

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
907 Emory Drive
Chapel Hill 27517

Signatories on separate page will be handed in before the meeting.

Signatories to the Flooding Petition Jan. 10, 2019

Rabea Baloch, 1303 Willow Dr.

Rebecca Bruening, 110 Willow Dr.

Steve Caiola, 505 Colony Woods Dr.

Janet Chen, 604 Tinkerbelle Rd.

Kathleen Clissord, 1916 Tryon Ct.

Meade & Betsey Christian, 816 Churchill Dr.

Maria Christopher, 720 Churchill Dr.

Kathryn Cloughly, 404 Overland Dr.

Lisa & Steve English, 1200 LeClair St.

Sara Fields, 503 Belmont St.

Charles & Joan Harris, 813 Churchill Dr.

Daniel Hatley, 1308 LeClair St.

Dave Hartman, 419 Ridgefield Rd.

Charles Humble, 910 Emory Dr.

Jody Jaw....

Ken Larsen, 807 Emory Dr.

Darren Legge, 305 Spruce St.

Ann J. Loftin, 907 Emory Dr.

Nicolas Lozano, Ridgefield Rd. ext.

Thomas Luntz, 1916 Tryon Ct.

John Mackey, 413 Thornwood Rd.

Andrew Mannebach, 1303 Willow Dr.
Brian Mawby, 404 Overland Dr.
Alexandra Mayer, 507 Colony Woods Dr.
Rachel & Simon McGorman, 425 Ridgefield Rd.
Larry Meek, 500 Longleaf Dr.
Rachel Narula, 1102 Willow Dr.
Alison & Zack Nimchuk, 808 Churchill Dr.
Elizabeth O'Nan, 420 Hickory Dr.
Jeff Prather, TK
Caryl Price, 1705 Fountain Ridge Rd.
Jane Provan, 995 Grove St.
Shabbar Ranapurwala, 110 Willow Dr.
Robert Ratcliffe, 504 Belmont St.
Janet Schoendorf, 1925 Fountain Ridge Rd.
Jennifer Schulz, 437 Ridgefield Rd.
David Schwartz, 415 Ridgefield Rd.
Nancy Shepherd, 1106 Willow Dr.
Patricia Smith, 413 Thornwood Rd.
Erica Sparkenbaugh, 902 Emory Dr.
Donna & Mike Stanley, 426 Ridgefield Rd.
Sherry Stockton, TK
Jon & Alison Volmer, 306 Spruce St.
Deborah & Jonathan Wahl
Susan & Bill Ward, 420 Hickory TK
Kristi Webb, 105 Deerwood Ct.

Andra Wilkinson, 305 Spruce St.

Todd Woerner, 105 Deerwood Ct.

Lynne & Andrew Young, 600 Emory Dr.

Michele Zembow, 1309 Wildwood Dr.









Re: Flooding petition

From: Jim Ott (jim.ott@triangle-systems.com)

To: ajloftin@sbcglobal.net

Date: Tuesday, January 8, 2019, 4:06 PM EST

Hi Ann,

I apologize for the initial attitude but I've been covered up today with telemarketers and I almost didn't pick up the call.

We lived at 907 Emory until 1988 and there was never any water in our basement while we lived there. Water did come up on the back part of our lot but never threatened our house. There was a period where it seemed to be getting deeper and some nearby houses actually had some water in their basements. We approached the town and got them to clear the Little Creek channel and things improved dramatically after that. Any impediment to a clear path for the water in Little Creek causes it to "shoulder up" and flow sideways in addition to straight through the channel. I can remember sitting on my back deck while the water was "flashing" and watching the water actually flowing right to left, basically perpendicular to the natural flow of Little Creek.

Regards,
Jim Ott

March 2009

Dear Potential Buyer,

Our real estate agent asked us to write this letter to explain the water-related issues concerning our house.

When we purchased this house in 1995, we were aware that it was in a flood plain, and that we would be required to have flood insurance on the house. One of the great things about this house is the fact that the woods behind us are owned by the Army Corps of Engineers, and will almost certainly never be developed, because it is designated as a flood plain. This gives the house a great deal of privacy. In addition, we often see interesting wildlife, from deer to owls to hawks, etc. In the spring, we hear the sounds of nature, including the frogs singing at night. We enjoy a huge variety of birds at our birdfeeder, and we have a family of hummingbirds visit us every summer. We have become quite spoiled by having woods behind our house. We knew when we bought the house, however, that with this advantage also came some risk.

Before we purchased the house, we asked the seller and the neighbors about past flooding. According to all these people, the yard would sometimes have standing water after a heavy rain, but the water had never come close to the house.

One year later, in September 1996, Hurricane Fran hit. It was the worst storm in North Carolina since Hurricane Hazel in 1954. During that storm, Chapel Hill received 7.81 inches of rain in a short time frame (Raleigh received 8.8 inches). Much of eastern North Carolina was flooded. In addition, there was extensive flooding in Chapel Hill, including Eastgate Shopping Center, much of the golf course at the Chapel Hill Country Club, and our house at 907 Emory Drive.

During that storm, the water rose approximately one foot on the outside of the house, with about 6 inches of standing water actually in the house. The water stayed only for a few hours, and quickly receded after the rain stopped and the creeks were able to drain the water away. We had no permanent damage to the house, except for ruined carpet and some personal items that had been left on the floor (photos and other personal items that had not yet been unpacked).

Four years later, in July of 2000, Chapel Hill experienced another unusual flood. According to news reports at the time, Chapel Hill received approximately 7 inches of rain in about 6 hours. Once again, there was extensive flooding in Chapel Hill, including Eastgate and the Country Club. (The creek in the flood plain behind our house runs between Eastgate and the Country Club.) Once again, we had about a foot of water outside the house, and about 6 inches of standing water inside. The water remained only for a few hours, and we again had no permanent damage except for carpet.

Since that second flood, Eastgate Shopping Center has done extensive flood control measures, and it has experienced a renaissance, with a new Trader Joes, Ace Hardware, Starbucks and a number of other new shops deciding to locate there. Although there have been several significant storms since that time, neither Eastgate nor our house have flooded since then.

Amy Harvey

From: Ann J Loftin <ajloftin@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Thursday, January 10, 2019 2:01 PM
To: Amy Harvey
Subject: Fw: Flooding in Chapel Hill

Hi Amy,
Can you possibly include this email with the petition?
It's a response from the Orange County stormwater manager.
Annie
(860) 248-0505 cell

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Michael Harvey <mharvey@orangecountync.gov>
To: Ann J Loftin <ajloftin@sbcglobal.net>
Cc: Travis Myren <tmyren@orangecountync.gov>; Craig Benedict <cbenedict@orangecountync.gov>; James Bryan <jbryan@orangecountync.gov>
Sent: Thursday, January 10, 2019, 12:01:59 PM EST
Subject: RE: Flooding in Chapel Hill

Hello Ms. Loftin:

I think it is perfectly reasonable and appropriate for you to reach out to local elected officials of the Town in an effort to identify your concerns and seek solutions.

In completing some research, the section of Briarcliff you reside in was platted/recorded in 1970 (Plat Book 18 Page 106) and approved by the Town of Chapel Hill. The plat was signed by the Town Manager at the time, who attested that all improvements required by local ordinances were installed (plat was signed on December 4, 1968). I have no knowledge or ability to review applicable Town standards as they existed at the time this plan was reviewed, approved, or recorded.

I am uncertain if the area in question was designated as being located within special flood hazard area in 1970 as I am uncertain as to when the Town became a member of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) adopting regulations associated with addressing development in an around identified flood hazard areas. It might be prudent for you to contact the Town and inquire.

I will say, although it has no bearing on the questions posed, the County became a member of the NFIP in 1976 by adopting a flood damage prevention ordinance. I remind you same has no bearing on your inquiry as the property was located within the planning jurisdiction of the Town of Chapel Hill at this time and was not subject to County regulation(s) including flood damage prevention.

I should also point out a property's location in the floodplain does not preclude its development. It just has to be developed in accordance with applicable standards.

Again I have no knowledge or ability to comment on 'what' the Town's policy/regulations were, nor do I know the extent of flood designations in your area, related to this issue in 1970 when the plat was approved/recorded. The subdivision, as well as all individual lots, were developed in accordance with applicable standards enforced at the time of their development.

Thanks for reaching out.

Michael D. Harvey AICP, CFM, CZO

Current Planning Supervisor – Planner III

Orange County Planning Department

131 West Margaret Lane

PO Box 8181

(919) 245-2597 (phone)

(919) 644-3002 (fax)

Pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 132, correspondence sent and received from this account is a public record and may be disclosed to third parties.

From: Ann J Loftin [mailto:ajloftin@sbcglobal.net]

Sent: Thursday, January 10, 2019 11:26 AM

To: Michael Harvey

Subject: Flooding in Chapel Hill

Hi Michael,

We met back in October, I think, right after Florence? It's all a blur, but thanks again for coming over. I am still trying to get my house back in shape. I am so deep in debt to Home Depot, they basically own me.

I am attaching a petition on the subject of flooding, that I will present to the Mayor and Council on Jan. 16. Feel free to forward it along to anyone who cares. I sent it to Chapel Hill's stormwater engineer and to the town's emergency management staff for comment, but they did not respond.

Former town council member Ed Harrison pointed out that an Orange County planner must have approved creating all those building lots in the floodplain back in the 1960s, when Chapel Hill's population DOUBLED from 12,573 to approx. 28,000 in 1975.

Is Ed correct? Would that have been a county official? If so, may I know who did this, and why? I know the developer who built the subdivision was Bruce Crumpton. He built Briarcliff/Ridgefield and Colony Woods, and made a big bundle doing it. He died a few years ago.

I've looked at the GIS map and as best I can figure, 63 lots/houses in this subdivision were built in the floodplain, either entirely (as with mine) or partially.

I sent a note around to our neighborhood asking if anyone else was having problems with flooding and, pun intended, I was FLOODED with horror stories, photos, cries for help. So I wrote this petition,* and am still gathering signatures.

*Many towns are meeting this challenge with new flood-control technologies or state-funded buyouts. See petition for two examples.

I hope that the town and the county can get together with the state to throw some weight behind this terrible problem. Photo below shows neighbor's backyard as the water begins to come in. Their fence is 6' tall. Their house has flooded four times since 2009! Homeowners cannot continue to shoulder this burden!!!

Do let me know your thoughts?

Many thanks,

Annie

Ann J. Loftin

907 Emory Drive

Chapel Hill 27517

(860) 248-0505 cell