

Subject: "when charity collides" [2025/09-10,12]

Regional Charity 1 (RC1): President,

Thank you for taking a look around, asking questions (I hadn't before considered): it helped spark further insight, clarification and (re)considerations (for the letters that follow).

I am hoping you, or your parent organization (given their broader/national-reach), might have better access to Advocacy? The Town keeps 'stalling-out'... I first reached-out to Town Hall on Labor Day; my "neighbors helping neighbors, take three" (NHN, below) letter was delivered over a month ago.

Summary of recent-events/efforts (since we met), below... Perhaps I should've waited until I heard back, first... but that can tend to take weeks/months (or never), alone. [Note— No shame/blame/offense/disrespect intended towards any/all involved... just detailing 'my quest' here (to whomever might finally help me move-forward).]

Be well.
"Silent"

[Yesterday:]
Town Welfare (TW),

Over-the-phone is incompatible with my disabilities. That Monday at 10:30 works for an in-office-appointment.

TC1 'stepped back' (a bit) upon finding out RC1 might be able to help, final word: "See what you get with the organization offering assistance now, and circle back to me when you have all of that buttoned up."

My most immediate concern is for the vine-choked trees that threaten my home (specifically, my daughter's bedroom). They sway disconcertingly in the breeze and most likely shall not survive the next wind/ice storm... regarding which, the Town Admin stated: "Unfortunately, the Town's DPW is not able to remove the other trees on your property for liability reasons." I offered to sign a liability waiver, as a Justice of the Peace: to which there was no acknowledgement.

Be well.
"Silent"

[Today: "NHN, take thirteen(ish)"]
Town: Select Board Chair, Admin, Welfare,

As I struggle with real-time communication (with strangers), please allow me to best lay-out my situation(s) prior to our in-person sit-down (employing the format I am best-equipped for: in-writing)...

Landscaping— I reached-out to a local provider (owned by a former classmate) yesterday over email (below)... Am considering reaching-out to the other companies in the area once I have better answers to include within that initial-outreach (which I am hoping you could provide)... [Notes: I only had managed to mow the upper-lawn twice this summer: leaving me hurt for days... The wilderness having taken-over the rest of the land... I used pruning shears for but ten minutes last week: left me injured.]

Septic— A concern which remains unaddressed... The tank needs to be pumped, the pipe has roots growing through it, the leach-field is a sinkhole that gets deeper every year (while the frost-season fast-approaches)... [Perhaps 'leakage' being why the well-water occasionally turns 'unwell,' making me worse?]

Plumbing— Merely a matter of but a number of small(ish) issues never with the spare \$hundreds to put towards over the years: the remediation of which would make living here easier, better, cleaner.

Rotting door/window-frames, falling-apart porches, firewood shelter— Best I can figure, all those fall under nobody's purview, so far: or elsewhere better-directed their noble efforts/funding instead.

Attic (crawlspaces)— Nary a look taken up there for years, uncertain what condition that space is in: figuring it better to not know what's going wrong (so long as it remains hidden), being as there's been nothing possibly (by oneself) to be done whatsoever about that 'unpleasantness lurking' just out-of-reach/sight/mind...

Middle Chimney— Needs repointing and to be capped (occasionally have to fish a bird/squirrel corpse from out-the-bottom)... The firewood chimney is in decent shape outside, but the stove needs help with the interior-exhaust pipe, outside-air intake, tiles, and a proper-wall behind (rather than the bare-insulation it abuts).

Radiant Heating/Cooling— An estimate (if only but to install the tubing into the upstairs floors, plugged into nothing: as presently the downstairs ceilings are missing: now's the time,) would be nice... I am also happy to product-test any heating/cooling systems that our local HVAC providers might seek to real-world test-drive... [Note: as the downstairs floors have no insulation, now would seem the ideal time to run the tubing there, too (hopefully then insulating and sealing-shut, permanently).]

Barn— An issue which remains unaddressed... rodents/varmints, broken window, leaky roof, rotting siding, no water/heat/insulation, underpowered electrical... [I name thee "Purgatory."]

Car— The dealership knowingly sold me a 'broken' BRAND automobile (being all I could barely afford) that would not pass inspection: but, soon enough that shall no longer be required by the State... [Even longer now can be put-off-fixing this soon-to-be-named "Public Safety Hazard."] My new-used car could really use a proper looking-at, discounted/charitable fixing-up by a local mechanic (and a far-more-reasonable APR: from the one-remaining local bank)..?

Note— All this week long have I been battling a gut infection, yet again, alongside other chronic/untreated 'conditions' (which tend to worsen as the weather darkens): without any health insurance... Don't even get me started. [Note: I have lost five-more pounds of late (making that thirty-down these past six months)...]

I require a Local Advocate: such to speak (up) for me, and to help correlate all of these disparate entities/issues/concerns/situations(/conversations, below).

Please, Help Me?
Your Neighbor,
"Silent"

ps. Below— Last what I wrote to the others, awaiting(/hoping for) a (positive) response... [Note: as to any 'inaccuracies' (throughout, herein) regarding RC1/TC1's 'indicated involvement' would mostly be the result of our meetings in real-time (with little in-writing to reference), which I struggle with: most of said conversations having since faded into half-forgotten memory.]

[Monday:]

Community Charity 1 (CC1),

Concern– Could having CC1 come inspect my (crappy) house result in it being ‘condemned’ by the State?

Federal Department 1 (FD1)– I could have afforded \$100/mo for that program had not my (paid-off 90k-miles) car needed to be replaced (with a 140k+miles car): which is \$149/mo plus \$30/mo increase in insurance (not to mention the repairs it soon will require)... [Financially, I am ruined: just to stay on-the-road.] Note: I am only ##-years-old, as such: too-young to qualify for FD1's \$10k grant.

Electrical– TC1 was arranging with an electrician to get an estimate (but that seems to have stalled-out).

Missing Interior Walls– Requires an electrician to complete their work before the insides can be finished-off. I stuffed-insulated as best I could around what remains-to-be-done (years ago).

Old Insulation– There is no insulation in any of the downstairs floors. I am uncertain what the entry/bathroom/laundry exterior walls are filled with (never having had reason/desire to cut one open, take a look inside). The upstairs landing/bathroom/closet exterior wooden-walls have vintage pre-1950s ‘uselessness’ inside: being the coldest areas of the house in winter (come summer: the hottest). Might those walls qualify for cellulose blown-insulating, by you?

Foundation– The last time I got into that crawlspace I got hurt, then stuck (for nearly an hour (days before anyone would have noticed)). I do not know what condition that-all is in there other than the few holes I can see daylight through (which rodents and outside-air make use of). Any help would be appreciated.

Roofing– I am hoping RC1 could handle that: they'll be here to take a proper-look, eventually. TC1 also indicated the possibility of getting a roofing estimate, last I heard.

Energy Audit and Inspection– It has been a decade+ since anyone-qualified inspected this place. It would, of course, help to know what's really wrong here, everywhere (rather than taking my word for it, unknowingly): what's going to fail next/when, where's best to start and how/why, with whom?

Everything Else– I understand and appreciate your limitations. It looks like this will take the help of several groups to get my house pointed-away from ‘condemnation.’ Collaboration would be appreciated between these entities: such to avoid wasted-effort, misunderstandings; maximize efficiency, minimize homeowner ‘oopsies.’

Inquiry– Do “walls to the outside” include those that (partly/mostly) face exterior (un)insulated porches? That would describe three of my downstairs ‘east-wing’ missing-walls; two others face but the bare-outside, one faces the kitchen, the last-pair between office and living rooms: eight walls total to finish-off the downstairs.

Be well.

“Silent”

[Tuesday:]

Town Charity 1 (TC1),

RC1 will either repair the roof or handle the electrical (should my situation pass their approval-board process (their president's optimistic, upon first-glance): which won't even be brought before them until a month-or-so from now). CC1 is unable to offer assistance with neither prospect.

Do you happen to have a preference for which TC1 might generously help me with? Note: RC1 rough-guessed the electrical would come in at around/under \$5,000. Didn't even speculate as to the roofing (without looking; which wouldn't see remediation until summer). But perhaps a local electrician/roofer might be more inclined to offer a better discount: neighbors helping neighbors and such (fingers-crossed)?

My preference would be for electrical: so then can I resume stuffing insulation (such to better 'weather' the forthcoming winter) in preparation for drywall, regarding which CC1 stated: "there is a possibility this could be covered" for "walls to the outside." [Awaiting quantification.]

Be well.
"Silent"

[Yesterday:]
Local Landscaper ø (LLZ),

[Been awhile since last we crossed paths. Hoping all's well, or at least going better than with me...] I have been physically disabled for over a decade now: my property has fallen into disrepute along the way. Might your company provide any charity services for struggling neighbors? Any help would be appreciated. [The Town *might* be able to cover some of the cost: I have an appointment soon(ish) to determine what that situation may be(come).]

Your Neighbor,
"Silent"

<UPDATE> Town Welfare (TW),

[That Monday: (after our appointment at the local police station...)]

While awaiting written-word from the others... Regarding "Safety"... [A keyword you kept dropping?] Nature— Vine-choked trees, teetering drunkenly/menacingly towards us. Electrical, Septical— Not up-to-code: significant issues? Wood Stove— About to start using again, as the primary source of heat... stovepipe, air-intake, chimney-sleeve, new chimney-feed, old 'capped' chimney-feed: were half-assed-done a few years back by unrepentant criminals with a history of fraud (found out later)... needs to be inspected/updated by someone licensed properly for such work, please? Ducts— Never been cleaned-out (best I can recall), likely festering/belching mold/mildew/allergens. [Health+Safety?] Plumbing— Hasn't once been inspected since the previous purchase-and-sale, back in 200#. [Well-water remains questionable?] Roof, Attic— Unknown, but likely ungood: silicone caulking applied to every nail and screw atop, ten(ish) years ago (to stop the dribbles). [Mold/mildew/insects permeate crawlspaces?] Subfloors— Riddled with hundreds (by now) of desiccated rodent-corpse half-buried in their burrows throughout (and some in the walls): having accumulated over the past few decades of poison being dropped within easy-reach. [(over-)Saturated (unsanctionable) dirt just below main living-area uninsulated floors?] Primary Concern— Please do not declare anything 'unfit' unless/until a remediation has already been arranged for (at a pro-bono/discounted-heavily rate, preferably)? I would really rather not (in)advertently implicate my poor home as 'condemnable' (/find myself forced to abandon) for that which I cannot afford to fix, alone (wherein nobody would otherwise have known nothing about it had not I (foolhardily?) sought 'health and safety' help)... Catch(-22) my drift here? [Result: financial assistance denied.]

</UPDATE>

[A Month Ago: "neighbors helping neighbors, take three(.two)"]
Honorable Village Leaders,

I am here asking our Town for help with my home, again. I had been asking around everywhere else: like you, there is usually no response (the first few attempts), as in: not worth your time/trouble/compassion.

As I understood it, previously, meeting with the Select Board means being recorded and posted online. Live, in-person, speaking to (/in front of) a group is not something I can do. The idea of begging for help (stumbling/fumbling over my words, witnessed by my neighbors, in real-time) as a matter of public record unsettles me and triggers my disabilities.

We have all manner of small/medium businesses (and owners of even-largers living/based here in our Village: builders, thinkers, (alt.)energy, heating/cooling, plumbing/septic, ceiling/wall/floor, roofing/siding/foundation, landscaping... I suppose I am asking if my Town Leaders could help me ask them (individually/collectively) if they would be willing to lend/donate some time/resources as part of a pilot-program 'community initiative' intended to help struggling neighbors fix-up their falling-apart homes?

Blindly asking corporations/organizations for help, in writing, is what I have been doing for a decade now: it has gotten me nowhere, alone. I require a Local Advocate to speak (up) for me. [And yes, I have tried all the advocacy groups: who are overwhelmed and typically don't respond anymore (to me, anyways).] It is harder to ignore a 'request' coming from Town Hall... Me alone, knocking upon neighborhood doors and (clumsily) pleading for help would be humiliating (and doomed to fail).

Housing Situation— The electrical has been a fire-hazard for years now. There are missing downstairs walls/ceilings. [I would really like to take a look into radiant heating/cooling, as presently wall/floor/ceiling-access is fairly unimpeded.] The insulation in a few of the remaining walls is fifty+ years old, there's none in the downstairs floors. The septic-system is suspect, as is the well-water, the upstairs plumbing out-of-commission for a decade now. Exterior door/window-frames are rotting off, siding barely hanging on in spots. Inaccessible sections of the stonewall foundation and dirt crawlspaces are riddled with rodent tunnels. The leaky tin-roof having been sealed-shut with silicone, a decade ago. The middle chimney occasionally shits a brick. Need a proper firewood shelter (built onto the back of the neglected barn), replacing the shoddy 2x4 plastic-sheeting firewood shanty. The wilderness having consumed half the back-yardage, as I couldn't push a mower up/down that slope (to the crumbling firepit-patio (overlooking the overgrown pond) hidden amongst all those fallen-down trees)... but hey, it's Home. [I cannot afford to live anywhere else anymore.]

Everywhere I go asking for help the answer (if any) is: "We cannot help you," and/or, "Try elsewhere." [I have run out of elsewhere.] There is a reason I keep coming back to My Hometown: being the only place (left) I stand a hope of finding help... The 'outside world' can/will not accommodate me(/us), alone. [As demonstrated.]

Please let's see what Our Town/Village/Community is made of... Compassion, hopefully.

Your Neighbor,
"Silent"

<UPDATE> RC1 President,
Notes: A month has passed without initial contact from your contractor; TW and TC1 have been nonresponsive awhile now, awaiting word that RC1 is done-done before they'll start/do anything; everytime I contact CC1, more possibilities have been disqualified (by their government matrices): it would appear there's nothing (left) they're allowed to do to help. Happy Christmas. </UPDATE>