

Before I begin my 3 minutes, does everyone know where Briarcliff is?

Briarcliff was built in the late 1960's and early 1970s, at the end of a decade when Chapel Hill's population more than doubled. Perhaps high demand made it possible for the developer, Bruce Crumpton, to put a few hundred houses in a low-lying area, much of it now designated as floodplain. Looking at the GIS map, I counted at least 60 houses that are either entirely or partially in the floodplain, where, I think we can all agree, large single family houses should not have been built, especially not on concrete slabs.

However, the town council approved the plan and the town manager would have signed off on it. It may have seemed like a good idea at the time.

But the water situation in my neighborhood has reached a dripping point, critical mess, if you will.

Take my house: In the eight years I've owned it, I've been flooded twice: Each time, several feet of stormwater, throughout the entire 1500-square-foot ground floor. The water pours out of Little Creek, and flows downhill to my house, rising above the 4' chain link fence in the backyard and surrounding the house on three sides, like a moat. Then water seeps in through the bricks and cement blocks. My \$1K flood door protected just one thing: the door. Even during heavy rains, stormwater penetrates the exterior walls, and sewer water comes up through the shower and floods the bathroom. I've spent at least \$30K I didn't have on repairs. Home Depot owns me.

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I asked Ram Jack what it might cost to raise up a two-story 3,000 square foot house, and the short answer was: forget about it. Briarcliff's slab construction was built for the ages. Nor, I'm reliably told by contractors, can you effectively waterproof our exterior walls, because slab foundations of that era were porous.

When I reached out to my neighborhood listserv to see if other people were struggling with water problems, I was deluged with horror stories. As you can see by the number of signatures on this petition, the burden has grown far heavier than individual homeowners can bear. This mess is not our fault.

Could you appoint an ambassador to come over, go house to house, talk to each of us, and make some recommendations asap?

The town approved this subdivision, the county gets our property taxes, and you continue to approve impervious-surface development at higher elevations. To paraphrase Bob Dylan, you don't need a watershed study to know which way the water flows.

