

To: State of Maine Board of Pesticide Control
Attn: Mr. Alexander Peacock, Director
Cc: Board Members
From: Eric Grubman

I write to you regarding the tree poisoning and destruction in Rockport, Maine on the property formerly owned and occupied by Ruth Graham; and the currently proposed arrangement that represents the staff/board belief that the destruction was perpetrated by her neighbor, Mr. Antonson. We do not have all the information assembled by the investigators and have therefore relied, in part, on these proceedings.

Ruth Graham was my mother. My brother, Steven Graham, and I have been following this matter for a number of years, beginning when she first suspected trees were being destroyed. As you know, this matter has also been followed by the local community and well beyond. Thus far, despite the resilient efforts of various authorities and staff members, there is no admission of guilt. This is not surprising, since legal counsel would likely advise that such an admission could increase the risk of civil liability. We appreciate and commend your diligence in seeking a remedy that provides accountability and deterrence.

There were financial costs to our mother to remove the trees, distress over a period of years, and the values of her two abutting properties were probably diminished. A civil proceeding, if pursued, could lead to subpoenas and discovery. The findings might well be embarrassing and/or damaging to defendants and perhaps others who might have assisted in the acts. There would be examination of emails and phone records and text messages between family members and perhaps others. Electronic devices would have to be preserved. It could likely go on for years. Revelations from such discovery process might implicate others or create other proceedings.

In short, it could likely result in an unpleasant mess.

Please allow me to list a few reasons that we are again sending correspondence:

1. Our mother was a good neighbor to many, including those living next to her.
2. At the time of the trespassing and tree destruction, she was somewhat frail, legally blind, but still making her way along Mechanic Street as best she could.
3. The accused perpetrator represents a family comprised of artists and writers who profess and demonstrate a love of nature and the Maine seacoast. They would logically revere the stunning beauty of Rockport.
4. No one has apologized or sought to make amends.

In short, things remain unsettled for us and others in the local community.

The thought of launching civil action, justified as it may seem, does not come naturally to us. We prefer that people own up to their mistakes, we prefer second chances, and we value civic responsibility.

Truth be told- if anyone had contacted our mother or us with regret, we would have forgiven them and moved on.

However, perhaps this has gone on long enough. Perhaps the State of Maine and the staff members tasked with resolving this matter have more productive things to do. Perhaps all of us in this country have other matters competing for time and energy.

We have a simple proposal for all to consider:

If the Antonsons are prepared to acknowledge responsibility, then the State of Maine fine should be paid. The Antonsons would gift an additional sum of their choice to a suitable charitable entity in Rockport or the County that is devoted to preservation. An example is The Coastal Mountain Land Trust, an entity that our mother supported. The charitable donation would be made in recognition of Ruth Graham. And finally, the Antonsons would find a way to correspond with a local newspaper or similar channel of communication expressing their thoughts in their own words.

If such an arrangement finds acceptance, our family would forgo further consideration of civil action.

This satisfies a sense of accountability. It gives everyone, including the Antonsons closure. It gives the Antonsons a way to regain their reputation. And it lets everyone move on with their lives. Bygones can be bygones for everyone and trees will grow back.

Respectfully,
Eric P. Grubman