

April 18, 2022

Dear Mayor, Trustees and Village Manager:

I read with dismay – but not surprise – the front-page article and letter to the editor in the April 15, 2022 issue of the *Scarsdale Inquirer*, setting forth the position of the New York State Turf & Landscape Association and a handful of local landscape owners. The NYSTLA is desperately trying to revert to 20<sup>th</sup> Century fossil fuel technology while everyone else is moving forward.

There is no need to repeat the extensive research and data set forth in the December 2020 report of the Conservation Advisory Council, or the exhaustive and extensively footnoted Scarsdale Forum’s “Report of the Sustainability, Municipal Services, and Climate Resilience Committees on Gas Leaf Blowers, Leaf Vacuuming, and Leaf Mulching in the Village of Scarsdale” dated April 22, 2021 (Earth Day). The science is clear on the issue. Gas-powered leaf blowers are a danger to humans, animals and birds, and the overall environment and ecosystems. Current data, as outlined in these reports, also shows that electric leaf blowers have now advanced to the point where they are both inexpensive and effective in getting the job done.

On a personal note, I walk with my dogs four to five miles a day through our Fox Meadow neighborhood, and the adjoining Edgewood, Heathcote and Greenacres neighborhoods. This spring season has been delightful! I can hear the birds chirping, and children playing outside, laughing and enjoying the nice weather. I can speak in ordinary, conversational tones with neighbors. I can hear a bicycle coming up behind me. All of this is possible this spring because we are spared the deafening noise of gas-powered leaf blowers throughout Scarsdale.

It also makes me happy to see employees of the landscape companies not subjected to toxic pollutants and dangerous decibel levels. As a matter of social justice, the health of workers as well as ourselves should factor into our decisions. Our house is located on a half-acre of property, and our landscaper employs grasscycling and mulch-mowing, and uses a battery or electric-powered leaf blower for minor clean-up. We are pleased with the result, and our costs have not gone up.

Happily, the Board of Trustees voted unanimously, after studying the issue at length and listening to days of testimony by residents and others, to ban the use of gas-powered leaf blowers except during the height of the “leaf season” from October through year-end. Although many people (including me) advocated for a total ban, and this is a step taken by several neighboring communities, we are content for now that the nine-month ban is in place and is being enforced.

Thank you for making health, safety and serenity a priority in Scarsdale, with the gas-powered leaf blower ban being an important component of the “Quality of Life” pillar. Scarsdale has long been a leader in environmental issues; it is unfathomable that we would slide backward on this issue.

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cc. Scarsdale Inquirer