



City of Bluff City
Mayor Percy J. Brown

Office of the Mayor

City Hall / 100 Broad Avenue
Bluff City, Ohio

July 31, 2008

Dear Bluff City Citizens:

Well, folks, this month Bluff City city council and I undertook a serious look at revising our fair city's panhandling ordinance. The previous ordinance prohibited panhandling within twenty feet of any ATM, bank entrance, parking meter, drive-thru window, or walk-up pharmacy window. These measures were not enough, especially around walk-up pharmacy windows, where panhandlers were demanding (and getting) medication.

It's been reported that Bluff City has become a magnet for panhandlers. Those same news agencies blame this on the fact that Bluff City's citizens are easily intimidated by vagrant men with unkempt grooming, a distaste for personal hygiene, and tattered clothing. I personally think the attraction as a panhandling Mecca is simply due to the unnatural generosity of Bluff City's fine citizens. Regardless, we at Bluff City city hall heard your cries of distress and responded accordingly. We decided to take a hard line on aggressive panhandling and we're determined to take back our city's reputation!

Here's how. Bluff City city council and I wrote *new* legislation that revised the original ordinance to extend the safe zone from twenty feet to fifty feet from all previously referenced locations. We also added new prohibited places into the ordinance that included all the new sidewalk cafés and patio bars that have sprung up recently in our Historic Parking Garages District as part of my well received "Eat Out More Often" urban redevelopment initiative. The legislation passed unanimously and was signed into law immediately.

Bluff City's police chief, Chief Edgar Runrouster, decided to use the new law to make some examples of the more over-zealous panhandlers harassing you, our fair citizens. Chief Runrouster created a new task force called, appropriately enough, the "Taking Back Our Change" task force, and swept through the Historic Parking Garages District, netting a total of forty-two panhandling arrests in one evening. This success, however, resulted in a sticky situation down at the Bluff City City Jail.

You see, the punishment for breaking the panhandling law is either 90 days in jail or a \$750 fine. Well, all forty-two of the vagrants that were arrested didn't have \$7.50 between the lot of them, resulting in 90 day jail terms for them all. But Bluff City City Jail, which was built in the early 1900s, was only designed to hold twelve prisoners, mainly the few town drunks who needed someplace to sober up before heading home. So we asked to have the prisoners transferred to the Bluff County Jail, but the Bluff County Sheriff has put my request on hold while he runs his reelection campaign. He says his reasons for holding up my request aren't political, but he's a politician in the other party, so you know everything he says is a lie.

Additionally, the vagrant prisoners have retained a local lawyer to sue the city over what they're calling "cruel and inhumane housing conditions". In response to this ludicrous lawsuit, I've decided to show them real inhumane conditions by hiring my mother-in-law to cook meals for them. They don't know cruel and inhumane until they've had her meat loaf!

Here's another potential tag line for Bluff City. Tell us what you think.

"Bluff City – almost vagrant free!"

Sincerely,
Percy J. Brown
Your Honorable Mayor