

Good morning,

My name is Kataryna Sciascia. In 2023 my husband and I got married and bought our first home. We live [REDACTED] in Ward 3.

On July 15th 2024, just over a year after buying our home, around 12:10pm, I went downstairs to my basement to grab a drink for lunch. Everything was normal. By around 12:40pm, I heard a noise that sounded like a faucet was on in the basement. I was confused because I hadn't turned anything on. Nothing would have prepared me for what I saw next.

When I saw my basement being flooded with sewage water, I froze. I stared at it for about 5 seconds. I started to hyperventilate, trying to understand what I was seeing. I could not believe what was happening. The water was high, it was coming up fast, and it was everywhere.

Immediately I grabbed one of my cats and locked him in the bedroom for safety. Then I went looking for my second cat. I couldn't find him upstairs, so I knew I had to go look in the basement. Just as I was stepping in, I knew there was a possibility of being electrocuted and prayed I wouldn't die. Wading through ankle deep water, I found my terrified cat and rescued him. He was in the back corner room, still on dry carpet but surrounded by the water. Another few minutes, he would have been in the water. Once he was safe, I went back in to grab a few items I could save. However, now, the water was up to my calf.

I knew I was in shock. I was trying to think about who would help me and I called 311. I could barely talk because I was in a panic. I was told I was the first one on the street reporting a flood. Then I was given the speech about the possibility that the City may not be liable if it is my fault for sewage water coming in. At this point, I am shocked at this unbelievable statement. I am staring into my basement, seeing poop and pee coming up through the drain. The smell is unbearable, and the sight is unbearable. What I needed was compassion and support. Instead, I was given an emotionless and uncompassionate generic speech.

It was hours before the one and a half feet of water receded and my husband and I could visually see the huge extent of our loss. We don't have a lot of money, and we scraped throughout that year to build our home. Within a few hours, our basement was wiped away. We lost huge and monumental purchases like our washer and dryer, furnace, an electric fireplace, sofas, electronics, an exercise machine. We lost sentimental items that we would never get back such as items our deceased grandparents had given to us,

autographed movies and games, a poster we bought on our honeymoon, a coffee table that my father had built for me.

On July 16th, as we were waiting for the emergency clean up team to come in (they came a full 33 hours after the flood occurred), a worker from the City came to take pictures of proof that we had a flood. He told us that as homeowners, it was not our fault. He handed us a pamphlet stating ways that we can protect our home with the City's subsidies and the \$1000 Ex-Gratia Grant. This was the extent of help we have gotten from the City. After that day, we feel like the City has forgotten about us.

Giving us these options of subsidies also feels hurtful. We don't feel a lot of compassion from the City because these subsidies don't cover the full cost. For a sewage backup caused by circumstances outside our home, we now must prioritize money to protect our home. We are in the opinion that we should be granted a full subsidy for what we decide to do to protect our home. We are currently in the process to get a backflow valve and that should be fully covered from the City. Currently, the subsidy is \$675 whereas it costs between \$3,000 and \$4,000 to install.

My husband and I are very traumatized by this experience. We live with the reminder of this trauma daily because every time we go into our basement, we see the destruction from the flood.

I decided to write for today's meeting (November 4th, 2024) because we are a couple who live and work in Burlington. My husband was born and raised in this city and is appalled by the lack of care. We rely on the City to protect our home on things that we cannot control. We cannot control the infrastructure of the City of Burlington's sewage system. We cannot control the upkeep of the infrastructure around highway 407. We rely on you for that. As we are living in Ward 3, which is an older neighborhood, we urge you to prioritize the older areas. We urge you to prioritize areas that were hit hard with the flood. We are terrified that we will be forgotten.

After the July 15th flood, many people have stated to me, "This is a once in a lifetime experience." However, with our current sewage system in Ward 3, I fear of a reoccurrence. Please update the sewage system. Please update the area around highway 407. Please protect my home, protect my neighborhood. In years to come, I want to say "Yes, this was a horrible and traumatizing experience, but the City of Burlington supported us and made it a once in a lifetime experience."

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns. I look forward to hearing an update on how the City of Burlington is going to protect its residents.

Sincerely, Kataryna Sciascia