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9-12-20

Address to the Mayor and City Council 9/12/20

Hello Mr. Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Councilmembers,

My name is Brian Sands. Thank you for the preceding discussion and for the opportunity to speak today.

I have been fortunate to live at 510 East Alexandria Avenue since 2005. I also note that I am a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners or AICP, like Director Lambert.

I would like to start by saying that Alexandria is a wonderful community and has excellent leadership, management, and staff – thank you for your hard work for our community.

Unfortunately, in the last year, my neighborhood has experienced severe flooding three times. Beyond this year, we experienced a similar event back in 2006, which was identified then as a “100-year event”

I won't take time to go through the slides that I submitted, but I hope you will take some time to review them in order to understand what we and our neighbors are dealing with.

I also want to note that we have made significant investments in our property to mitigate flooding, but we are still being affected, and this is probably due to a lack of sufficient storm sewer capacity in the street in front of us and in the alley behind us, which only the City can address.

As should be clear, this situation is obviously more than a simple inconvenience, or even a threat to property damage, in fact, I think given the depth and frequency, that it is becoming serious enough to be considered a potential life safety issue, one which I believe the city needs to solve.

Given this, I think that the City needs to plan proactively now to address this issue as soon as possible, and to make the necessary investments to do so, large as they may be, particularly since with climate change this situation is obviously going to continue and is going to get worse.

I think that the city needs to start expecting this, planning for it, investing for it, so as to head off not just the problems we are having now, but worse ones we will have in the future.

If the City is unable or unwilling to begin to take significant steps, then it should also start to considering participating in the FEMA National Flood Insurance program to potentially purchase at market rate repetitive flood loss properties.

Thank you for your attention, and I and many of my neighbors, look forward to working with you all on this issue going forward.

Brian Sands

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Hello Mr. Mayor and Councilmembers,

My name is Brian Sands. I have been fortunate to live at 510 Alexandria Avenue since 2005. I say fortunate because Alexandria is a wonderful community and has excellent leadership, management, and staff – thank you for your hard work for our community.

Unfortunately, in the last year, my neighborhood has experienced severe flooding three times. When I say severe, this is what I mean (see slides):

1. This is the 500 block of East Alexandria Avenue at around 1:45pm on Thursday afternoon – the water is rising rapidly in the street.
2. Here I had just moved my car out of the space you see here in order to keep it from flooding into the car cabin. Notice that you can't even see the curb on either side of the street. At that point, I had to go inside to prepare for potential flooding in our basement.
3. This is 45 minutes later, our backyard facing toward the street you just saw, which was the same situation in all of the houses around us.
4. Again our backyard facing the alley.
5. Now in the alley, between Alexandria Avenue and Nelson Avenue, facing west.
6. This is the backyard of our neighbors at 512 East Alexandria Avenue, which by the way had around 18 inches of water in the basement at this point.
7. Back in our basement, we were "fortunate", which I say in quotes, to have been largely spared, except for a bit of water from the wall of our neighbors house, and oddly some backup into our shower and toilet, although we have a floodgate. And despite the stress and damage that this caused, I do say "fortunate" because it could have been much worse except that we have been taking measures to try to minimize the potential for flooding.
8. We took those measures and were spared from flooding in the basement in July of this year, but last summer we had significant flooding in our basement. This is the exact same spot as was shown in the previous picture, with around a foot of water.
9. Here is the main room in our basement, last summer.
10. And the bathroom.
11. And the basement walkway under our deck.

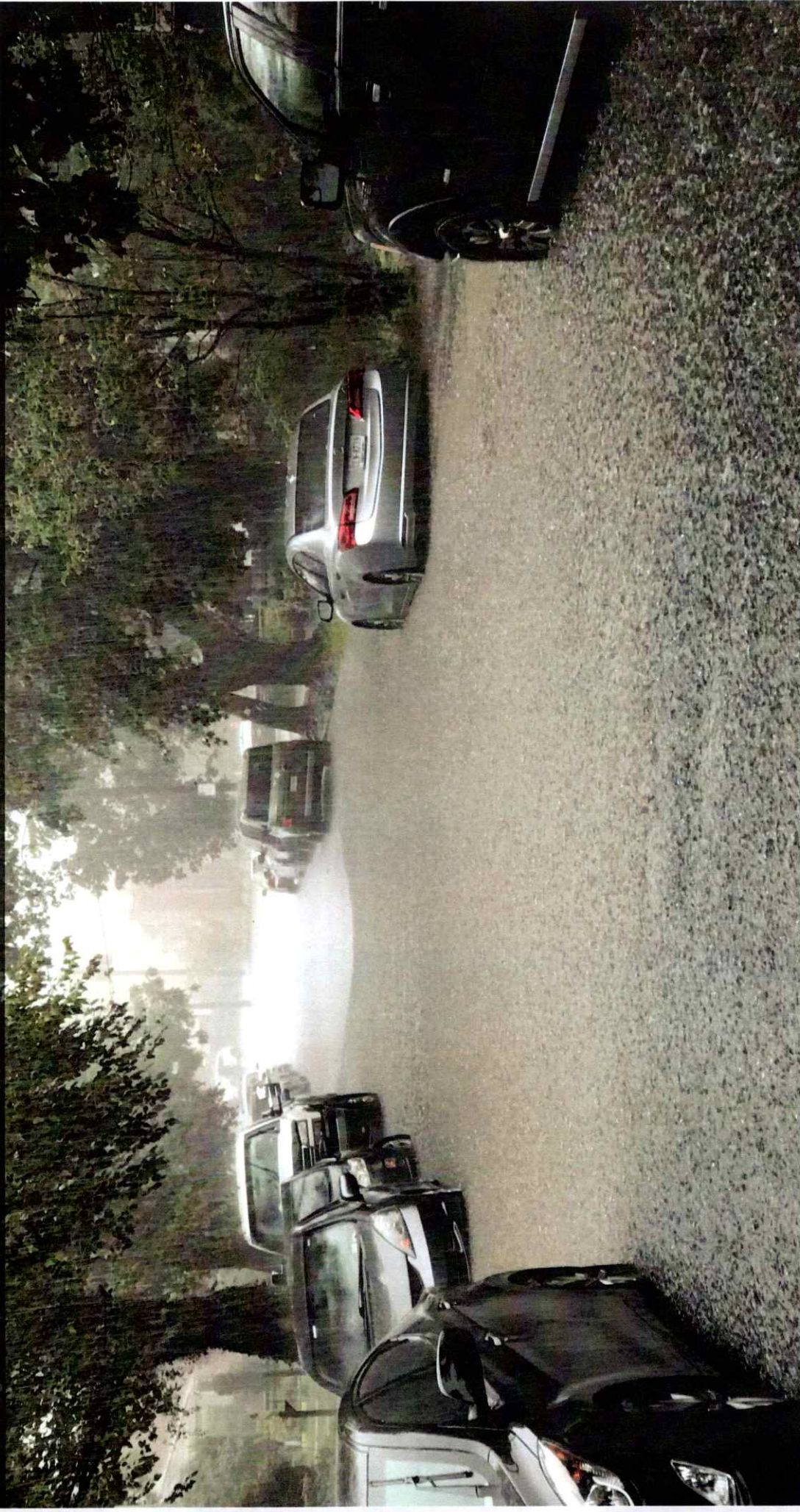
This situation is obviously more than a simple inconvenience, or even a threat to property damage, in fact, I think that it is becoming serious enough to be considered a life safety issue, one which I believe the city needs to solve.

With this, I would like to ask you Mr. Mayor and Councilmembers, what the city thinks about this situation, how the city will investigate it and develop a solution, and then act?

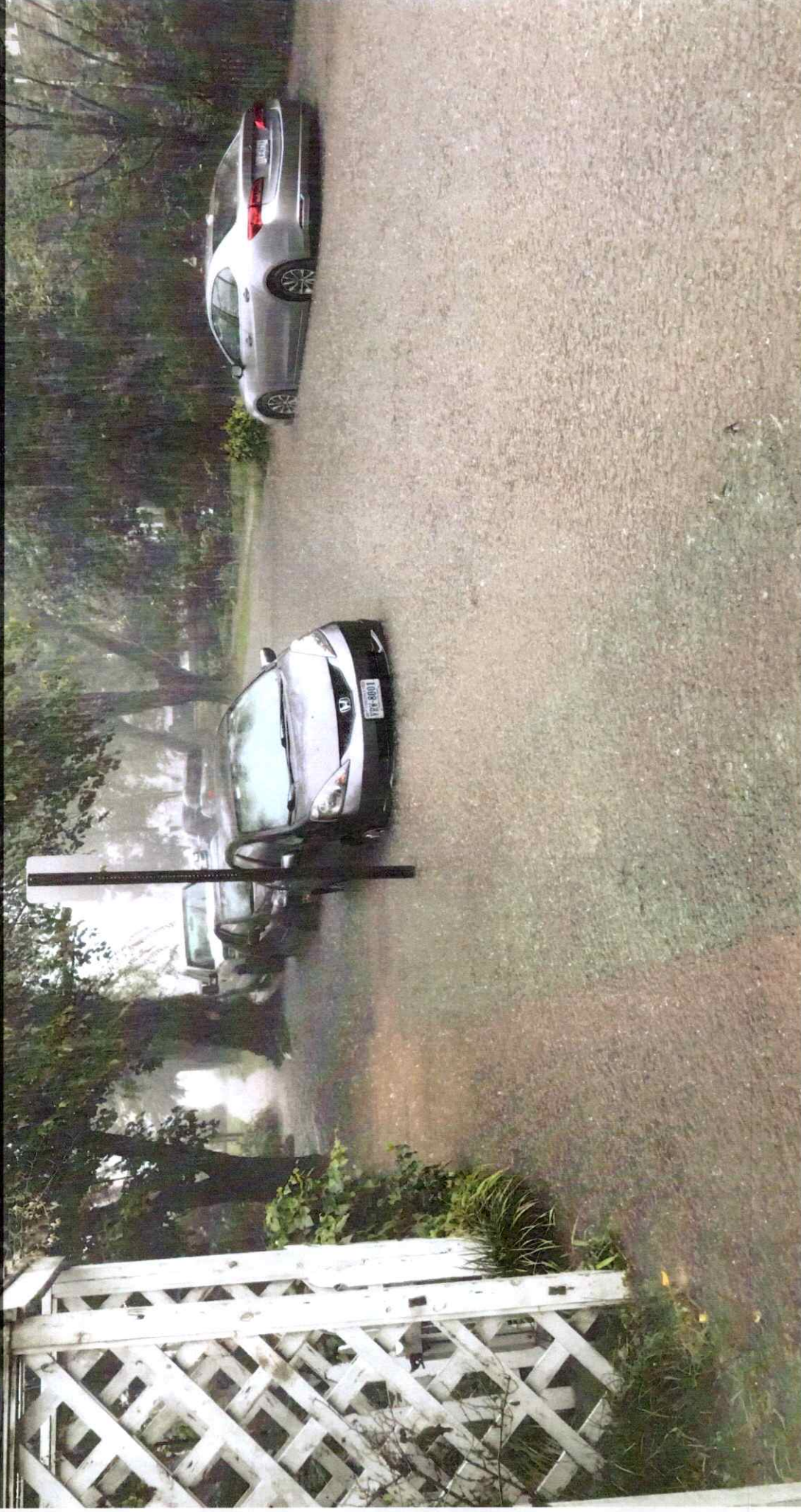
Thank you.

Brian Sands
510 E Alexandria Ave.
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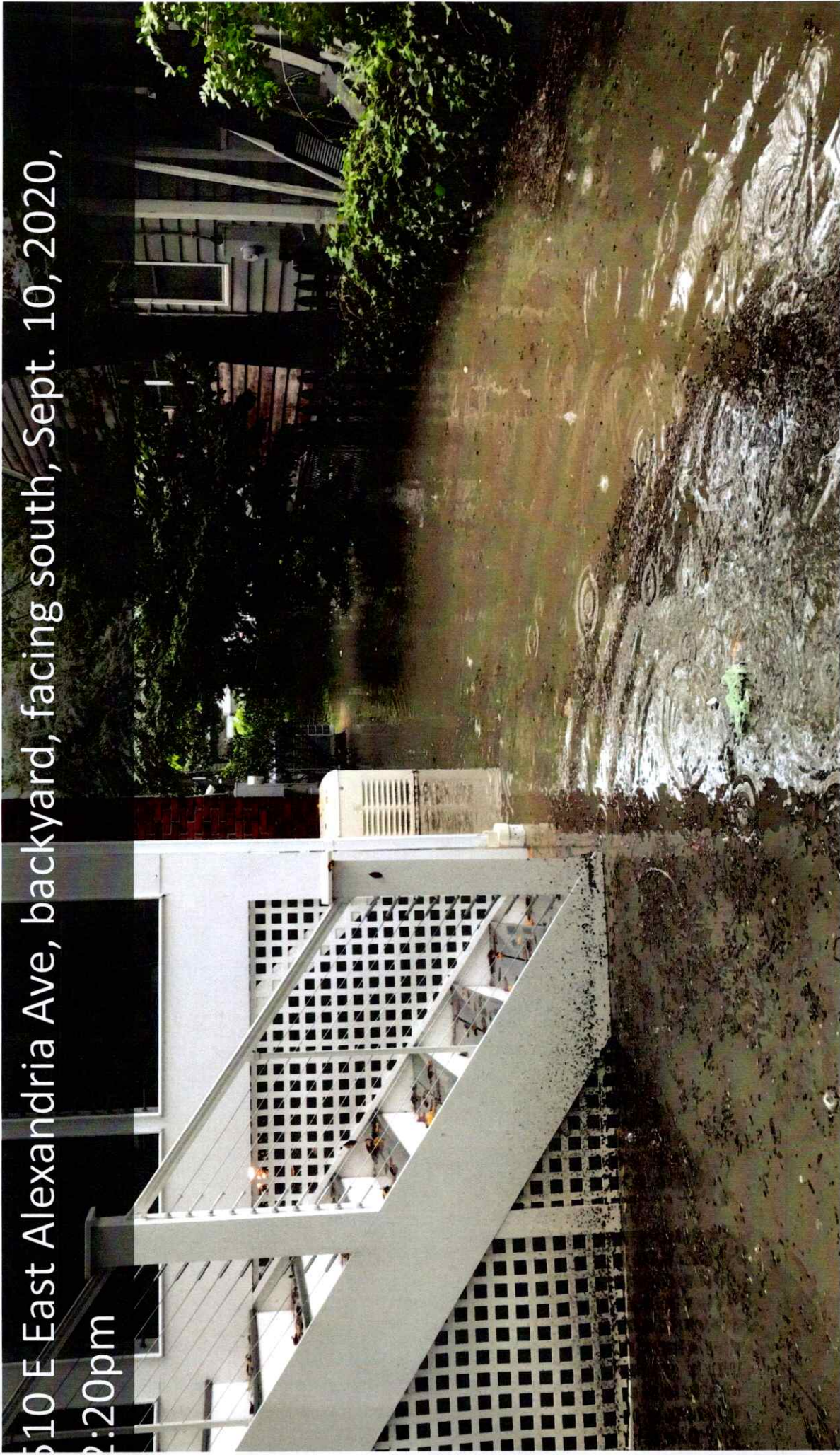
506 E East Alexandria Ave, looking east, Sept. 10, 2020, 1:52pm



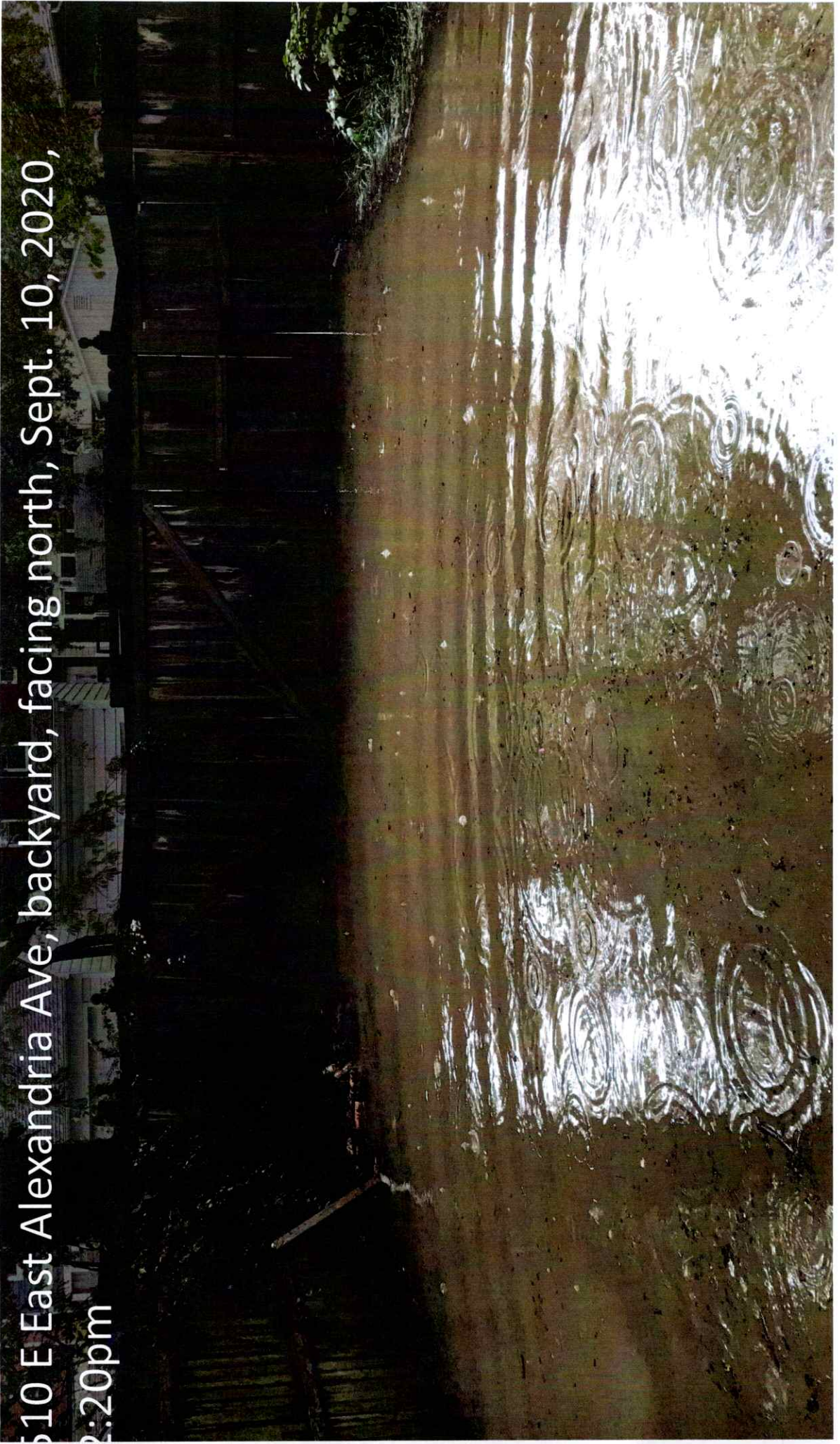
506 E East Alexandria Ave, looking east, Sept. 10, 2020, 1:52pm



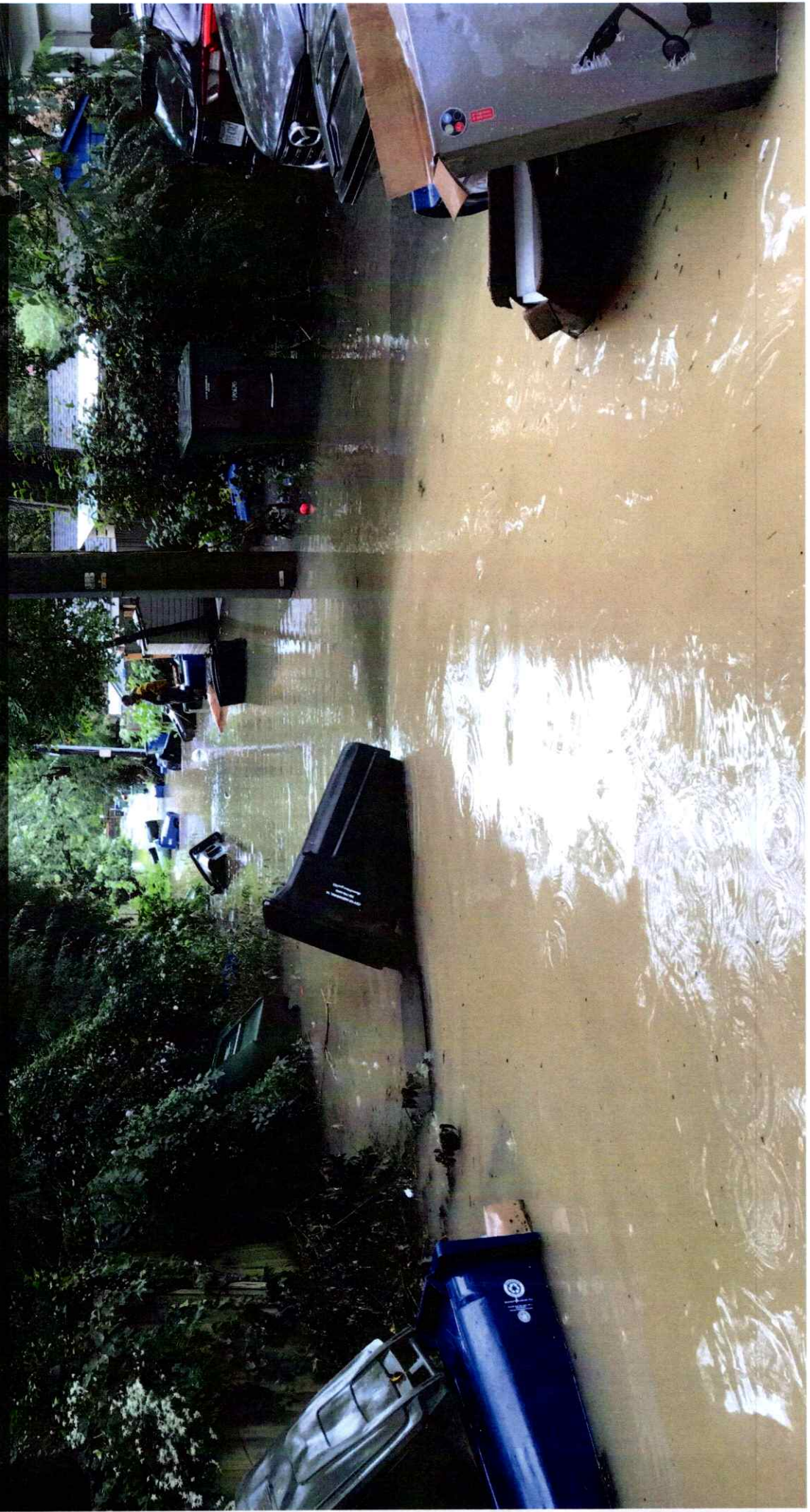
510 E East Alexandria Ave, backyard, facing south, Sept. 10, 2020,
2:20pm



510 E East Alexandria Ave, backyard, facing north, Sept. 10, 2020,
2:20pm



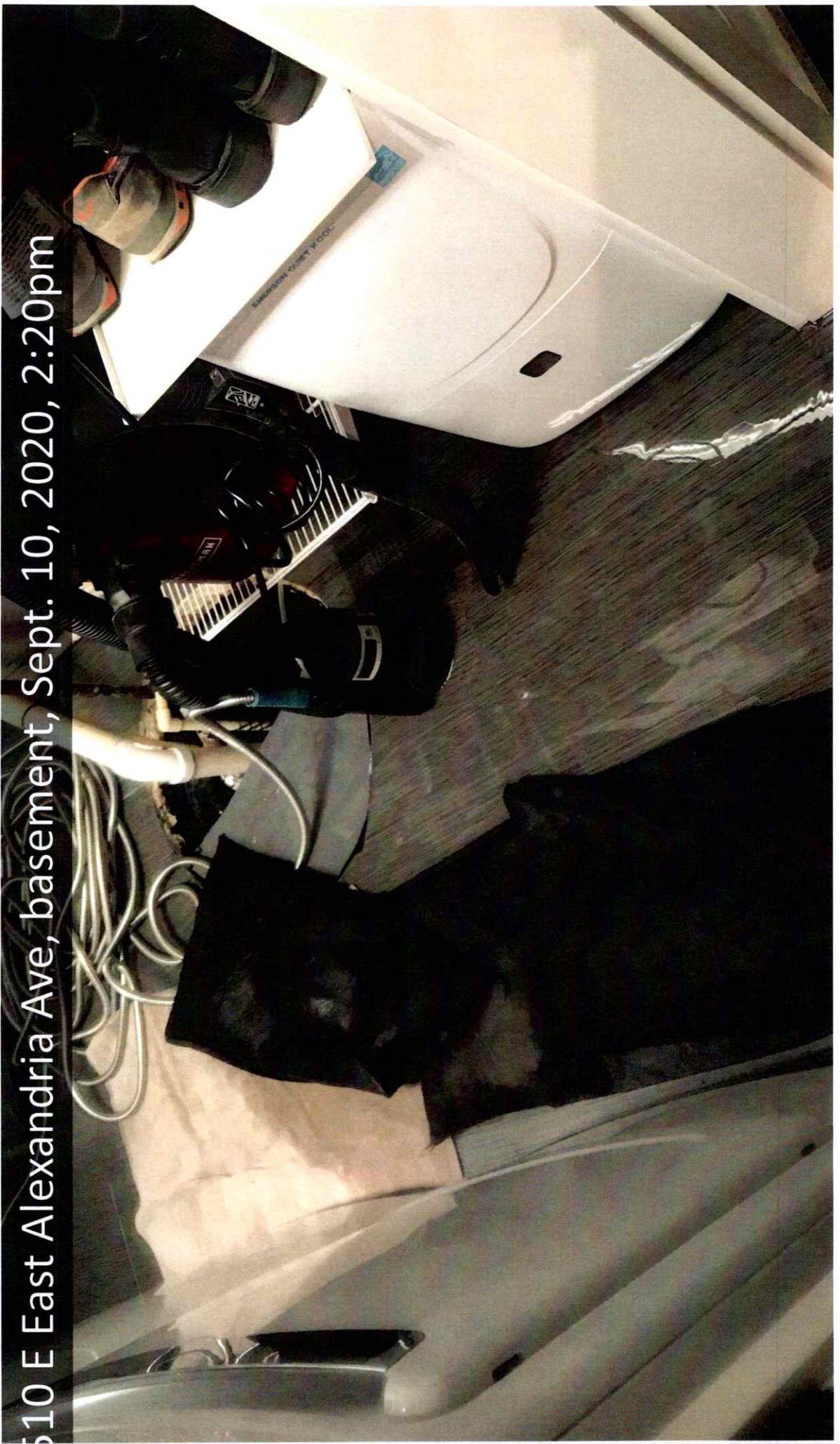
510 E East Alexandria Ave, alleyway, facing west, Sept. 10, 2020, 2:20pm



512 E East Alexandria Ave, backyard, facing south, Sept. 10, 2020,
2:20pm



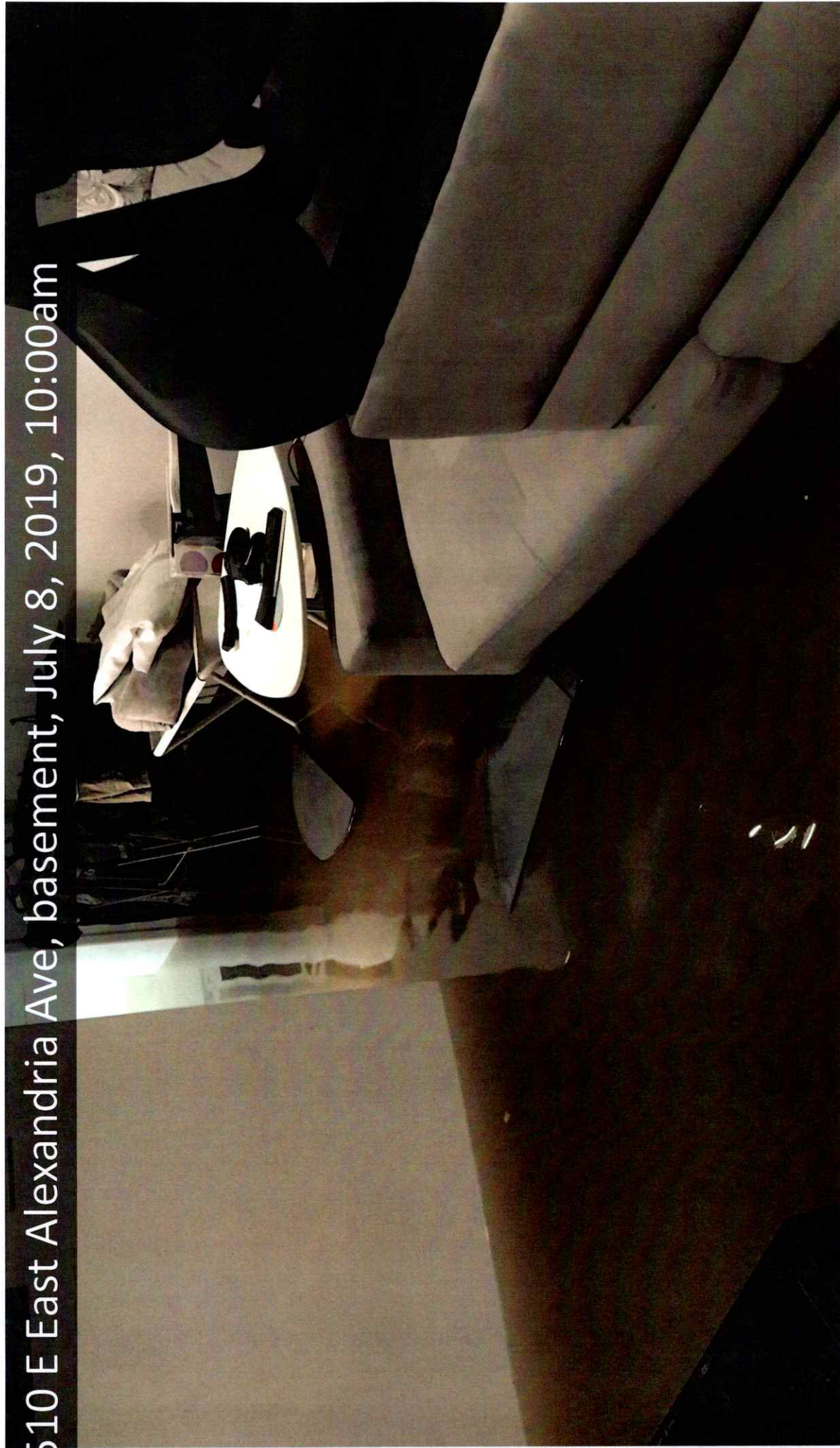
510 E East Alexandria Ave, basement, Sept. 10, 2020, 2:20pm



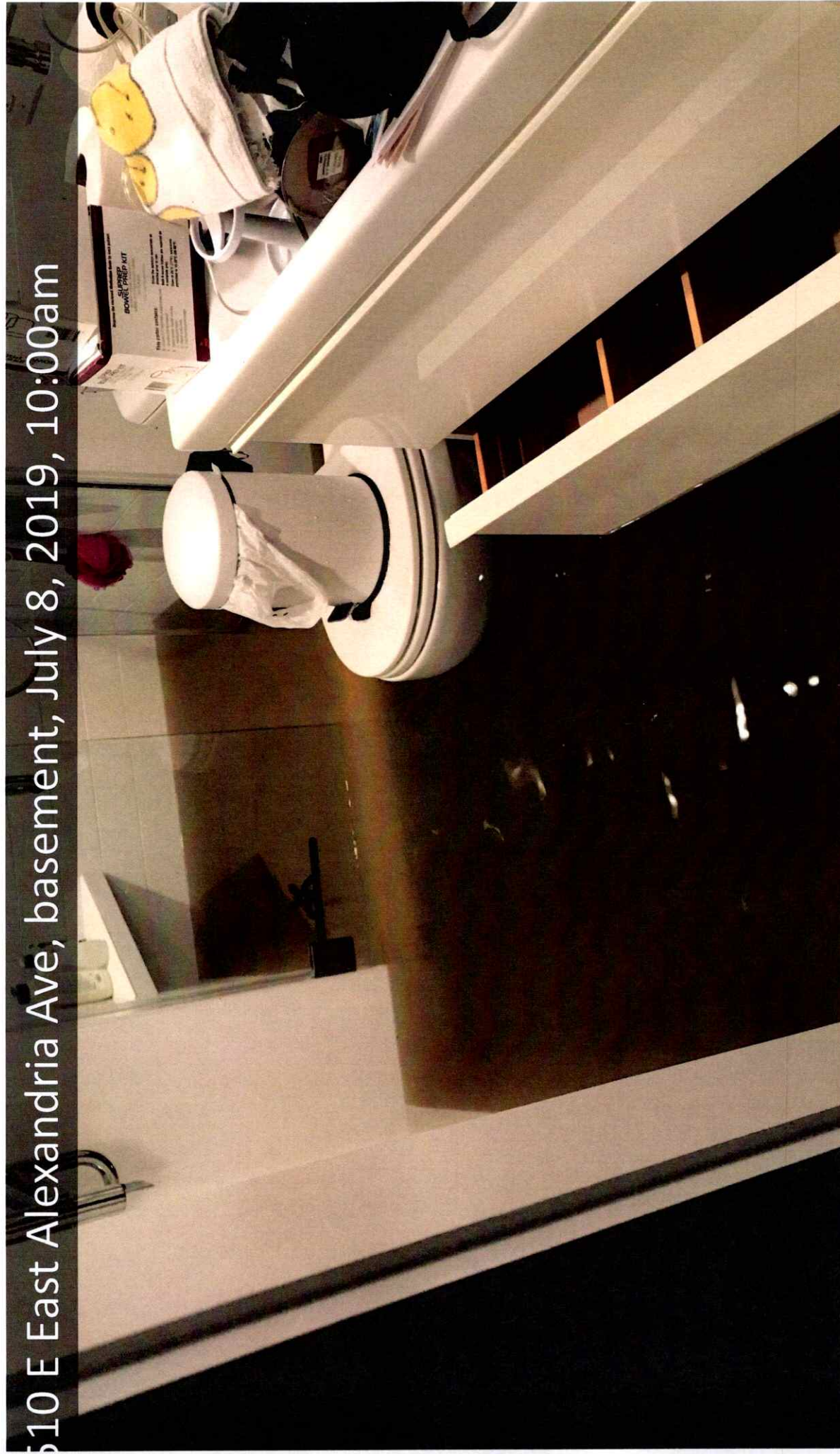
510 E East Alexandria Ave, basement, July 8, 2019, 10:00am



510 E East Alexandria Ave, basement, July 8, 2019, 10:00am



510 E East Alexandria Ave, basement, July 8, 2019, 10:00am



510 E East Alexandria Ave, basement walkway, July 8, 2019, 10:00am



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9-12-20

Gloria Sitton

From: George Demetriades <gdemetch@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, September 12, 2020 9:58 AM
To: Gloria Sitton
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Comments for Council meeting on flooding

Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

This has been an ongoing problem for years. The Council raised taxes to the maximum extent allowed by law under the guise of fixing infrastructure. We haven't seen work done on Hoofs Run, ever (except for putting up orange fencing), and none of us have ever seen the city clean the drains. Yon is articulate but there is no specificity to the plan so why should we believe him when he says there's a plan? So far the only thing I've heard him actually commit to is talking.

Sent from my iPhone

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2
9-12-20

Friends of Holmes Run

7419 Add Dr.
Falls Church, VA 22042
friendsofholmesrun@gmail.com
www.friendsofholmesrun.org

September 11, 2020

Hon. Justin Wilson
Members of the City Council
City of Alexandria
VIA EMAIL

Dear Mayor Wilson and Members of the City Council:

Friends of Holmes Run is a nonpartisan, all-volunteer organization dedicated to the preservation and protection of the 44-square-mile Holmes Run/Cameron Run watershed, which includes Strawberry Run and Taylor Run. On behalf of our members, including City of Alexandria residents, I respectfully request that the city pause its plans for restoring Taylor Run and Strawberry Run in order to collect feedback on the plans' specifics from Alexandria residents and watershed scientists.

I understand that Alexandria has been planning this restoration for some time. However, it is also my understanding that a public meeting to be held last spring regarding the city's plans was unable to take place in person because of the pandemic, and no virtual public meeting was planned in its place. During the most recent in-person meeting last winter, attendees were informed by city staff that the restoration design was not yet solidified. So it came as a surprise to affected homeowners when they received notice eight months later that, in fact, the restoration project is now imminent.

Because it is not possible to hold public hearings in person during the pandemic, it is all the more vital for local governments to find other ways to ensure that citizens are heard and included in the process. Virtual public meetings and hearings, however imperfect a substitution for the real thing, are just about the only way that the public can coalesce around an issue of shared concern. Differences regarding the specific strategies that the city plans to employ in the restoration of these two streams qualify as an issue of shared concern.

Stream restoration is an evolving, nuanced discipline. Experts often disagree on the best way to proceed. It is important, therefore, that the city be as transparent as possible as it weighs these options and allow concerned citizens to have the opportunity to weigh in. Our citizen-run organization believes that any projects to improve the stream should:

- Have significant public support;
- Prioritize existing natural resources over construction convenience;
- Respect the best scientific understanding of stream preservation, in addition to engineering practices;
- Be part of a comprehensive, carefully planned strategy to address damage to the watershed caused by urbanization and past land use decisions.

Again, we hope that you will allow for a more robust discussion of these restoration plans, to ensure they achieve what the watershed and the Chesapeake Bay truly need.

Thank you for your attention and for your stewardship of these important natural resources.

Sincerely,

Whitney Redding
Co-Founder and Director
703/405-5126 c