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ALBANY COUNTY LEGISLATURE, 6TH DISTRICT
COUNTY OF ALBANY
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CHAIR
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May 11, 2011

James Campbell
Sheriff, Albany County
Room 92
Albany County Courthouse
Eagle Street, Albany, NY 12207
Albany, NY 12207

RE: Lark Street Operation Safe Corridor

Dear Sheriff Campbell,

Thank you for speaking with me on May 6th regarding my involvement in the Lark Street Public Safety Committee and one of our projects. As you may recall, the Lark Street Public Safety Committee was formed several years ago by City Alderman Richard Conti in an effort to bring stakeholders from within the community together with law enforcement in an effort to make our communities safer for both residents and patrons of the Lark Street businesses. The committee meets on a monthly basis at the Lark St. Business Improvement District office to review crime activity from the preceding month, different local laws and ordinances, complaints from the various neighborhood associations, and other issues.

One of our most recent projects, in conjunction with the Albany Police Department, In Our Own Voices, the Albany County District Attorney's Office, the Lark Street BID, the Central Avenue BID, the Pride Center of the Capital Region, and the neighborhood associations, has been the establishment of "safe corridor." Modeled after the Safe Corridor in the Pine Hills Neighborhood, the Lark Street/Central Avenue Safe Corridor will include Lark Street from Madison Avenue to Washington Avenue, Washington Avenue from Lark Street to Lexington Avenue, Lexington from Washington Avenue to Central Avenue and Central Avenue from Lexington to Henry Johnson Boulevard. The idea came about in 2010 after Albany Police and community organizations noticed a sudden rise in crime in the aforementioned, highly frequented areas culminating in the brutal attack of an individual following the annual LGBT

pride parade and festival in Washington Park last June. The idea behind the corridor is to educate the public on ways in which they can reduce their likelihood of being a victim of a crime and to increase reporting if they are a victim of a crime. It is also the intent to get more people to travel down said corridor rather than on side streets where they are more likely to become the target of offenders. Businesses along the corridor will also be educated on how they can provide assistance to someone who enters their establishment not feeling safe.

While many of the logistics have now been completed, the committee is now looking for funding to pay for the signs which will be placed on Lark Street and in participating businesses; as well as for the printing of brochures and pamphlets to educate the public about this new initiative. Preliminary estimates show our total remaining costs for this project to be approximately \$1,500. My understanding is the District Attorney's Office is covering much of the printing costs with additional contributions coming from the involved organizations. I have been told the City of Albany will be paying for the Operation Safe Corridor signs but additional funding of approximately \$840 is needed to include two (2) rainbow strips to each sign, designating the Safe Corridor inclusive of the LGBT community. As such, I was hoping your office would be willing, on behalf of Albany County and the Sheriff's Office, to contribute \$500 towards the cost of the signage.

The actual purchase of the signs is being handled by Phillip Burse from In Our Own Voices, which is a federal 501(c) (3) organization. Should your office be willing to participate, a check should be written out to In Our Own Voices and include ***Operation Safe Corridor*** in the memo line. The check can be mailed or delivered to In Our Own Voices c/o Phillip A. Burse, 245 Lark Street, Albany, NY 12210.

Thank you again for considering our request as it relates to this important initiative. The Lark Street Public Safety Committee truly appreciates the support. We will be sure to contact your office once we have picked the date for the final designation so that you or a representative from the Sheriff's office can be in attendance at the ceremony and be recognized for your generous contribution.

Please feel free to contact me at 845.797.9315 should you have any additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Chris Higgins

Christopher T. Higgins
Albany County Legislator, 6th District