

No doubt everyone was affected, in one way or another, by 2018's heavy rainfall. But this past year's rainfall proved nothing short of catastrophic for those of us who live in low-lying neighborhoods like Briarcliff and Ridgefield.

Our basements and ground floors flooded, again and again. Our yards turned into swimming pools. We tore out walls, replaced carpets, dragged soggy sofas and boxes of ruined books up to the road. We've been sickened by chronic exposure to mold, which homeowners' insurance doesn't cover, and forced to pay steep and ever-rising prices for flood insurance.

During Hurricane Florence, one man who rents a duplex next to Ridgefield's recreation facilities had to rescue an elderly couple, along with their pets, one by one, in a canoe. This situation is unsustainable.

As in years past, many residents reached out to town staff and council. All our requests for help have met with variants on "There's nothing we can do."

But is that really true? We know the problem will only get worse, given climate change and the pace of urbanization in Chapel Hill. Downstream property owners cannot continue to bear the burden of upstream development, coupled with severe weather events. So, we urge you to take action now, before the spring rains bring another round of misery:

1. Clear all the blockages and deepen the channel in Little Creek.
2. Create more storm-water impoundments upstream, as the town's own watershed study recommends.
3. Investigate preventive technologies, and get back to us. Companies are responding to climate change by making reusable, removable flood barriers that come in pieces like giant Legos. They can be assembled and disassembled in a matter of hours, and there are different kinds for different applications. See: <http://www.flooddefensegroup.com/>. You salt the road before and during snowfalls. Why not make flood barriers a standard preventive measure before and during heavy rains? If the town can't legally use public lands for this purpose, we'll gladly give you easements through our yards.
4. For properties that cannot be salvaged by any of these measures, we ask that you aggressively pursue buyouts, whether through federal, state, or county funding. See: https://www.nj.gov/dep/greenacres/blue_flood_ac.html

Other towns all around the country are meeting this challenge.
It's time we joined them.

Sincerely,
Ann J. Loftin
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Signatories on separate page will be handed in before the meeting.