

## Special Meeting Minutes

March 6, 2024

### **CALL TO ORDER**

| Attendee      | Title       | Status  |
|---------------|-------------|---------|
| Janis Seavolt | At Large    | Present |
| Tammy Woods   | Third Ward  | Present |
| Mel Severns   | Councilman  | Present |
| Mike Miller   | Fourth Ward | Present |
| James Mahan   | First Ward  | Present |
| John Ruckman  | Second Ward | Present |
| Amber Keener  | At Large    | Excused |
| Bruce Hawkins | President   | Absent  |

Woods presided as President Pro-Tem in the absence of Hawkins. Seavolt made a motion to excuse Keener, with a second by Severns. Motion to excuse passed by a voice vote of 6-0.

### **PUBLIC PORTION**

Nineteen residents spoke about Resolution No. 2024-23, to enter into contract with ODOT for the rehabilitation and improvement of Edgewood Road. Before they did so, Severns detailed guidelines on how the meeting would be conducted and the speakers accommodated.

James Stallard, 202 S. Edgewood Road, said the proposal would increase traffic, that the City's details on the proposal were inadequate, that property values along Edgewood Road should the proposal proceed are a concern, and that Council abuses the emergency clause on legislation.

Joe Noonan, 207 S. Edgewood Road, asked about the City's process for notifying residents of the proposal, and suggested that the City has ulterior motives for proceeding with the proposal.

Dennis Swingle, 1101 E. Chestnut St., said the proposal would have a major impact on the neighborhood, suggested that the City's details on the proposal were inadequate, and asked where the plans were that enabled the City to acquire State funds for the project.

Tammy Swingle, 1101 E. Chestnut St., said the proposal would increase traffic, that homes would be lost, and that a bypass is needed instead. She also suggested that the City had not shared details of the proposal with residents.

Greg Childers, 7 Marita Drive, asked what traffic surveys were done related to the proposal, and added that he liked the absence of sidewalks on Edgewood Road.

Rick Hall, 101 Marita Drive, expressed concerns that Edgewood Road would be connected to Coshocton Avenue, and that it would lead to increased truck traffic.

Stan Wood, 1011 E. Chestnut St., expressed concerns about traffic congestion, asked if the proposal would lead to more traffic signals, how much Edgewood would be widened, whether sidewalks would be required, if infrastructure improvements would still take place if the proposal was rejected, and where the funds for the project would come from.

Sterling Hamilton, 944 E. High St., said the proposal would be disruptive and lower the quality of life in the neighborhood.

Mike Hillier, 215 E. Sugar St., said the City's details on the proposal were inadequate and that the legislation's emergency clause was unnecessary. He added that insertion of the word "multimodal" referred to truck traffic, asked whether the City would resort to eminent domain, acknowledged that infrastructure work is needed, asked if sidewalks were a requirement of any funding agreements, and suggested property values would suffer.

Zack Thurman, 6 S. Edgewood Road, suggested that the proposal could be dangerous for children and that safety should be a priority.

Alvin Murray, 105 N. Edgewood Road, said the proposal would not be safe for pedestrians, and suggested Upper Gilchrist Road be utilized as a bypass around the city.

Jennifer Shoman, 200 N. Edgewood Road, suggested that connecting Edgewood to Coshocton Avenue is the proposal's ultimate goal, won't relieve traffic congestion, and said the City's details on the proposal were inadequate. She also asked which properties the City would acquire.

Bob Beck, 10 Woodside Drive, said the City's details on the proposal were inadequate, that connecting Edgewood to Coshocton Avenue is the proposal's ultimate goal, that there's already too much traffic on Edgewood, and that the legislation's emergency clause was unnecessary.

Charles Albert, 1000 New Gambier Road, said the project raises safety issues, and that the City ultimately wants a bypass to connect to State Routes 13 and 661.

Bruce Malek, 25 Dixie Drive, said the public hadn't been allowed to give its input until today, that the legislation is premature, and suggested that connecting Edgewood to Coshocton Avenue is the proposal's ultimate goal.

Emily Wood, 943 E. High St., said transparency should be a priority for the City and suggested that the proposal puts her house at risk.

Clyde Kahrl, 507 E. Gambier St., noted that infrastructure improvements are needed, that Edgewood is very narrow, and that the proposal would require the removal of some houses on East High Street.

Michael Smith, 210 S. Edgewood Road, noted that infrastructure improvements are needed, suggested that the proposal won't fix speed or traffic issues, and that only a bypass would.

Bruce Malek, 25 Dixie Drive, returned and asked Council not to pass the legislation.

Dennis Swingle, 1101 E. Chestnut St., returned and distributed several photos of Edgewood to Council.

Arturo Faustino, 943 E. High St., said he has invested a lot of money into his home and has no idea what will happen to it.

Jennifer Shoman, 200 N. Edgewood Road, returned and said the proposal would lower property values and is not a good solution.

Dennis Swingle, 1101 E. Chestnut St., returned and said the proposal would lower property values.

Michael Smith, 210 S. Edgewood Road, returned and blamed previous City Councils for the proposal.

Seavolt made a motion to adjourn, with a second by Miller. Meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

- Resolution No. 2024-23

- Edgewood Phase I SOW

**ADJOURN AT THE CALL OF THE PRESIDENT**

**COMMUNICATIONS**

- 03-06-24 Koester Letter
- 03-06-24 Malek Letter
- 03-06-24 Noonan Letter
- 03-06-24 Shoman Letter
- 03-06-24 Smith Letter
- 03-06-24 Stallard Letter
- 03-06-24 Swingle Letter

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Tammy Woods, Council President Pro-Tem

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Todd Hill, Clerk of Council

CD on file/th



City Council  
City of Mount Vernon  
Mount Vernon, OH 43050

SCHEDULED

RESOLUTION 2024-23

Meeting: 02/26/24 7:30 PM  
Dept: Streets and Public Buildings  
Severns, Ruckman  
Category: Streets  
Prepared By: Rob Broeren  
Initiator: Todd Hill  
DOC ID: 3965

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE SAFETY-SERVICE DIRECTOR TO ENTER INTO CONTRACT WITH THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR THE REHABILITATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF EDGEWOOD ROAD (KNO CR 63A 0.00); AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.**

WHEREAS, the City of Mount Vernon, Knox County, Ohio, hereinafter referred to as the Local Public Agency (LPA) has determined the need for the described project:

Widening of Edgewood Road from Gambier Road (US-229) to US-36. Roadway improvements are to include widening, drainage improvements, and multimodal improvements.

NOW THEREFORE, be it ordained by the City of Mount Vernon of Knox County, Ohio.

**SECTION 1 - Consent Statement**

Being in the public interest, the LPA gives consent to the Director of Transportation to complete the above described project as detailed in the LPA-ODOT-Let Agreement entered into between the parties, if applicable.

**SECTION 2 - Cooperation Statement**

The LPA shall cooperate with the Director of Transportation in the development and construction of the above described project and shall enter into an LPA Federal ODOT Let Project Agreement, if applicable, as well as any other agreements necessary to develop and construct the Project.

For a breakout of costs and funding sources by Phase, please refer to Agreement 40144, Attachment 1.

The LPA further agrees to pay 100% of the cost of those features requested by the LPA which are determined by the State and Federal Highway Administration to be unnecessary for the Project.

The LPA further agrees that change orders and extra work contracts required to fulfill the construction contracts shall be processed as needed. The State shall not approve a change order or extra work contract until it first gives notice, in writing, to the LPA. The LPA shall contribute its share of the cost of these items in accordance with other sections herein.

The LPA agrees that if Federal Funds are used to pay the cost of any consultant contract, the LPA shall comply with 23 CFR 172 in the selection of its consultant and administration of the consultant contract. Further the LPA agrees to incorporate ODOT's "Specifications for Consulting Services" as a contract document in all of its consultant contracts. The LPA agrees to require, as a scope of services clause, that all plans prepared by the consultant must conform to



ODOT's current design standards and that the consultant shall be responsible for ongoing consultant involvement during the construction phase of the Project. The LPA agrees to include a completion schedule acceptable to ODOT and to assist ODOT in rating the consultant's performance through ODOT's Consultant Evaluation System.

### SECTION 3 - Utilities and Right-of-Way Statement

The LPA agrees to acquire and/or make available to ODOT, in accordance with current State and Federal regulations, all necessary right-of-way required for the described Project. The LPA also understands that right-of-way includes eligible utility costs.

The LPA agrees to be responsible for all utility accommodation, relocation and reimbursement and agrees that such accommodation, relocations, and reimbursements shall comply with the current provisions of 23 CFR 645 and the ODOT Utilities Manual.

### SECTION 4 - Maintenance

Upon completion of the Project, and unless otherwise agreed, the LPA shall: (1) provide adequate maintenance for the Project in accordance with all applicable State and Federal law, including, but not limited to, Title 23, U.S.C., Section 116; (2) provide ample financial provisions, as necessary, for the maintenance of the Project; (3) maintain the right-of-way, keeping it free of obstructions; and (4) hold said right-of-way inviolate for public highway purposes.

### SECTION 5 - Authority to Sign

The LPA hereby authorizes, Safety Service Director of the City of Mount Vernon is hereby empowered on behalf of the City of Mount Vernon to enter into and execute contracts with the Director of Transportation which are necessary to develop plans for and to complete the above-described project; and to execute contracts with ODOT pre-qualified consultants for the preliminary engineering phase of the Project.

Upon request of ODOT, Safety Service Director to execute any appropriate documents to affect the assignment of all rights, title, and interests of the City of Mount Vernon to ODOT arising from any agreement with its consultant in order to allow ODOT to direct additional or corrective work, recover damages due to errors or omissions, and to exercise all other contractual rights and remedies afforded by law or equity.

### SECTION 6 - Emergency Clause

This Resolution is declared to be an emergency measure necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety and for the further reason to immediately begin the process of the upgrade of Edgewood Road, become effective upon its date of passage and approval by the Mayor, provided that it receives the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members elected to the Council of the City of Mount Vernon; otherwise, it shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bruce E. Hawkins, President of Council

PASSED: \_\_\_\_\_, 2024

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Todd Hill, Clerk of Council

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_, 2024

\_\_\_\_\_  
Matthew T. Starr, Mayor

# A CAPITAL PROJECT

# EDGEWOOD ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

## PHASE I SCOPE OF WORK

### Executive Summary

The **Edgewood Road Improvements** project aims to **address challenges associated with traffic congestion, outdated utilities infrastructure, and much needed stormwater management.**

This project is **two-phased** and includes a **phase I construction project** for **Edgewood Rd. from Rt. 229 (Gambier Rd.) to E. High St.** detailed below, and a **phase II planning and design project** for **Edgewood Rd. from E. High St. to Rt. 36 (Coshocton Ave.).** While approval for the design of phase II is being sought, the administration is focused largely on phase I of the Edgewood Road Improvements.

Both phases are part of the City's larger goal to **comprehensively address traffic congestion**, particularly in our residential neighborhoods, **update and improve our extensive utilities infrastructure**, and **responsibly manage stormwater. Public involvement and participation is critical** in both phases and **will be sought consistently** throughout the process.

### Project Details

- **Phase I** does **NOT** include **construction** north of **E High St.**
- **Phase I** will include construction between **RT. 229 to E High St.**
- **Extension** of **sanitary sewer** from **RT. 229 to E High St.**
- **Installation** of modern **storm sewer**, including **curb & gutter** and **catch basins** from **RT. 229 to E High St.**
- Complete **replacement** of **water lines** from **RT. 229 to E High St.** improving water flow and reliability, reducing service disruptions.
- **Regrading Edgewood Rd.** between **RT. 229 and E High St.** for improved drainage and overall safety.
- Total **resurfacing** of **Edgewood Rd.** from **RT. 229 to E High St.**
- **Sidewalks** planned for the **west side** of **Edgewood Rd.** to connect existing sidewalks south of **RT. 229** with a **crosswalk** installation included.
- **Limited property acquisition** may be required for **sidewalk** and **utilities** installation.

### Anticipated Costs

With **existing estimates**, including built in costs for **contingencies, design, right of way acquisition, environmental impacts, and inflation**, anticipated costs for **phase I** of the **Edgewood Road Improvements** are **approximately five million dollars.** The City has secured a grant from the **Central Ohio Rural Planning Organization (CORPO)** totaling **\$680,000** as well as **\$2 million** from the **Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT).** An additional grant request has been made for dollars from **ODOT's Systemic Safety fund.** The remaining costs will come from **numerous funds** within **Mount Vernon's budget.**

### Anticipated Timeline

**Design** for **Phase I & II** to begin in **Spring 2024.**

**Construction** for **Phase I** to begin as early as **Spring 2026.**

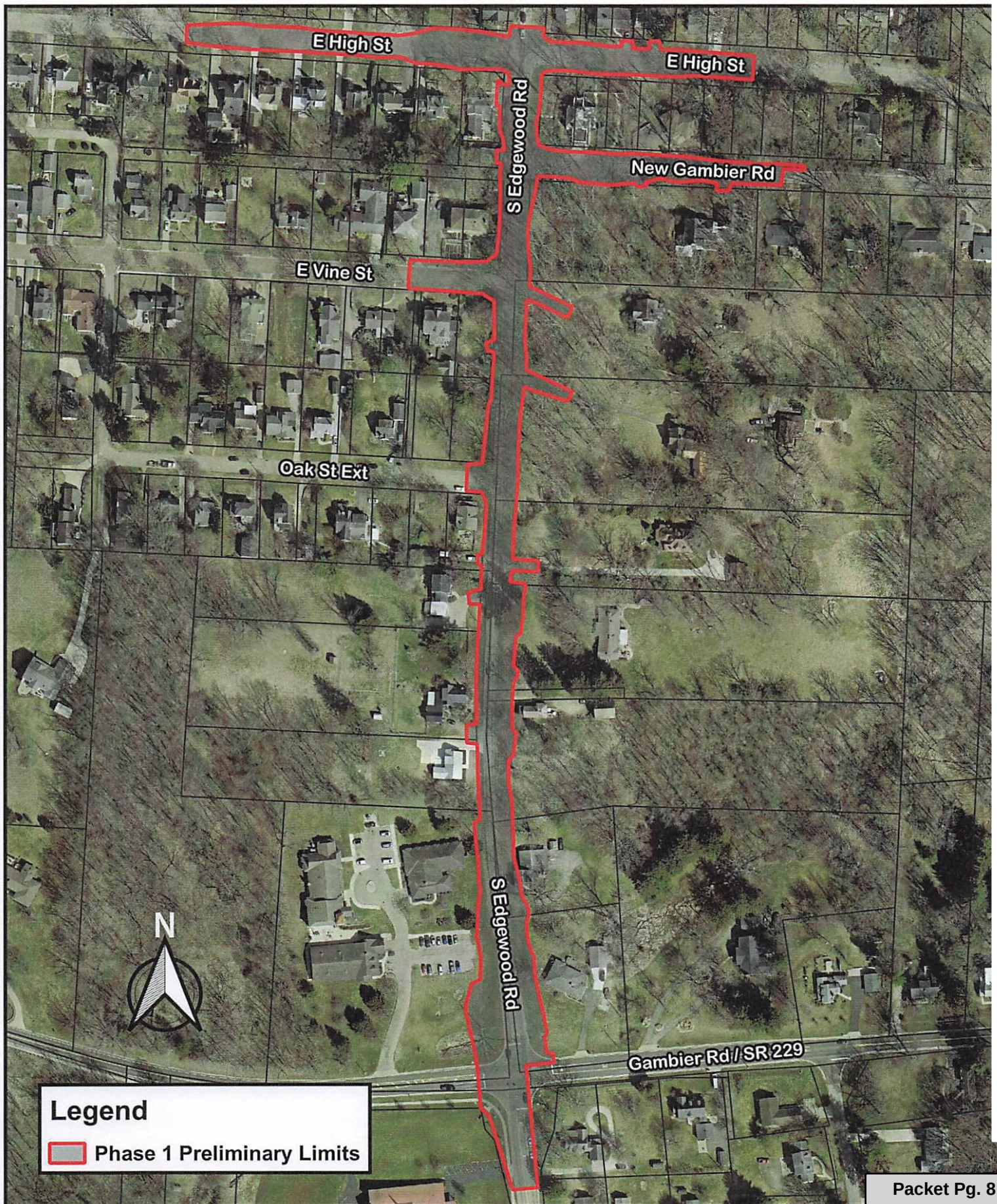
As with any project, **timelines are subject to change** due to factors both in and out of our control.

### **PREPARED BY:**

Tanner S. Salyers,  
Mount Vernon Safety Service Director  
SafetyService@MountVernonOhio.org  
740.393.9520



# Edgewood Rd Improvements





**To:** Mount Vernon City Administration and City Council

**Date:** March 3, 2024

**Re:** Resolution 2024-23

Again, I am writing on behalf of several citizens of Mount Vernon and the Edgewood Road/Marita Drive neighborhoods. Resolution 2024-23 is before the City Council to authorize the City Administration to proceed to procure funding for "The Rehabilitation and Improvement of Edgewood Road and Declaring an Emergency" (aka-The Edgewood Road Project).

Further, the City has scheduled a meeting on Wednesday, March 6, 2024 in Council Chambers for the limited purpose of discussing Resolution No. 2024-23 and the proposed improvements of the Edgewood Road Project. The meeting will be open to the public and attendees will be invited to speak on the legislation.

However, The City has done very little to provide the public with adequate project documentation and preliminary engineering drawings that would allow the public enough information and project detail to make a meaningful review of this project. The two documents that were posted by the City on its Website for the public are inadequate. The City has been discussing and planning the Edgewood Rd Project for over a decade and preliminary drawings have surfaced before. It makes no sense for City Council to authorize funding for a project of this magnitude (\$Millions) and city impact without a written proposal that clearly defines and details the City Administration's overall plan; a proposal that would include the scope of work, all preliminary engineering drawings, preliminary budget estimates, breakdown of the schedule, manpower and subcontractor requirements, etc. What the City has provided is an inadequate overview which is going to raise more questions instead of answering or defining them.

I strongly request the City Council to suspend Resolution 2024-23 until the City Administration submits a proper proposal to support their request for authorization to seek funding for the Edgewood Road Project from the Ohio DOT.

Gary Koester  
Mount Vernon, Ohio 43050  
gkoester1@columbus.rr.com

Communication: 03-06-24 Koester Letter (Communications)

March 6, 2024

To: Bruce E. Hawkins, President of Council; James Mahan, First Ward; Amber Keener, At-Large; Mel Severns, At-Large; Janis Seavolt, At-Large; John Ruckman, Second Ward; Tammy Woods, Third Ward; Mike Miller, Fourth Ward; and Todd Hill, Clerk of Council

From: Bruce Malek, 25 Dixie Drive (740) 397-0576  
Re: Edgewood Road Improvement Funding - Resolution 2024-23

Council Member:

Attached is a copy of my comments and slide presentation for the public hearing today. Thank you for scheduling the hearing and seeking input from the public on this important issue.

Very truly yours,



Bruce Malek

Communication: 03-06-24 Malek Letter (Communications)



My name is Bruce Malek, 25 Dixie Drive, Mount Vernon. Let me explain the packet which I handed you. The first page is a cover page. The next three pages are my extended comments. The next page is a Title Slide. The next 3 pages/slides are highlights from my comments. All of those pages can be disregarded in that they pertain to a power point presentation which I understand cannot be shown. In effect, the first page that I reference tonight will be the 9<sup>th</sup> page in the packet, which is a picture with the caption "Concept-Phase 1".

I want to thank City Council for holding this public hearing. I'm here to speak in opposition to Resolution 2024-23. (While I may refer to phase II in the course of my comments, it is only because and to the extent it is referenced both in the Resolution and the Capital Project fact sheet prepared for this meeting.)

Words have meaning.

At a Utility Commission hearing on June 1, 2021, while discussing concerns about utilities on Edgewood Road, City Engineer Brian Ball acknowledged traffic concerns of the residents and indicated the City would like to look at traffic calming and other improvements **if a mutual agreement can be reached with the residents.** That was **A PROMISE MADE**

On August 24, 2023, an article or articles posted on Knox Pages, reported the Dept. of Transportation (ODOT) had awarded Mount Vernon \$2,000,000 to help cover the cost of improving **Edgewood Road between East High Street and Gambier Road.** The noted improvements in the articles were consistent with the phase I Project Details included on the Capital Project fact sheet prepared for tonight's meeting. In the articles, Safety Service Director Tanner Salyers said that some improvements **will be determined through further design and discussions with property owners. ANOTHER PROMISE MADE**

A final **PROMISE MADE** is included in the Capital Project fact sheet prepared by Mr. Salyers. In the final sentence of the Executive Summary, Mr. Salyers states, Public involvement and participation is critical in both phases of the project and will be sought consistently throughout the process."



As of February 26, 2024, when Resolution 2024-23 was presented to Council for a first reading, the administration had not:

- held a public hearing
- provided information to or reached out to the residents of Edgewood Road and or surrounding neighborhoods to review, discuss or seek input regarding this proposed “improvement”, or how best to implement the same.

Not until today, long after the planning of phase I has presumably been completed, have the affected residents, or the public in general, had an opportunity to be heard and to voice their concerns. Clearly, regarding phase I, **PROMISES MADE HAVE BECOME PROMISES BROKEN** and it only becomes worse if planning for phase II is complete. If traffic studies evidencing a need for the project and its impact on local residents exist, if supporting data, concept and preliminary engineering drawings and detailed cost analysis and projections (in far greater detail than have been included with the Capital Project fact sheet) have been completed, it was done, contrary to the statement in the fact sheet, without the “public involvement and participation” the administration claims was so critical.

Examining the Capital Project sheet prepared for this public hearing, why is phase I referred to as a “construction project” and phase II a “planning and design project”? Clearly, they are different. The suggestion is that phase I planning is “complete”, while the planning and design for phase II is not. If that is the case, then this Resolution is woefully premature unless City Council is willing to buy the proverbial “pig in a poke”. I can’t imagine MVNU, the Dept. of Natural Resources, other government entities or private businesses submitting or funding a project of this magnitude with so little information, and without input from, discussion with or consideration of the impact on the affected parties, the residents and the public. Referring to the power point presentation, page 9 of the packet, the picture entitled Concept-Phase 1, is a concept photo of a theoretical phase I of a two phase project. It doesn’t give an adequate indication of what the total project will be. Without knowing the full purpose and extent of the project and what it will look like when it’s finished, a funding request cannot be justified and should not be approved. The same is true of the next slide, Concept-Phase 2. Only when we have an idea of the entire project, Project Concept to Completion photo, can it be visualized, intelligently discussed, understood and properly evaluated for



funding. We don't have that for this Resolution. For that reason, Council should reject it.

Referring back to the Capital Project fact sheet, why is "approval of the design of phase II being sought" while "the administration is focused largely (if not completely) on phase I of the Edgewood Road Improvements."? Is there an aspect of phase II that the administration does not want to disclose or discuss? The Capital Project fact sheet and the Resolution itself refer to Edgewood Road improvements **from High Street to Rt. 36, Coshocton Avenue**. In the Knox Pages August 24, 2023 article previously mentioned, City Engineer Brain Ball reportedly said that "ultimately the thought is to route traffic from Coshocton Avenue to Ohio 229 via Upper Gilchrist and Ohio Eastern Star roads.... Neither Mayor Starr nor Safety Service Director Salyers corrected the City Engineer's comment. The City actually went so far as to have a concept drawing prepared for that project (Final power point slide), which is more than has been provided regarding this Resolution. **What has changed since August 24, 2023?** By that date, plans for the Edgewood Road Improvement project between SR. 229 and High Street, phase I, were already in place and funding from ODOT had been approved. Why does the Resolution refer to Coshocton Ave,?

**Mr. Mayor, Mr. Safety Service Director, Mr. City Engineer: Will the funding resulting from this Resolution be used to plan the extension of or extend Edgewood Rd. to Coshocton Ave.?** Is that what phase II is really about? If so, how will that be done? What will it look like? What will the impact be, both in terms of traffic, and on the Edgewood and neighboring residents, their quality of life and property values? It's time to be transparent. The people in this room, including Council and the public, have a right to know. For all of the foregoing reasons, I respectfully ask you, the members of City Council, to reject Resolution 2024-23. Thank you for your time and consideration.

# RESOLUTION 2024-23

PUBLIC HEARING-MARCH 6, 2024

## Utility Commission Hearing-June 1, 2021

- While discussing concerns about the water line on Edgewood Road and the storm system, City Engineer Brian Ball noted concerns of the residents and indicated the City would like to look at traffic calming and other improvements **if a mutual agreement can be reached with the residents.**
- **A PROMISE MADE**



# MOUNT VERNON GETS \$2 MILLION TO IMPROVE EDGEWOOD ROAD

Knox Pages-Cheryl Splain August 24, 2023

- MOUNT VERNON — Of the \$16.9 million the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) is providing to help fund road reconstruction or maintenance, the City of Mount Vernon will get \$2 million.
- The funds will help cover the cost of improving **Edgewood Road between East High Street and Gambier Road (Ohio 229)**.
- The noted improvements were consistent with the phase I Project Details included on the Fact Sheet provided for tonight's meeting. In the articles, Safety Service Director Tanner Salyers said the city might need to acquire limited property to install sidewalk and utilities. The article indicates Salyers stated **this will be determined through further design and discussions with property owners.**
- **ANOTHER PROMISE MADE**

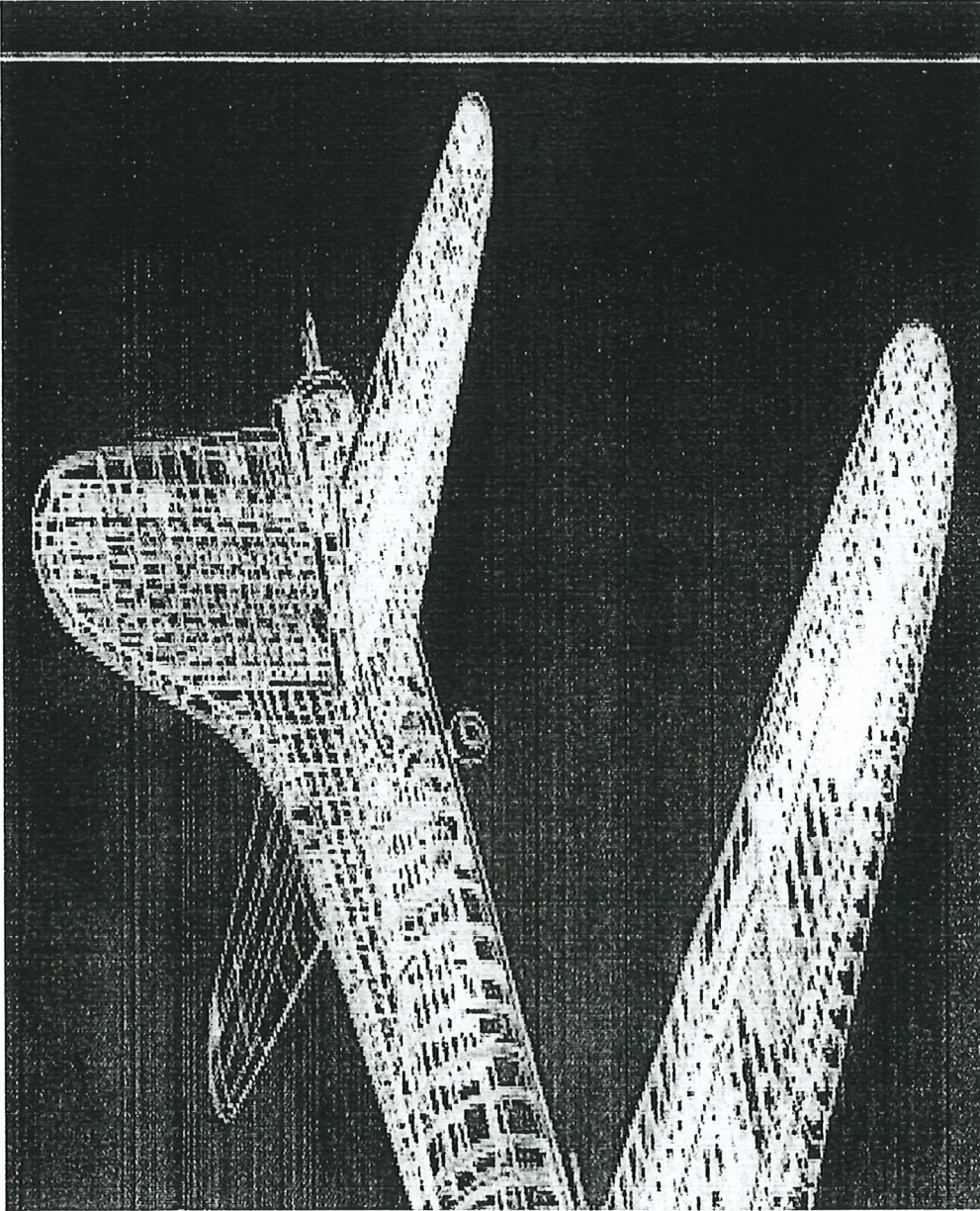
•The wording of the Capital Project fact sheet is critical. In it, Mr. Salyers states,

•“This project is two-phased...a phase 1 construction project for Edgewood Rd. from Rt. 229...to E. High St..., and a phase II planning and design project...from E. High St. to Rt. 36....

While approval for the design of phase II is being sought (despite not appearing to be included in the \$2,000,000 awarded by ODOT)...Public involvement and participation is critical in both phases and will be sought consistently throughout the process.”

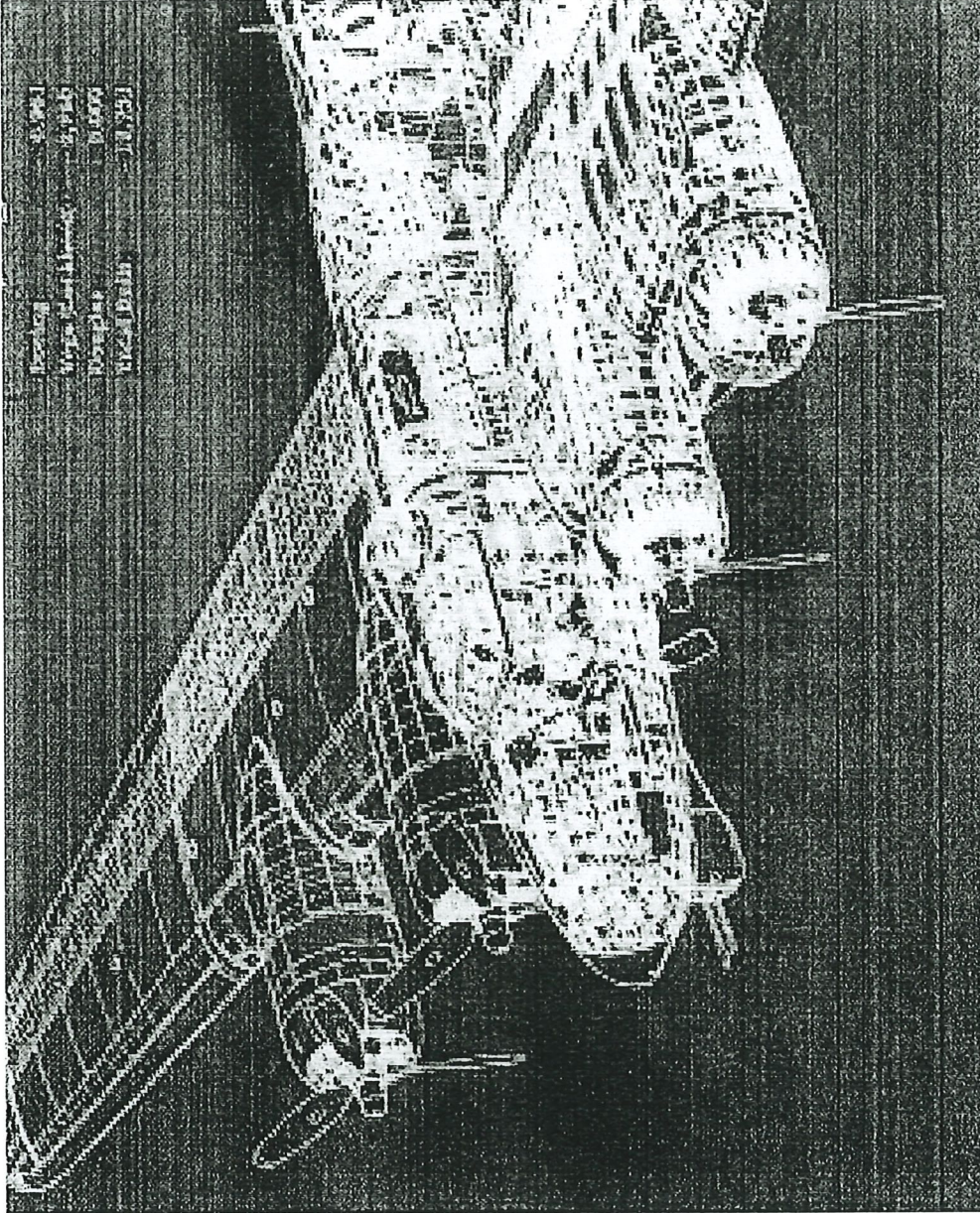
**AGAIN, A PROMISE MADE**





## CONCEPT-PHASE 1



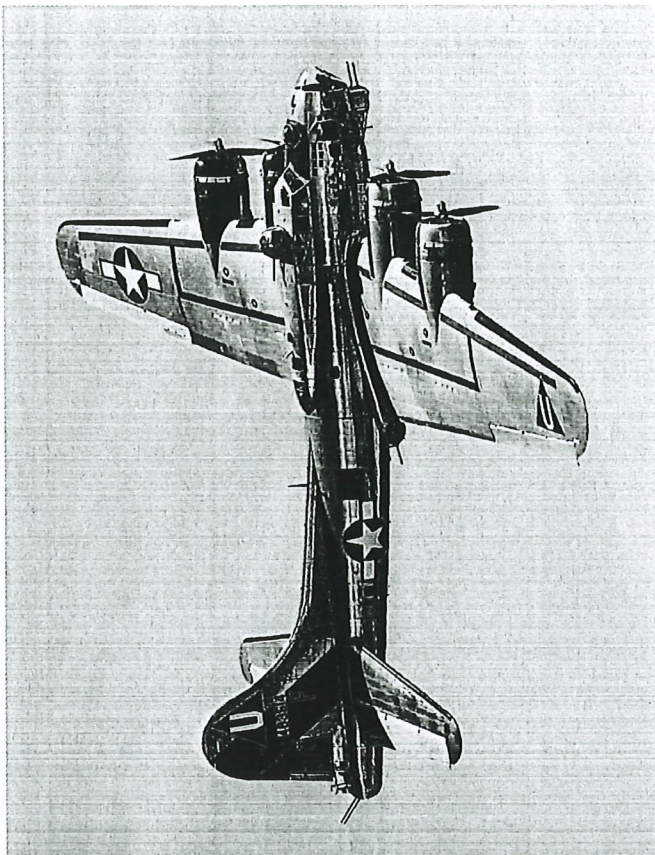
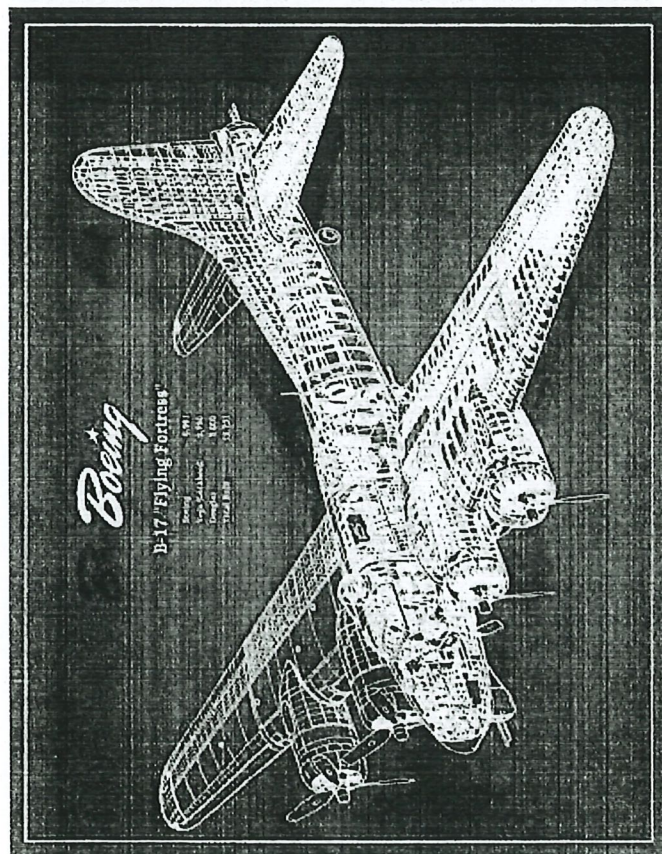


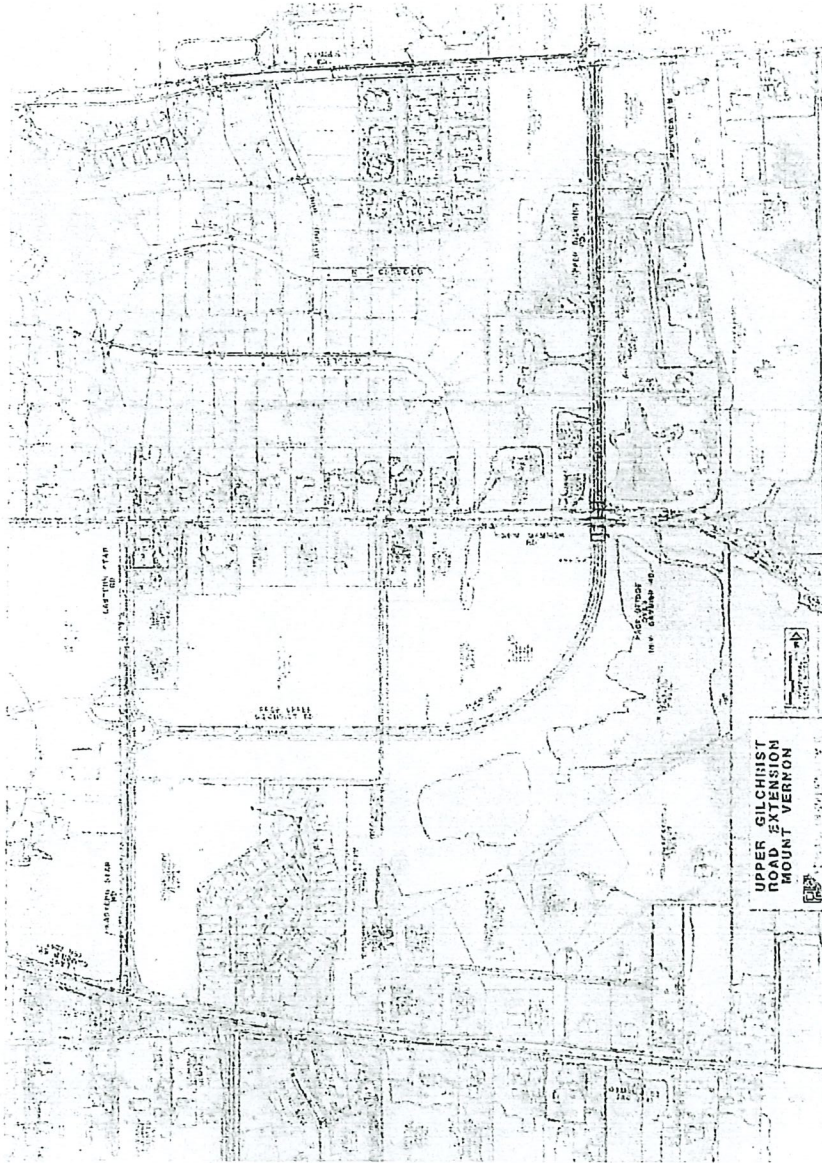
## CONCEPT PHASE 2

Communication: 03-06-24 Malek Letter (Communications)



# Project Concept to Completion





## Proposed Upper Gilchrist Rd. 229/US 36 Connector

Mount Vernon News October 5, 2019



# Edgewood Road Public Involvement Meeting 03/06/2024

## COMMENT SHEET

Name:

JOE NOONAN

Address:

207 S EDGEWOOD RD

Telephone:

742-398-2643

Email:

noonan-joe@gmail.com

Please return this comment sheet to the sign in table during the meeting, by mail, or email by April 12, 2024 to:

Tanner Salyers, Safety Service Director of the City of Mount Vernon

40 Public Square, Mount Vernon, OH 43050

Email: PC@MountVernonOhio.org

If you have comments or suggestions concerning the Edgewood Road area, please print them below.

EMAIL SENT TO SEVENS & BALL  
TABLE RESOLUTION AND EDUCATE US  
ON THE PROCESS - LET US LISTEN  
LET US SPEAK

Communication: 03-06-24 Noonan Letter (Communications)

Dear Council Members,

I would like to express my concerns about the proposed Edgewood Rd Improvements project. While I understand that currently only phase 1 is under review, it is still part of a larger project. One of the main goals for this larger project is connecting N Edgewood Rd to Coshocton Ave. While your proposal states that your goal here is to “comprehensively address traffic congestion, PARTICULARLY in our residential neighborhoods,” your plan is effectively redirecting high traffic into our residential neighborhoods. Clearly you can see why we do not see this as a helpful solution. Your proposal would also (in theory) mean connecting Edgewood BLVD to N Edgewood. This means you are just moving and increasing the congestion from one bad intersection at Vernedale Dr down Coshocton Ave down about 1000 ft. You would also, (in theory), be putting another stop light, so people can pull out on to Coshocton Ave, within 500ft of the Highland Dr light, potentially further backing up traffic. Given this, it doesn't seem like this is the best way to address traffic congestion.

While the Council has appealed for public involvement and participation, the council has not been forthcoming with the actual details that matter when creating this plan. You can tell us how many MILLIONS this project is going to cost, but you can't even give us a detailed map with the proposed changes. None of the documents that I have seen so far states exactly how much additional land is needed to complete this project. Even if the land is considered “right of way” property, this can still adversely affect property owners and is vital information. The plan states it includes limited property acquisition, but no details are given for what properties are impacted by this. Are the properties on the N side of Edgewood also included in this limited property acquisition? If phase 2 follows the same path as phase one, the property at 943 E High St would appear to be in the way of these plans, as their actual home falls ON the right of way line. Has anyone reached out to these people or is it just being ignored for now so that phase 1 can be successfully passed?

I have also seen evidence that suggests the grant money to widen Edgewood was first approved as far back as August 2023, yet the public portion of this proposal was only recently made public and quite frankly the added map left much to be desired. How can you support a proposal that you can't see the actual details to? How wide is the road? How far will the sidewalks be from homes? What do modern curb, gutter and catch basins look like and where are they on these properties? Without these details I'm not sure how you can expect the support from members of the neighborhoods most directly affected let alone ask for Council approval.

ODOT refers to this project as widening Edgewood Rd, but Mr. Ball has been quoted as saying the road is not really going to get wider. While I do not see widening the road listed in the project details for phase 1, I also cannot find documentation that includes any details about road width and location, let alone that information in comparison to what currently exists.

Communication: 03-06-24 Shoman Letter (Communications)



Given Mr. Ball's reluctance to provide actual concrete details for this plan, is this something that we can trust as fact? If in fact, the plans do include widening the road, does that mean you will start allowing trucks through High St to turn on Edgewood, especially when your goal is to redirect traffic our way? This would add even more traffic into our residential neighborhoods, while also making our homes less safe by putting them closer to the road.

While I cannot speak knowledgeably about the need to update our utilities infrastructure, I also do not think anyone would be here tonight if that was ALL you were proposing to do. I also think that regrading and resurfacing a road at the same time as updating utilities is a great policy, but I don't think including additional items in order to expedite and further the City's agenda, is. Keeping our infrastructure up to date and our roads in good condition are things we expect. Adding additional features that encroach on our properties like sidewalks and providing avenues that actively increase the traffic, while reducing our ability to create barriers, is not. From what I could see, more than one property owner has taken measures to help create some kind of barrier between Edgewood and their homes. Properties have trees, bushes and fences, all put in place, for privacy and to provide natural barriers between the traffic and the inherent traffic noises that comes with living near a busy street. This proposal not only increases these issues for owners, but it also appears be taking away the land that provided these buffers. While Mr. Ball has stated that this project "includes vegetative barriers to create separation between the road and homes," no real details about this are provided either. If we look at what the city has done in the past, this typically takes the form of planting small trees that 1. Do not provide any type of real barrier, and 2. Are problematic in the long term as their root system can be destructive, affecting utilities, sidewalks and even home foundations. Increased traffic and reduced yard space also equals a less safe environment to families with children. The value of our properties will decrease, as our neighborhoods and homes become less desirable, while our liability increases with the additional sidewalks.

With the lack of transparency, or planning details to what phase 1, let alone phase 2, really means for our neighborhood, we request that this proposal is not passed. We hope you look to our beautiful and well maintained bike path as the best option for bikers and walkers, instead of spending large amounts on new sidewalks with steep inclines that encroach upon our homes. We hope that you will continue to look for other, better ways to reduce traffic congestion, one that doesn't adversely affect our established residential neighborhoods. This project has continuously been voted down in the past for a reason. It is NOT the best solution for our town! Thank you.

JENNIFER  
SHOMAN

Mount Vernon City Council

March 2024

Council Members,

I have been a resident on Edgewood Road since August 1984. The use of this residential street as a quicker way to get to the shopping area on Coshocton Avenue has been an issue ever since my family moved in. We had no idea there was that much traffic there. I failed to do enough research prior to our purchase. The plan that you are considering has some very tempting aspects. I'm sure that sidewalks, new gas and water lines and storm water drains would be wonderful and a benefit to those living along Edgewood. There is no question that there is a problem that needs solving, but the solution does not include increasing the volume of traffic and negatively impacting the value of our property. I strongly urge you to reject any plan to increase traffic volume on Edgewood.

Respectfully submitted.



Michael E. Smith

Communication: 03-06-24 Smith Letter (Communications)



March 6, 2024 I am James R. Stallard, husband of Joan B. Stallard, Trustee, owner of 202 South Edgewood Road, where we have resided 49 years. That property is served underground by Columbia Gas, AEP Ohio, Brightspeed and public sewer.

Three points on Resolution 2024-23:

1. The Resolution concerns an Agreement. The purpose of the AGREEMENT is “widening ... Edgewood Road from Gambier Road ... to ... [Coshocton Road].” This has been a controversial matter for more than forty-five years, as residents have strongly objected to constant destruction of their quality of life by an ever-increasing flood of traffic. No one doubts that implementation of the AGREEMENT will increase the flood of traffic still more. The information provided by the city administration on March first about altering Edgewood Road is inadequate to the point of being an elitist insult, more effort to hide than to inform. At minimum, we residents need complete information about implementation of the AGREEMENT so we can judge how our properties might be affected and how negatively the increased through traffic will affect our property values and quality of life.
2. On June 18, 1990, the City levied a \$50 fee to receive a petition requesting relief from the negative impacts on our neighborhood from poor planning and ever increasing traffic through our R-1 residential neighborhood. Our petition had 439 valid signatures. Everyone who ever had a civics class knew then and knows now that Amendment I of the Bill of Rights allows for the free “petition [of] the Government for redress of grievances.” Nevertheless, it took a visit from the American Civil Liberties Union before the City refunded our money and considered our petition. Unfortunately, the City continued to fail in planning for the impacts of the development it didn’t just allow, but heedlessly fostered on Coshocton Road, Yauger Road and Upper Gilchrist Road.
3. City Council routinely adopts legislation including the phrase “and declaring an emergency.” Resolution 2024-23 has that phrase. The Ohio Revised Code 731.30 provides that “declaring an emergency” removes the possibility otherwise allowed by ORC 731.29 for signatures to be collected to place the matter on the ballot at the next general election. “Declaring an Emergency” is for actual matters that must be attended to at the moment; all matters before City Council cannot be such “emergencies.”
  - a. My neighbor Don Carr, who could not be here tonight, drew the phrase to Council’s attention and detailed the fact that, as of last November, all of the “40 Ordinances and 86 Resolutions” enacted by Council in 2023 had included the phrase and that all of the “49 Ordinances and 133 Resolutions” enacted in 2022 contained the phrase. It is an abuse of the law to use “and declaring an emergency” on every piece of legislation because the phrase preemptively prohibits voters from exercising the specific right of ultimate oversight of Council that is reserved to the public in ORC 731.29. By using the phrase routinely, Council, whether intentionally or otherwise, disenfranchises voters.
  - b. Consequently, if Resolution 2024-23 comes to a vote, it should be amended to remove the phrase “and declaring an emergency.” Likewise, the phrase should hereafter be confined to resolutions addressing actual emergency situations, examples of which appear in ORC 731.30. Declaring an “emergency” routinely should cease. And, it should not escape notice that the American Civil Liberties Union is now and has always been especially concerned with disenfranchisement of voters.

Mt Vernon City Council:

The proposed alteration of Edgewood Road will have major impacts on the residents who live on Edgewood Road and on the streets connecting to it. In fact, there is no possibility it will not have major impacts on the entire R-1 neighborhood.

The information provided by the city administration so far on the proposed alteration of Edgewood Road is insufficient. No part of it is sufficient to allow residents to even understand how much property will be taken, much less the impact on the quality of life of the entire neighborhood. The pitiful information released so far seems designed to hide more than to explain or convince. This is a guaranteed way to inflame the public.

As a Capital Planning/Facilities Engineer, I have 32 years of experience doing multi-million dollar projects. All of that work involved engineering plans and drawings from initial stages to completion. From that experience, I find it impossible to believe that the city was able to obtain \$680,000 from CORPO as well as \$2 million from the Ohio Department of Transportation with nothing more than the extremely poor representation of an explanation as to the layout planned for Phase 1 of the Edgewood Road Project. Additionally now you are asking council to approve resolution 2024-23 seeking another 3.1 million dollars with nothing more than what you provided in the Edgewood phase I SOW document, that's 5.8 million dollars with no details. So, I ask, where are the plans that had to be submitted to get the money? If Council has seen them, why can't they be made public now? If Council has not seen them, it should reject Resolution 2024-23 until it and the public has seen and had the opportunity to review and comment on them.

Before city council considers moving Resolution 2024-23 forward, I believe the public and City Council deserve a good deal more information and especially significantly better interpretation of exactly how Edgewood Road and the other affected streets and driveways might look, if the proposed alteration is implemented.

By the way, Mr. Mayor, when you lived across the street from me on East Chestnut Street, you told me on numerous occasions that widening Edgewood Road and putting it through to Coshocton Avenue was the worst thing the city could do. You stood on your front porch with a sound meter and measured the noise the traffic made going up and down Chestnut Street and said the city needed to do something about all the noise and traffic in a residential area. Once you moved away and became a member of city council, your opinion totally changed. The neighborhood is still R1. Nothing about the neighborhood has changed, but you have.

Respectively submitted,

Dennis Swingle

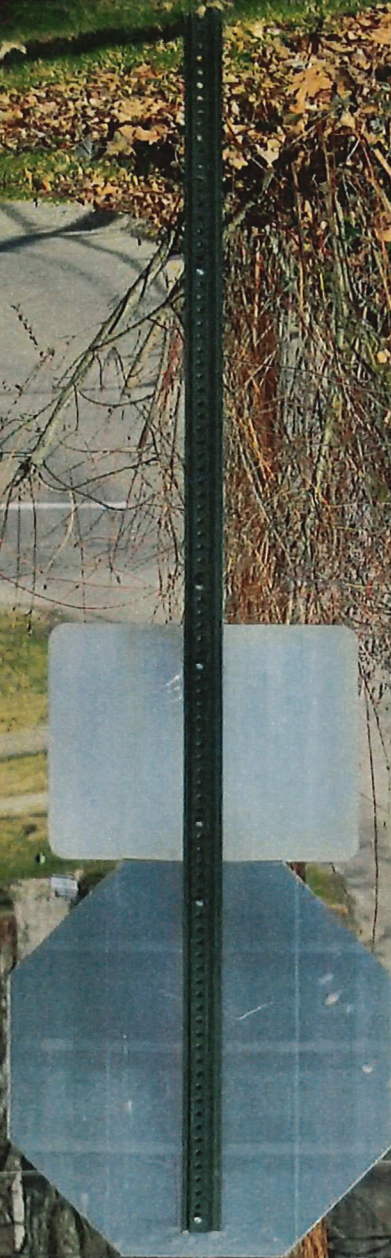
March 6, 2024

Communication: 03-06-24 Swingle Letter (Communications)





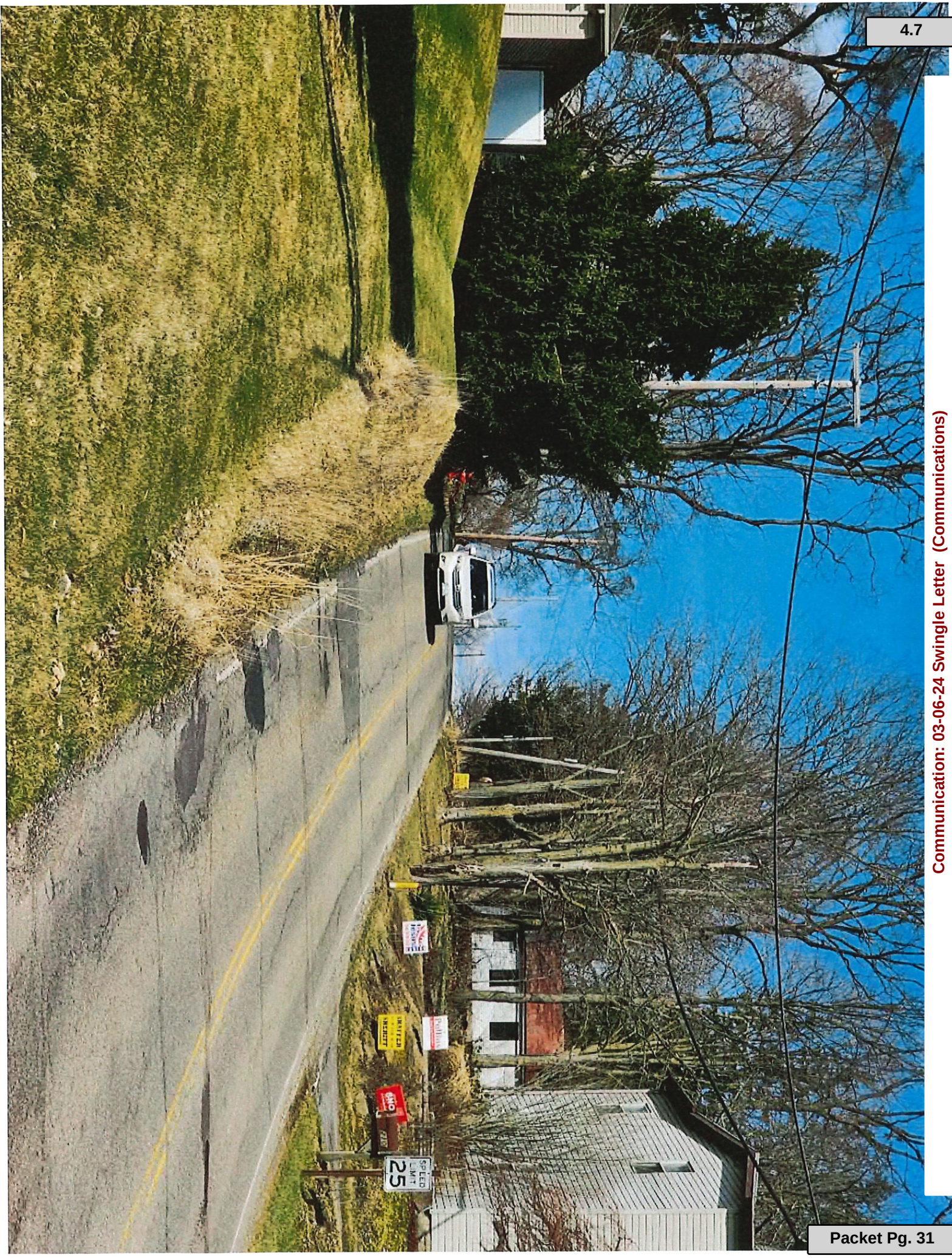




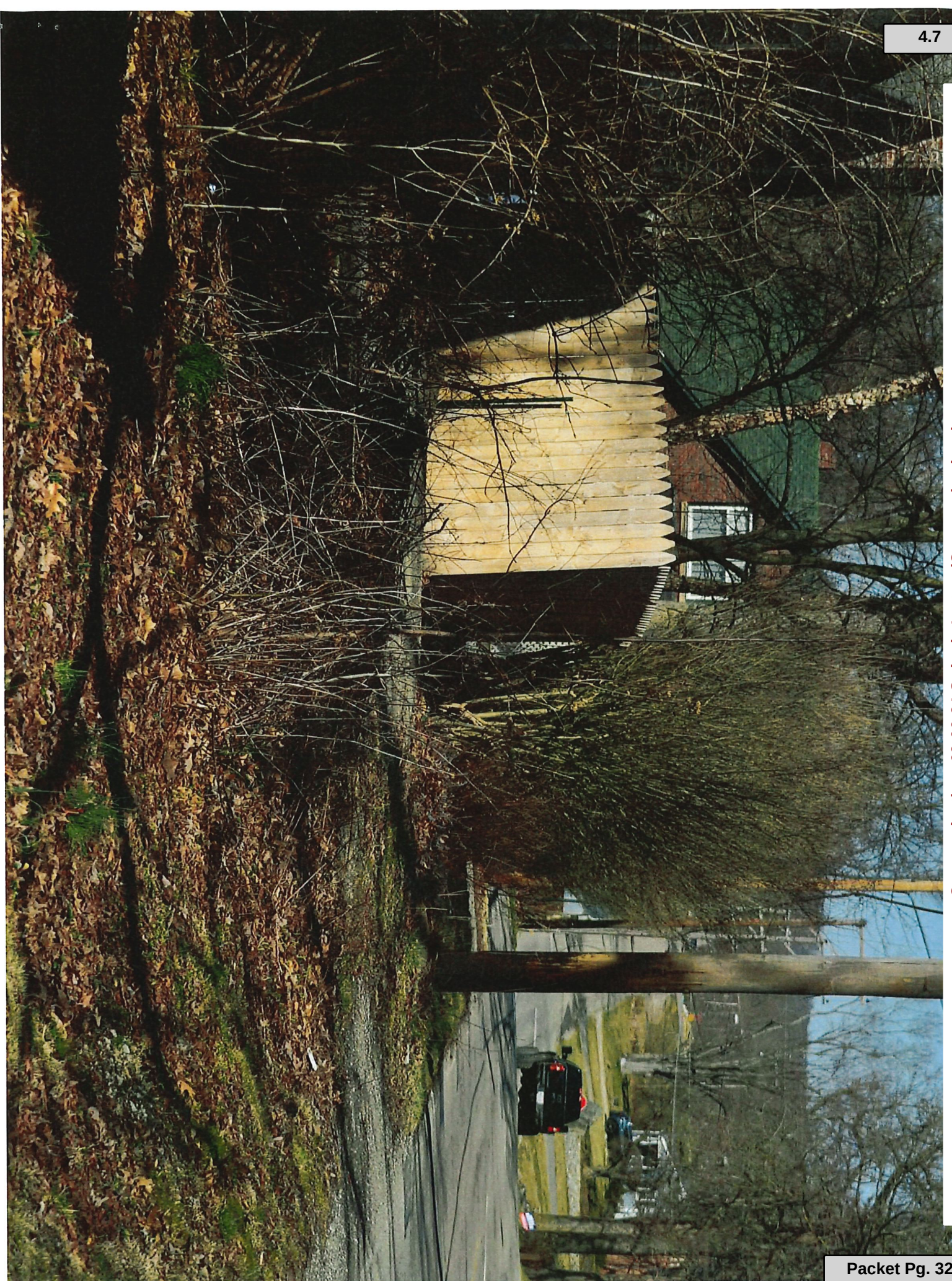














**SHAFTER**  
— ★ FOR ★ —  
**SHERIFF**

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State Representative







