mph during the morning and afternoon work hours. I prepared letter #05-012 dated November 14, 2005 to report safety issue to the Mayor. *[Constituent Listed]*
- On December 6, 2005, I prepared follow-up letter #05-017 to document a request to the Mayor for any citations or surveillances performed on Hutchins Avenue after the Mayor's November 28, 2005 letter stating the Police Department are aware of the concern. *[Constituents Listed]*

- On January 25, 2006, I prepared another follow-up letter #**06-005** and requested a list from the Mayor of any actions or observations concerning persons violating speed limits since November 2005. *[Requested Update of Actions Taken]*
- On January 31, 2006, I prepared letter #**06-010** to the Mayor to request your review of my correspondence #06-005 and update with any pertinent information or actions taken to resolve. *[Requested Update of Actions Taken]*
- On April 10, 2006, I prepared letter #**06-029** to the Mayor to request consideration to install a four-way stop on Franklin Boulevard. A petition was submitted by young requestors within the neighborhood to resolve a safety concern with vehicles traveling above the 25 mph speed limit. It was agreed at the May 9, 2006 Traffic Committee Meeting to discuss the issue in 90 days and alert the patrol to pay particular attention to speed in this area. *[Constituents Listed]*
- On May 1, 2006, I prepared letter #**06-038** to the Mayor to request consideration for the purchase of a shared mobile radar speed limit board within the 2006 Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which was also requested within the 2005 CIP, to assist speed limit enforcement in residential districts and street maintenance work. *[Proposed 2006 CIP Budget Suggestions]*
- On May 16, 2006, I prepared letter #**06-040** to the Mayor to report vehicles routinely exceeding the speed limits on Lincoln Street (between Robinson Avenue and Grant Street) and the 1600 Block of Grant Street. It was reported that traffic routinely exceed the speed limit between the hours of 4:00 pm and 8:00 pm which jeopardizes the safety of our youth within this residential area. I requested enforcement of the City's traffic speed limit. *[Constituents Not Listed]*
- On June 1, 2006, I prepared letter #**06-044** to the Mayor suggesting the way to solve the problem is seek to understand, educate, identify solutions, and move forward with a plan. I suggested the Traffic Committee be involved since it is chaired by the Police Department and includes public representatives. I suggested the following options:
 - Traffic Enforcement Unit – representatives who identify long –term solutions for traffic safety through enforcement, community meetings and communication efforts.
 - Efforts to reduce speeding and promote traffic safety through education with custom-designed signs posted in neighborhoods, similar to Dublin, Ohio, reminding drivers there is “No Need to Speed.”
 - Neighborhood Speed Watch Program allows residents and volunteers, upon completion of training, to borrow radar equipment to use in their neighborhoods. Reminder notices regarding speed limits are sent to motorists identified as violators. The notices are not citations, but reminders to obey the posted speed limit and the community's concern for safety. Allows community involvement.
 - Speed Display Board (portable) may be posted alerting motorists of excessive speed.
 - Speed Limit Signs posted in residential districts to remind motorists of 25 mph area.
 These options and others may be considered but the City must take action and start enforcing our traffic laws within our residential districts. Many residents have requested physical traffic calming devices, such as four-way stops, because it appears to be the only solution when enforcement is not available. If the problem is enforcement then how can it be solved?
[Requested Update of Actions Taken and Suggestions for Improvement]
- On June 6, 2006, I followed up with a resident on North Hill Road to discuss vehicles exceeding the 25 mph speed limit; no noticeable enforcement to date. *[Update from Constituent]*

- On January 17, 2007, residents of Sherman Road expressed safety concern with access to Coles Boulevard because vehicles are exceeding the speed limit and the traffic light at Gilbert Avenue is not functioning properly. I prepared letter #07-002 to the Mayor dated January 22, 2007 to document various concerns expressed by constituents that request safe vehicular access to Coles Boulevard at the intersections with Forrest Avenue, Sherman Road, and Gilbert Avenue. *[Constituents Not Listed]*
- On February 12, 2007, I prepared letter #07-022 to Council members to suggest proposed 2007 goals for consideration by City Council. I suggested establishment of a citizen group to brainstorm solutions for problems associated with crime and drugs and provide support to the Police Department. I also suggested utilizing citizens with radar devices, issuing friendly reminders, and radar speed display boards. *[Suggestions for Improvements]*
- On October 9, 2007, resident of Sherman Road attended the Traffic Committee Meeting to express a safety concern with 300 to 350 cars a day speeding on this street and suggested speed limit signs. The Police Department stated officers will be requested to pay attention to this area for speeding. *[Constituent Listed in Minutes]*
- At the February 25, 2008 City Council Meeting a resident of North Hill Road “referred to a petition dated 9/11/03 that was presented to the Traffic Committee with regard to speeding on North Hill Road. He claimed there to be no patrolmen in that area and reported there to have some near fatalities because of the speeding. He suggested 25 mph signs be erected, saying motorists are traveling between 50 and 55 mph on the street, especially in the morning and in the evening when they are going home to or coming from work.” Another resident “reported a problem on Sherman Road with speeders.” “He said the four-way stop helped a little but there is still a need to slow down the traffic.” *[Constituent Listed in Minutes]*
- On April 30, 2008, I prepared letter #08-016 to the Mayor to request a description (Item #9) of the proposed 2008 CIP budget for Laser (Speed Enforcement). I requested consideration for the use of portable speed display board to assist enforcement of traffic safety in residential areas and street maintenance crews as needed. *[Proposed 2008 CIP Budget Suggestions]*
- On May 12, 2008, while evaluating a proposed 2008 Capital Improvement Project related to Hutchins Avenue, a resident expressed a safety concern with vehicles that routinely exceed the 25 mph speed limit by 50 mph to 55 mph on Hutchins Avenue. The resident suggested the possibility of implementing the auxiliary patrol or possible digital speed display with a camera similar to traffic lights. *[Constituent Not Listed in Council Discussion]*

At the May 12, 2008 City Council meeting you stated most of my letters referenced constituents and did not include names of residents expressing concerns. The Chief of Police stated I referred to constituents and requested the names to better evaluate the concern. Based on the above listed letters, you and the Chief of Police should have reviewed the facts prior to making false and disingenuous statements before a legislative body. The names of constituents were given in letters based on the topic of enforcement of traffic safety laws in residential districts. Keep in mind, if a reported concern involves neighbors arguing or the potential for a dispute between neighbors involved in a reported code violation, I generally copy letters to ambiguous “3rd Ward Constituents.” My goal is to avoid elevating tensions between neighbors by focusing on the City government’s obligation to enforce the laws as written regardless of the names involved, to avoid blighted conditions, maintain the peace, and provide a safe environment for all within our community. Let’s be clear, regardless if we agree or disagree with the obligations of our City government, I am the elected representative for the citizens of the 3rd Ward of the City of Portsmouth and I have made the commitment to be available to work through these problems.

My idea would be speedy implementation of corrective actions or provide written feedback for inactions related to communicate issues, to ensure timely resolutions and feedback.

The Chief of Police requested any notes, letters, or electronic-mail to identify the names of the constituents. The above referenced letters #05-012, 017, #06-005, 010, 029, 038, 040, 044, #07-002, 022, and #8-016 may be found on my website www.mollette.info under the "Letters" page. The letters to the Traffic Committee, Traffic Committee meeting minutes, and City Council meeting minutes referenced above are a public record previously sent or within your possession.

The lack of communication on your part has hindered residents from determining what actions, if any, have been taken in response to their safety concerns. Various options are listed above and others may be considered if the problem of enforcement is discussed to establish a deliberate plan to resolve. I am requesting any and all pertinent documents to establish what actions have been taken to date to address this concern.

If you should have any questions contact me.

Respectfully,



Bob Mollette, 3rd Ward Advocate and Representative on City Council

rwm

cc: 3rd Ward Constituents
Honorable Council Members
Michael Jones, Solicitor
Trent Williams, Auditor
Charles Horner, Chief of Police
Jo Ann Aeh, Clerk (Record)