

July 30, 2025

Re: 32 Harvard St., Reading MA

Dear Conservation Commission,

We appreciate the approval you gave us to move forward with our construction project at 32 Harvard Street. Part of the requirement we agreed to was that, since we are extending the footprint of our house approximately 4 x 5 feet, the rain runoff from the downspout on that corner of the house must be directed into an underground infiltration chamber.

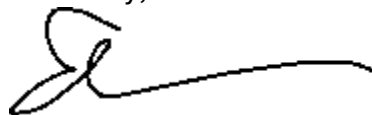
However, we discussed the matter with our General Contractor. He has significant concerns due to existing groundwater on our property. He does not recommend the approach because the chamber would need to be submerged into existing ground water, which would negate the efficacy of the chamber.

As shown in the attached photo (taken on May 9, 2025), the water level in this 5 foot deep test pit is very high. There would not be enough distance between the bottom of the chamber system and the groundwater table to prevent potential groundwater contamination. He also mentioned the cost of \$6,000.

Another option we discussed was piping the water from the downspout into the wetlands (or near the entrance to the wetlands) at the back edge of our yard. However, he stated that during the rainy season, the water would back up the downspout because there would be nowhere else for it to go. My understanding is that this would be an issue whether or not there were holes in the pipe. He also mentioned that when digging the trench, water would need to be actively pumped out in order to submerge the pipe.

We respectfully request that the Committee consider a waiver from the infiltration requirement because of: (a) the technical challenges that will significantly impact efficacy of the system and (b) the relatively small area of new impervious surface (approximately 20 square feet). If this would not be acceptable, we are open to considering other alternatives the Commission suggests.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Eleanor and Adam Shonkoff', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eleanor and Adam Shonkoff

32 Harvard St., Reading, MA

