

ANOTHER BUMP IN THE ROAD By Brian McMillan | Managing Editor

Should Florida Park Drive be 25 mph?

Part of my daily commute to the *Palm Coast Observer* office takes me the length

of Florida Park Drive North. It's about two miles long, and sometimes it can feel painfully slow at 30 mph.

Ernie Tykarski tells stories of a 4-year-old who was hit by a car last year, and an 11-year-old hit a few years before that. He cringes at the cars who speed past the children waiting at a bus stop near his home, at 76 Florida Park Drive N.



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"I had someone drive through my yard going around someone else who was stopped to turn left," Tykarski said. "They couldn't slow down."

I spoke with him in his driveway earlier this week and couldn't help but note that, compared to many of the residential roads in Palm Coast, Florida Park Drive North feels cramped. The driveways are short, the front doors only a few strides from the sidewalk.

"It's brutal every day," he said. "The cars won't let you out of your driveway. You're waiting and waiting."

Tykarski wants the speed limit dropped from 30 mph to 25. He has talked to Mayor Jon Netts, Palm Coast Substation Capt. Mark Carman and has sent emails to City Manager Jim Landon. In Tykarski's view, the city did nothing. And so, to protest, he posted a sign on his mailbox: "City officials don't care, but we do!" He added the

speed limit, which is still 30 mph, and a reminder: "Safety first, please."

The city's response to the sign: Dear Mr. Tykarski. You're in violation of city code. Please take down the sign.

What's wrong with the sign? I asked.

"Listen to this," he said, a big grin on his face, as cars pass by in front of his house. "It's a safety issue."

Tykarski is passionate. He collected 65 signatures for a petition to lower the limit. He has contacted the governor. He plans to get a lawyer to fight for his sign, if need be. He says the deputies need to write more tickets, and the city should install speed bumps, if necessary, to make people drive more slowly.

After I left his house, I emailed the city to get their side of the story.

According to Netts, there are no streets in Palm Coast that have speed limits lower than 30 mph, unless they're going around a sharp turn (Florida Park Drive has a bit of a wave to it, but it's basically straight).

And although Tykarski estimates that traffic has tripled in the nine years since he moved to town, the numbers don't back it up.

"We do regular traffic counts on Palm Coast streets," Netts wrote via email. "Here are the numbers for Average Annual Daily Traffic in the segment between Forest Hill and Fleetwood: 2002: 5,400; 2004: 5,400; 2006: 7,200; 2008: 5,100; 2011: 5,700."

The sign itself is in violation because of two reasons, Netts said. First, it's in the public right of way. That's illegal for businesses and residents. Second, it imitates a safety sign. Imagine the confusion if all



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Ernie Tykarski wants the speed limit dropped from 30 mph to 25, on Florida Park Drive North.

of Tykarski's neighbors decided to put up similar signs, but they all put different speed limits over their mailboxes (35, 60, 110, 5 mph)?

The interview with Tykarski was a good wakeup call for me. An even bigger wakeup call, though, comes from the two radar speed signs that tell me how fast I'm driving.

For those of you who do speed on Florida Park Drive North, remember the kids who were hit. And, if you slow down, you'll find that at 30 mph, when you see the deputies along the road, you can simply smile and wave, knowing that you're a law-abiding citizen, rather than getting nervous and trying to hit your breaks without looking like you're hitting your breaks.

Sit back, relax, and enjoy the views of the canals and the majestic oak trees, and the sign on Tykarski's mailbox.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR