

## Donna Conkling

---

**From:** Anne Hintermeister <ahintermeister@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 06, 2022 10:38 AM  
**To:** Clerk's Department  
**Subject:** Fwd: Leaf Analysis Questions

**CAUTION:** External sender.

correspondence sent Friday 2/4/22

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Anne Hintermeister <[ahintermeister@gmail.com](mailto:ahintermeister@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** Fri, Feb 4, 2022 at 5:16 PM  
**Subject:** Leaf Analysis Questions  
**To:** Mayor <[mayor@scarsdale.com](mailto:mayor@scarsdale.com)>, Trustee Arest <[jarest@scarsdale.com](mailto:jarest@scarsdale.com)>, Trustee Whitestone <[rwhitestone@scarsdale.com](mailto:rwhitestone@scarsdale.com)>, <[sahuja@scarsdale.com](mailto:sahuja@scarsdale.com)>, <[kbrew@scarsdale.com](mailto:kbrew@scarsdale.com)>, Trustee Lewis <[jlewis@scarsdale.com](mailto:jlewis@scarsdale.com)>, Robert Cole <[rcole@scarsdale.com](mailto:rcole@scarsdale.com)>, Trustee Crandall <[lcrandall@scarsdale.com](mailto:lcrandall@scarsdale.com)>

Mayor, Trustees and Village Manager,

We are writing to respectfully request responses to the questions posed in the Scarsdale Forum's Scarsdale Fiscal Affairs (SFA) Committee e-mail of January 30, 2022 regarding the DPW's Leaf Collection Analysis and to an additional request sent to the Village Manager on February 1, 2022. The Committee's requests are reproduced below.

The DPW First Pass budget includes expenditures to continue curbside collection of loose leaves. A slide entitled "Leaf Program Analysis" was included in materials posted on January 28, 2022 in advance of the January 31, 2022 departmental budget meeting with the DPW Superintendent. The Analysis compares the costs of the existing program to a bagged leaf pick up program. The SFA Chair submitted questions about the Analysis by e-mail on January 30, 2022.

At the January 31, 2022 budget meeting, the Mayor deferred discussion of leaf collection costs, including the Analysis, to a February 16, 2022 budget meeting. In the public comment segment of the meeting, the SFA Chair asked for a response to the Committee's January 30 questions. After the meeting, the Village Manager provided to the Committee an Excel file that Mr. Coleman used in his leaf analysis last year. Responding to the Chair's February 1, 2022 e-mail, the Village Manager stated that staff are focused on preparing for the February 16 meeting and that any remaining questions from the Committee would be addressed after that meeting.

We all agree that Fall leaf collection is a complex issue with a lot of moving parts and that community input is essential to resolving it. The first step in resolving the issue is gathering all the facts and reliable unbiased estimates about the existing program and all alternative approaches. We think the Village is best served if the Board, staff and the public are working with the same set of complete facts about costs and other fiscal effects, as well as quality of life and sustainability “costs” and benefits, of the various options. Without that foundation, comparisons are not useful. The rationale articulated for continuing the existing program is the \$1,000,000 “burden shift” assumed in the DPW slide and the spreadsheet. That number, in particular, needs to be supported with reliable data showing which residents benefit from the existing program and by how much.

We urge the Board and staff to provide the requested information about the Analysis without delay. While we look forward to the February 16, 2022 presentation and appreciate staff’s work to prepare for it, the Committee wants to do its own work on this issue in advance of the meeting. Our requests are limited in number and should not unduly burden staff since they are likely reviewing the same material. Answering them will require no research or data compilation; many call for a yes or no answer.

Thank you for considering this request.

Scarsdale Forum Scarsdale Fiscal Affairs Committee

Anne Hintermeister, Chair

### January 30, 2022 Leaf Collection Questions

3. The Leaf Program Analysis included in the DPW slides (1/31/22 agenda package PDF p. 89) merits further explanation and support given the high costs of the program and community objections.

a. Can you reconcile the requested Leaf Collection costs itemized at p. 77 of the First Pass workbook with the Existing Leaf Program cost amounts in the Analysis?

b. Please explain the method and factual basis for the personnel cost allocations to the existing program and to bagged pick-up in the Analysis. Do the personnel costs assumed in the Analysis include benefits?

c. Please explain the method and factual basis for the Equipment cost allocations to the existing program and to bagged pick-up in the Analysis. Does the Analysis take the proceeds from selling vacuum trucks into consideration?

d. Does the Analysis assume that if the existing program is discontinued, every resident will put out bagged leaves for collection and no one will mulch mow or bring leaves to the recycling center? This seems unreasonable. Have you considered the experience of neighboring communities?

e. Does the first asterisk in the Analysis refer to another \$239,870 in labor cost savings in addition to the \$203,992 difference shown in the slide? Why isn't freeing up staff for other duties by switching to bagged leaf collection a cost savings that should be accounted for in the analysis? Maybe we wouldn't need so many new DPW employees?

f. Please explain how the "Burden Shift" of \$1,000,000 was computed and provide backup. What is the source of the estimated increase in private landscaping costs of \$186/yr/property? Is this based on evidence of actual landscaping fees charged in Scarsdale v. other communities who have switched to bagged leaf pick-up? Was such evidence considered? Does the \$1,000,000 assume that every property owner would pay a landscaper to bag their leaves? How much less would a landscaper charge to take leaves away for no-fee tipping at the recycling center? Does the Analysis assume every property owner uses a private landscaping service?

g. What are the "difficulties for older residents with added work" listed as one of the three "key observations." What is that observation based on?

h. Please explain how "sustainability benefits" of leaf vacuuming v. bagged leaf collection were compared (third "key observation")? What specific benefits were considered and how were they weighted in the Analysis? Did you consider quality of life "costs"—noise and pollution from vacuuming and messy and potentially dangerous leaf piles?

i. Can you update the community re: reports provided last spring/summer that the Village did not own the right kind of garbage trucks needed to pick up bagged leaves and could not order them due to a steel shortage. DPW is asking for nearly \$3 million for vehicles (operating and capital catchup amounts) in the First Pass budget. Can you provide an itemized list of the vehicles proposed to be acquired? Does it include leaf vacuuming vehicles? Does it include garbage trucks that could be used to pick up bagged leaves?

#### February 1, 2022 Additional Request to the Village Manager

Please send me documents supporting the "burden shift," including estimates of increased private landscaping costs due to bagging.