

**JOHN AND KATHY TRUMBULL**

*348 First Avenue  
Berlin, NH 03570*

January 2, 2023

Paul Grenier, Mayor,  
Berlin City Council,  
Phillip Warren, City Manager  
168 Main Street  
Berlin, NH 03570

RE: Prohibited use of fireworks

Dear Mr. Grenier, Warren and City Council Representatives;

We have had an ongoing problem with repeat offenders' use of fireworks within very close proximity to our home on First Avenue. Over the past years we have made numerous calls to police to report these incidents, providing photos, addresses, license plates of vehicles with rocket launchers in the flatbed, etc. To the best of our knowledge, there have been no fines or warnings issued, or even a visit to inform repeat offenders that fireworks are in violation of the zoning regulations within the City. When reported, dispatch has merely stated that they would inform an officer, with no follow-up report on what action was taken. On New Year's Eve when dispatch was re-called to report that the fireworks were still ongoing and asked what action was taken, we were told that a police vehicle was dispatched and was unable to locate the violation. This is likely because the close neighbor at 373 First Avenue, this New Year's Eve, lit off several fireworks, then waited about 45 minutes, then lit off several more, repeating numerous times over the course of the evening. It is unlikely that a drive-by in a police cruiser ten to twenty minutes after an incident would be able to witness the use of fireworks with this strategy. It hasn't worked over the past 5-6 years, so clearly a different approach is needed.

Several years ago, a close neighbor on Western Avenue just below our house lit off fireworks that exploded directly in front of our picture window, which amazingly did not shatter. Burned debris was found in our yard the following day. These incidents cause extreme trauma to our dogs, and other neighbors' dogs who have complained as well. Our dogs have jumped into the bathtub to hide, curled up in closets, and crawled under a bed, unable to get out without us both lifting the entire bed. Surely it must also be traumatic for veterans and persons with PTSD hearing explosions within close range.

This past July 4<sup>th</sup> was yet another terrible night with a "fireworks party" with guests in a black pickup truck transporting a rocket launcher to 373 First Avenue, the home of Jason Thomas. Police were called multiple times, photos sent, with no mitigation or police assistance. After walking partially up the driveway to this neighbor to ask them to stop, young children were witnessed operating the fireworks and launched one that nearly hit me in the head. The response from Jason Thomas was not of concern, but to yell at me for trespassing. Neighbors from every direction were screaming at them to stop, yet no police intervened. This chaos in our neighborhood would not be happening if our ordinances were enforced. The next day I sent an email to Paul Grenier along with the police chief, Andy Buteau, asking for messages

to go out to the community, which was done.

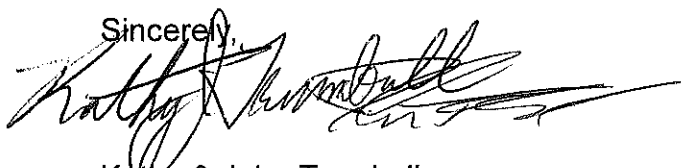
On July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021, I knocked on the door of this same home, politely attempted to explain the trauma our dogs were experiencing, and Jason Thomas slammed the door in my face.

It is time the City of Berlin and the Berlin Police take this issue seriously, draft an effective plan, and take steps to resolve it. We all should want our community and neighborhoods to be peaceful and safe. This lack of enforcing our ordinances is pitting neighbor against neighbor, causing chaotic house-to-house shouting, which occurred in my neighborhood. Here are a few suggestions:

1. Increase fines for use of fireworks use within close proximity of houses;
2. Increase police officers on duty for holidays and conduct stationary patrols (versus drive-by's);
3. Police physically visit homes reported/suspected of fireworks use, provide a copy of zoning regulation prohibiting fireworks within City limits, and inform residents of future fines for violation;
4. Disseminate a widespread public message to the residents regarding the prohibition of fireworks use within the City of Berlin; and
5. Provide public fireworks on holidays typical for celebrations at a safe venue, a large parking lot, or a specified location not in close proximity to homes and inform the public widely about the event(s).

We would appreciate a response to our request and thank you for your efforts and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kathy & John Trumbull", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kathy & John Trumbull