

Bristol Selectboard

11/14/19

Holley Hall

Bristol, VT

05443

RECEIVED

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Town of Bristol

Dear Selectboard:

Thank you for considering the following letter. I have lived in the Town of Bristol for over 36 years now and have resided at 24 Spring Street for the last 29 years. During that time, flooding from run-off coming off Deerleap Mountain onto Mountain Street has caused my basement to be flooded numerous times. I have borne the brunt of this flooding in terms of damaging washout of the driveway I share with the house next door, debris washed onto my property and the slow deterioration of the deck at the back of my house to the point where it must now be taken down and replaced. But the main and most costly damage has been to the contents of my basement, which has suffered water damage to things being stored there plus to my furnace and hotwater heater. I have borne the costs of replacing these personally and in the case of the 2008 flood, with the help from FEMA funds.

On October 31st – Nov. 1st of this year the heavy rain run-off again caused flooding that washed out my driveway and around my back deck so severely that the wheel of a car that shares the driveway with me was completely washed out underneath it, a hole approx. 2 ½ feet deep dug by the water and the deck will need to be replaced next Spring. Plus there were deep washed out trenches in the driveway that I had to have more stone brought in again, \$170 worth this time. This was the second time this year the driveway has been washed out and needed repair that I bore the cost for.

By far the worst immediate damage has been caused to my basement. The flooding to my basement reached over 2 ½ of water flooding my basement. Currently, my hotwater heater is still working, but the water damage will almost certainly will shorten its life and it will need to be replaced within the next few months. My furnace is another story however. It is currently not working and the water / sediment damage has caused damage to the point it is inoperable and needs replacing. The estimated cost of the furnace, water heater and possibly needing to replace my fuel tank is approx. \$8,000. My back deck will cost approx. another \$11,000 as well.

All of this damage is caused when the storm drain on Mountain Street in front of the Elementary School is not kept clean of rocks and brush that inevitably washes down off the mountain during heavy periods

of rain. This is not unknown to the Town, yet on almost every occasion of heavy rain it is not inspected frequently during these storms until flooding is taking place across Mountain Street and a torrent of floodwater rages down behind the houses on the north side of Spring Street until it flows directly under my back deck, into my basement and then turns down my driveway out to Spring Street. Most times the flooding has required that myself, my sons and neighbors such as Russ Luke to try to get the drains opened up to slow the flooding across Mountain Street so it can be controlled enough until the Town finally arrives to clean the drain. We are not Town employees and should not be expected to maintain our streets to try to keep them in a safe manner. Understanding that this is not the only area where dangerous and destructive flooding can and does occur, I feel the Town has not done a good job during these storms. I also feel that I should not be held liable for the costs to my home resulting from these situations and am asking for reimbursement from the town for the damages resulting from this latest failure to keep the drain cleaned and able to manage these waters. When the Mountain Street drain system was being modified circa 2009, it was put to voters that this would solve the flooding problem and does, when the drains are sufficiently kept free of branches and rocks that plug it up.

I know many of the Selectboard members and generally over the years I have felt that the Board does a very good job overseeing the administration of our Town so I hope you will consider my request for the Town to reimburse me the cost of correcting the damage to my property and equipment in my basement. I would, of course, be able to submit any documentation in the form of receipts / estimates necessary for this latest incident and would ask for the opportunity to hear what the board will plan on doing to address my costs and what the plan will be going forward to make sure our streets are kept in a safe condition, especially in the school district like Mountain and Spring streets.

I will await your response to my concerns and thank you again for considering them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ernest Senecal". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "E" at the beginning and a long, horizontal flourish at the end.

Ernest Senecal

24 Spring Street

Bristol, VT 05443