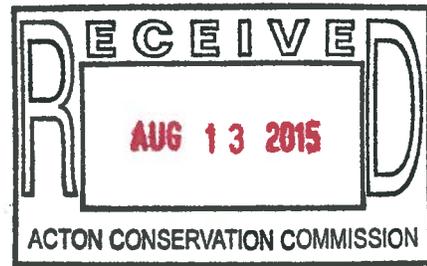


August 8, 2015

**SUBJECT:** Environmental Changes – 34 Robbins Street



Dear Mr. Bernhard,

The purpose of this communication is to provide you with some history and insight into the neighborhood where you have chosen to create a home for you and your family.

I am a lifelong resident of Acton, and have been very familiar with this neighborhood since my sister and her husband built their home at 110 Stow Street in the early 1950s.

I purchased my home at 94 Stow Street in the fall of 1965. In the Spring of 1966 we had our first flooding experience, which was to say the least very frightening. At that time I was in the process of renovating my home. By the grace of God there was no damage.

From my experiences flooding occurs in the Spring when we have both a rapid snow melt and 2 to 3 days of steady heavy rain. Subsequently, each time we have had a flooding incident I was cautiously optimistic that there would be no damage to my home. I felt this way because as soon as the water level was high enough to flow over Robbins Street, which runs parallel to the side of my property, the water level stabilized and gradually receded.

The look of the neighborhood changes dramatically. Stow Street from Tuttle Lane in Stow to Liberty Street at the baseball field has to be closed to thru traffic. The flooding starts on upper Stow Street just above where the brook flows under the road at the back left corner of 34 Robbins Street. The flooding stops at the highest point at the crossroads of Stow and Robbins Street, and begins again a short distance down Stow Street. The water level at about the midpoint between Robbins Street and Liberty Street is so deep that any car that attempts to drive through it is swamped. As the water level rises the stonewall on the property at 34 Robbins Street, which runs parallel to Stow Street, is completely submerged under water. My home becomes completely surrounded by water and becomes an island until the water begins to recede.

The most recent flooding occurred in March, about 3 years ago. I do not recall the exact year. This flooding was much different from what I had experienced in the past when the water got to the level where it flowed over Robbins Street. This time the water level continued to rise, and for the first time my garage was flooded. In spite of the fact that I elevated as many things as possible, I still experienced damage. It is clear to me that negative changes to the environment, both upstream and downstream contributed to the higher water level.

There is no way to predict when we will experience another flooding situation, but sadly when it occurs, and surely it will, both myself and our neighbors upstream will experience more extreme flooding and more damage.

Clearly my home at 94 Stow Street should never have been built at this location, however, in the late 1950s when the house was built, there were few regulations regarding building in wetlands.

I love my home, however, as changes that humans make to the environment in this area, I feel certain that during the next flood, which will surely occur, I will have damage to both my garage and house, and that will be heartbreaking for me, and financially draining. Although I have insurance, it never covers everything, and there is no way to replace treasured personal items that have the potential to get damaged or destroyed. My house is on a slab, so there is no basement, therefore the living space will be flooded.

I cannot speak for the neighbors who live behind 34 Robbins Street, but from my experience I am certain they will incur more damage than they did during the last flooding.

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The large amount of trees that were removed at 34 Robbins Street will result in severe damage to the overall environment, if it has not already done so. I can only speculate how the wildlife habitat has been affected, and the negative effect to the home's summer and winter energy consumption.

The recent excavation and deposit of several large trailer truck loads of fill is surely going to have a very negative impact on the water level during all future flooding, as there is now less area for storage during and after any future flooding.

Perhaps you are not aware that the water level continues to rise for at least a day after the snow melt and rain subsides. As the water upstream starts to recede the level of the water downstream rises.

It is my hope that this information will help in creating an understanding that the change to the terrain that has been created recently must be reversed as soon as possible. Nothing can be done to reverse the damage done by the tree removal, however, the terrain on the property at 34 Robbins Street must be restored in order to ensure that no additional property damage is incurred by myself and our neighbors in the future as a result of high water levels.

You may recall that you and I had a conversation shortly after you moved into the property at 34 Robbins Street. At that time I attempted to explain the flooding problem, and at that time you assured me that no additional changes would be made that would negatively affect the environment. The recent events have me very concerned, and it is frightening and heartbreaking to think about the potential damage that could occur to a home that I have worked so very hard to maintain over the last 50 years.

I wish you and your family well in the future, and I hope that you would wish the same for me and our neighbors.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sandra L. Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sandra L. Taylor

94 Stow Street

Acton, MA 01720

CC: Thomas Tidman  
Conservation Commissioner  
Town of Acton