

50 Jason Street
Arlington, MA 02476
February 13, 2019

Select Board
Arlington, MA 02476

Dear Board Members:

The morning after the snowstorm has revealed what is too common on my street: the snow has been plowed from the roadway into the previously cleared sidewalk. The sidewalk in front of my house is filled with large chunks of frozen, icy snow. The sidewalk on the other side appears relatively clear this time. See the photos on the next page (taken just now). The snow is cleared to within inches of the curb on the even side of the street and the debris covers the sidewalk. The odd side of the street is not cleared so near the curb and the sidewalk is still clear from last night.

The cause is overeager snow plow drivers clearing the pavement too close to the curb and at too high a speed. Once the center of the roadway is clear, the plows can proceed quite quickly and throw the snow right out of the street. By that time, of course, the snow has gotten plenty of salt in it and has become slushy. I deduce that plows going downhill in front of my house are much faster than those going uphill on the other side of the street.

This all takes place in the wee hours of the night, when those of us who have tried to get ahead of the snow have gone to bed. By morning, the sidewalk has become a jagged mass of heavy ice that is almost impossible to clear. It is too heavy for reasonable shoveling and too hard and massive for a snowblower to deal with.

The Town warns homeowners again and again not to throw the snow from sidewalks and driveways into the street. Yet "cowboy" drivers do not show the appropriate consideration for the work done by homeowners. Sometimes I think that it would be easier for me if the street was not plowed at all and I was required to clear both the sidewalk AND my side of the street. At least I would only have to do it once and no boulders of ice would be involved.

Can the Board direct the Director of Public Works to instruct the plow drivers to limit their speed so as not to throw snow into the sidewalks? I am not looking forward to the cleanup that will be necessary this morning. I am even less eager to face it again after an even sogger snowfall later in the season.

Sincerely,



David Bean
Town Meeting Member, Precinct 8



Odd side of street. The snow is only cleared to within about two feet of the curb. The sidewalk is quite clear and passable.



Even side of street. Note how close the plow has come to the curb and how much snow has been thrown on the sidewalk.