

From: Kendall Miller
To: Town Admin
Subject: 662 Edgartown Rd cellar vibration from the road surface and pot hole.
Date: Wednesday, August 19, 2026 11:31:15 AM

Dear Jennifer,

Thank you for taking the time this morning to listen to my concerns regarding the extreme structural vibrations we are experiencing at the old Gifford general store.

As we discussed, this property holds deep roots in the history of West Tisbury. The house was originally the site of the town animal pound (where people in the punishment stocks were kept at night), served as the first ice house in West Tisbury, and is historically understood to be the site where West Tisbury broke away from Tisbury. The nearby mill pond served as the ice source in the winter, and this double brick circular cellar was filled yearly with ice from 1875 until the invention of modern refrigeration.

I grew up with this circular cellar, and my grandfather, Willis Gifford, always complained about truck speeds and road vibrations. I have personally owned this historic home for 35 years. For the vast majority of that time, there was absolutely no major brick or structural vibrational damage—just a minor settling of brick dust powder once or twice a year. Until about five years ago, the vibrations were a slight rumble that would occasionally rattle the stained glass in our picture window.

Now, the vibrations have escalated into loud, structural bangs every time heavy trucks hit the unmaintained potholes and bounce down the road toward Edgartown. When heavy vehicles turn onto Old County Road, they roll over the water drain cover, driving low-frequency shockwaves straight through their wheels into our foundation.

Since the speed limit was raised to 30 mph, the up-island traffic has become drastically more violent as heavy vehicles travel over the intersection's uneven surface. Because kinetic impact force increases exponentially with velocity, raising the traffic speed from 25 to 30 mph means the force generated by these trucks has multiplied. Instead of a light tap, my historic cellar bricks are actively getting hammered with a sledgehammer. Over this past winter, MassDOT snow plows severely gouged the street surface, creating even worse vertical "launchpads" outside my property line.

To resolve this compounding hazard, I am currently moving forward with a proactive, multi-step action plan:

1. **Structural Engineering:** I am contacting professional structural engineers to evaluate the baseline requirements and costs for a formal structural assessment.
2. **Technical Monitoring Rig:** I am upgrading my property video system to capture high-definition front and side angles of every passing commercial vehicle. I am pairing this video with an accelerometer system (\$500 investment vs. a \$5,000 corporate study) to scientifically measure and log the exact vibration spike caused by each specific truck. This data will provide the local and State Police commercial vehicle teams with actionable talking points when confronting local trucking firms.
3. **MassDOT Escalation:** I have officially filed a report through the MassDOT pothole system (**Reference Number: 08192615**). The state hotline has successfully escalated my file directly to the Taunton MassDOT District 5 Highway Manager for an official callback and field review.
4. **Law Enforcement Coordination:** I am reaching out to Chief Bradley Cortez regarding targeted speed sign deployment and commercial truck monitoring during peak hours. I will be offering the use of my private driveway as a secure stationary radar and monitoring zone for his officers.

If the immediate pothole gets leveled and the intersection's severe asphalt degradation is remediated, these destructive forces should drop back down to tolerable historical levels. Furthermore, due to its immediate proximity to the water system, this intersection and the road triangle intersection on the west side of the pond must be formally included in the mill pond dam solutions the town is currently studying.

I have attached several photos showing the fresh structural damage to the foundation, including two brick faces that were physically sheared off and thrown onto the cellar floor by recent vehicle impacts.

You can view the full high-definition video showing the damage caused by the physical impact and structural shaking via this secure Google Photos link:

<https://url43.mailanyone.net/scanner?m=1wwiEp-0000000E0YY-3sPG&d=4%7Cmail%2F90%2F1787153400%2F1wwiEp-0000000E0YY-3sPG%7Cin43a%7C57e1b682%7C26142692%7C17116472%7C6A85CBF768BF1EE9170830CA483DF7A2&o=%2Fpht%3A%2Fptspsotgap.o.wgooZ%2FXr.lcyLxCTAx9PAU6&s=cnO5iSVizZT6SkRlpAlhAhlHyyE>

Thank you for your time, your understanding, and your dedication to helping protect our town's historic residential structures. I look forward to your confirmation of an upcoming Select Board agenda slot, we will be on island August 28th to September 10th, and could attend either Wednesday meeting 9/2 or 9/8 in person.



Sincerely,

Kendall Gifford Miller
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