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date: 08/03/2021 12:12 PM
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cc: **Cheung** <atwoodcheung@verizon.net>, **Joan Barbosa** <joantbarbosa@gmail.com>, **Rick Barbosa** <richardsbarbosa@gmail.com>

To the Town of Arlington Select Board –

We are taxpaying homeowners at 86 Mount Vernon Street and 16-year residents in the Town of Arlington. I am writing to you about the Town's tree in front of our house. It is a Norway Maple which is:

- a widely known invasive with shallow roots;*
- top heavy from pre-2021 Town prunings;*
- overhanging our roof without proper clearance; and*
- diseased from active carpenter ant activity.*

In 2018, we reported the carpenter ants to the Arlington Tree Warden and was told the Town did not have the resources to treat it and that the tree was 'OK'. 3 years later, the carpenter ant activity continues (see attached photo of fresh sawdust on the sidewalk from July 16, 2021) and the Town tree is a fall risk. As we all know, the recent storms and ensuing fallen trees and limbs have been frightful. In the most recent July 6th microburst, our next door neighbor's car at 82 Mount Vernon Street was dented by a large broken branch from the Town tree in front of their house (see attached photo). Thankfully, their small grandchildren were not injured.

Four months ago in March 2021, I submitted an online request that the Town prune the tree outside our house to provide sufficient clearance from our roof. I believe a 10-15 foot clearance is required. We were told there was a backlog and that it would be pruned within 2-6 weeks. As I followed up in vain each month with emails to the Tree Warden, I finally checked the online Request/Answer Center, and found it was marked 'completed' which is false. Please see attached photos from March 2021 when the pruning request was submitted to present day - they show no change to the tree or its branches.

Between the carpenter ants and the terrifying incident at our neighbor's house, we have jointly requested that the Town trees in front of our homes be removed for the sake of public safety. Our block is a main thoroughfare for elementary school students walking to the Brackett School. Given how fragile, hollowed out and highly vulnerable to breakage the diseased trees are, it won't even take a storm for a branch to break off or for the tree to tip over and cause incalculable loss of property and/or life.

We jointly emailed the Town Manager and DPW Director on July 18, 2021 but received no response. The Tree Warden continues to maintain the trees are fine and even fabricated dates of when it was pruned. As I work from home, our retired neighbors have a doorbell camera, and we have photo documentation, we know this to be false. As of August 3, 2021, the Town tree at 86 Mount Vernon St hangs, unpruned and precariously, over our roof by our daughter's bedroom.

The fruitless email exchanges with the Tree Warden combined with the lack of response from both the Town Manager and DPW Director to our inquiries and requests left us no choice but to escalate this to the Select Board.

This ongoing problem has been routinely ignored by the Town of Arlington since 2018 to the point of negligence. On a practical note, in all the time that has elapsed - in being told by the Tree Warden that the Town trees are fine/have been pruned on fabricated dates/can't be treated for carpenter ants - this high-risk situation could easily have been remedied. We are requesting that this letter be treated as official correspondence and urge you to address the highly unsafe situation the Town trees present at 82 and 86 Mount Vernon as soon as possible.

*Thank you in advance for your attention in this matter,
Nancy Chew and Atwood Cheung
86 Mount Vernon Street*

*Rick and Joan Barbosa
82 Mount Vernon Street*

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