

# Bob Mollette

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward Councilman

1705 Franklin Blvd.  
Portsmouth, Ohio 45662

Phone: 740-353-0099  
email: [mollette@mollette.info](mailto:mollette@mollette.info)  
website: [www.mollette.info](http://www.mollette.info)

Correspondence#: 08-028

July 14, 2008

Jim Kalb, Mayor  
728 Second Street  
Portsmouth, Ohio 45662

### **Re: Proposed City Government Office Space and Downtown Revitalization Plan**

I was disappointed the relevant information requested June 3, 2008 (#08-023), June 11, 2008 (#08-024), and July 1, 2008 (#08-027) was not included or addressed in your July 10, 2008 letter. This omission prevents well informed decision-making and long-range planning. Again, the purpose of my previous letters was to encourage relevant dialogue and fact finding; to provide unified leadership with coordinated efforts; and a positive community partnership concerning the proposed City office space and downtown revitalization. I was also disappointed by your comments directed at negativity and your decision that further dialogue is a waste of time. I do not share those views.

A citizen speaking at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward Neighborhood Forum held June 25, 2008 inspired the July 1, 2008 (#08-027) correspondence. The citizen expressed uncertainty whether renovating the Marting Building as a City Center would revitalize our downtown and asked what other solutions are feasible. The City of Portsmouth Downtown Revitalization Plan dated June 20, 2007, was very informative and identified shared action steps with various funding options. A great deal of dialogue without correlating facts has occurred in Council Chambers and the media regarding downtown revitalization and City office space. To date, I have not received facts to justify the additional expense on the taxpayers for one floor of City office space to be located in a renovated Marting Building.

Let's be clear, the Operating Budget has narrowly balanced the last several years, which the Auditor suggested a four tenths of one percent (.4%) income tax rate increase in a letter dated May 25, 2008; the Capital Improvement Budget was deemed, by a majority of Council members, insufficient this year to cover the expenses which required a one year property tax levy to be implemented; the City office space & downtown revitalization is estimated at \$13.4 million, not including the \$1.4 million from the Richard D. Marting Foundation; and the Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Long Term Control Plan dated September 19, 2006, estimates expenses from \$9.1 to \$39.9 million. Be aware the CSO Plan utilized a reference procedure to evaluate the citizen financial capability within Section 1.6 & 12. It determined a "Medium" burden for costs less than \$15 million and a "High" burden for costs greater than \$15 million. It was noted *'The analysis does not however, factor in a significantly declining population and consideration that today's "Median" burden of cost may well translate to tomorrow's "High" burden as it is borne by fewer people.'* Again, I am requesting adequate information to make informed decisions with our limited resources.

The problem with the City of Portsmouth is not overwhelming negativity, it is the lack of a deliberate City plan or vision. I do not fear the public. It is always a win-win situation that provides either an opportunity to develop new ideas or provides an opportunity to gain supporter(s) by presenting available facts and information addressing their concerns. I see our City problems as a lack of critical fact finding and considering available options that would confirm the best solution. I feel these inactions translate a lack of sensitivity for the taxpayer.

I support the citizens' choice from the May 2006 ballot concerning the Marting Building. My decision comes in part as a result of not receiving requested relevant facts that could include information to justify the expense to the taxpayers for renovation of the Marting Building. At this time the proposed additional expense to be levied on the taxpayers for downtown revitalization has not been justified or adequately discussed. An unsuccessful plan will further delay a workable solution for our citizens and employees.

If you have any further comments contact me.

Respectfully,



Bob Mollette, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward Advocate and Representative on City Council

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cc: Jennifer Hanlon, Director of Community Development  
Zoe Richards, Director of Main Street Portsmouth  
David Stone, Tanner Stone Holsinger Donges Architects  
Della Rucker, Edwards & Kelcey Consultants (895 Central Ave. Cincinnati, Ohio 45202)  
Southern Ohio Growth Partnership (SOGP)  
Trent Williams, Auditor  
Michael Jones, Solicitor  
Jo Ann Aeh, Clerk (Record)  
City Department Heads  
Press Release