

August 27, 2021

Dear Brian Keezer (Project Manager of the Church Road Readfield Sidewalk):

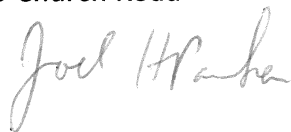
We would like to put our concerns in writing to you, as we are not sure our busy work schedules, along with raising our five children, will permit us to attend the meetings associated with the referenced subject matter. Accordingly, we want you, as Project Manager, to ensure our concerns are shared and considered on our behalf at all meetings pertaining to this matter. Please note the following:

1. The proposed sidewalk will result in our vehicle ALWAYS being parked on the sidewalk. As you may be aware, we do not have a lot of frontage on our house. Hence, our driveway is short. The addition of a sidewalk will make an already short frontage to our home even shorter. The suburban & Ford F350 we drive to transport our five children to and from school and various activities just barely fits in our driveway now. Once the sidewalk is installed, it will no longer fit in our driveway. It will fit in our driveway AND on the new sidewalk.
2. During snowy winters, the snowbank is so tall that there is little to no space to snow blow. Even now, with such small frontage to our home, the snow gets piled up near our house. If a sidewalk is built on our side of Church Road, and the town's snow removal methods push the snow up against our home, our basement will flood and cause structural damage to our house. Our Homeowners Insurance Company, USAA, upon hearing of the town's plan to build a sidewalk on our side of Church Road, has come out to inspect our basement and research the situation and concurs that flooding will result if the sidewalk is built in front of our home.
3. Finally, we have spoken with several homeowners on the other side of Church Road, where they have plenty of frontage to their homes to accommodate a sidewalk without having the structural damage and issues to their driveways and parking as we would, and they are not opposed to building a sidewalk on their side of the road. Additionally, the homeowners on our side of Church Road are in opposition to a sidewalk on our side of Church Road. If necessary, we will gladly get signatures from the neighbors on Church Road.

We appreciate your attention to this matter, and look forward to a response.

Respectfully,

Virginia and Joel Parker  
39 Church Road



Given to me by  
Bill Drake

Sketch on separate sheet

Owner Comments:

In developing this Church Rd. sidewalk project, I believe it is important to understand the history of how the present street evolved and how/why that has resulted in a highly unsafe street for resident usage. I have lived at my present residence for over 30 years and believe I can provide creditable information that can be used to create the safest street for all users - not just motor vehicles.

Sometime before I moved to Readfield, a drainage culvert that was under Church Rd. approximately between 30 and 39 Church Rd. was removed by the town's road committee. This culvert was removed because the property owner of 39 Church Rd did not like the drainage water draining on his land. Town road maps continue to show this now non-existent culvert to this day. This is important as it shows how unknowledgeable the town is on the actual conditions of the street.

About 20 years ago, the town decided that a drainage ditch was needed on the northwest side of the street. This ditch was dug with insufficient specification, without monitoring by the town, without any consideration for non-motorized usage by the residents, without any knowledge of the hydrology of the adjacent land nor any consideration of the environmental impact that the ditch would have on the land. The end result was the following:

1. The ditch was dug deeper in front of my house than the under road culvert between 44 Church Rd and 39 Church Rd. This resulted with a very heavy rain (greater than 2 inches) a small lake forming in the ditch. We named the lake "Lake Bracy" after the senior citizen living at 39 Church Rd. Approximately 90% of all water in the ditch permeates downward through the soil, joins the water table that exists on top of the clay hillside and drains downhill under Church Rd.
2. The entire Church Rd. hillside has this clay base. The topsoil is from 4' to 6' thick on top of it. Water does not penetrate this clay base so a water table forms on top of it and drains down the hillside. This clay base is why most basements in the Readfield corner area flood when it rains heavily and/or the snow all melts. It is why leach fields have to be built up to have sufficient percolation depth. And it is why you never see any water draining in the ditch between the Union Meeting House and the 44 Church Rd culvert. In fact, the only time I see any water in the ditch is between 14 Church Rd and the corner.
3. In digging the ditch, the contractor must have had a live snake to follow. It wandered all over the right-of-way being so close to the paved roadway in some areas that there is no shoulder. In a couple of areas, it was so close that the blacktop roadway broke off into the ditch. Although parallel parking is permitted for almost all of Church Rd on both sides, there is no shoulder sufficient for people to park without using most of the travel lane. When people do park (mostly in the travel lane), I have seen elderly people exit the passenger side of a car and fall in down in the ditch. Also, when vehicles are parked in the travel lane, pedestrians walk around the vehicle in the center of the road way. On several occasions, motorists (usually at night) have ventured on to the shoulder (parking?) and their vehicle has fallen into the ditch requiring a tow vehicle to extract it.
4. Pedestrians walking on the ditch side of the street do so at high risk because they mostly have to walk in the road. Many use only the southwest side when walking in both directions and this can be equally unsafe. Several years ago, I made the local superintendent of schools aware of how unsafe it was for track and cross country teams to practice running on Church Rd. She immediately took action to preclude their further use of Church Rd. The Union Meeting House conducts several public events every year and they do not have sufficient on-site parking for the crowds they draw. They also do not let people park in the shoulder and have made arrangements with nearby businesses on their side of the street to use their parking as well as on-street parking on Main st. Still people parking

away from the Union Meeting House have to get to it by either walking on the unsafe shoulder or trespassing on private land.

5. The ditch in front of 44 Church Rd. was dug so deep that the leach field in the front yard was compromised and a new leach field had to be built by the town. In addition, the ditch undermined and weakened the ditch bank to the point that an adjacent tree's roots were weakened allowing the tree to fall over into the ditch. The homeowner had to take care of correcting this error. Further up the street, whenever there is a heavy rain, there is also a distinct odor from the ditch which may indicate a leach field draining into the ditch.

I consider street lights to be important to safe pedestrian travel or why have them. When the Main St. sidewalk was put in, which side of the street the streetlights were on was not considered. As a result there are several areas on the Main St sidewalk that are dark. On Church Rd. the streetlights are on the northwest side (the same as the ditch) and should either remain there if the sidewalk is created there or moved to the other side if the sidewalk is placed there. In other words, they need to be on the same side.

When I had my in-ground swimming pool put in, it was dug to a depth of about 5 feet where the clay started. I went to the town road committee to see if they had any objection to my placing all the excavated soil in the ditch to fill it in leaving a gentle swale to catch the run-off from the road. They had no objection and I have never had any drainage issues in front of my property. In fact, we don't have "Lake Bracy" anymore either.

Speeding is a very real issue on Church Rd. Many consider it a drag strip from the corner to the fairgrounds. And this speeding makes pedestrian travel on the shoulders extremely hazardous. That fact is easily verified by the vast number of single vehicle accidents each year in Maine that involve pedestrians. Active measures are totally ineffective. There currently are no effective passive measures. Before there was any road striping, many vehicles would move to the center of the road whenever they saw a pedestrian in the shoulder. After the solid double yellow lines were installed, drivers are now reluctant to cross the double line and using the shoulder is now more of a hazard. So if the sidewalk project can include some passive speed control features (such as elevated crosswalks), it might slow the traffic down somewhat.

Somehow, this sidewalk project must eliminate the ditch. If this man-made hazard is not addressed and remediated, then this whole project will have done little to make the Church Rd residential and business area as safe as possible for all of Readfield's residents.

Finally, I have repeatedly invited this town's road commissioner, road committee members, and road maintenance personnel to walk the street with me and learn of all the issues I have discussed above but to no avail. I sincerely offer this same invitation to any and all sidewalk project personnel to see first hand these issues and to avoid making the same mistakes twice.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Given to me by  
Bill Drake