

**From:** Madelaine Eppenstein <[meppenstein@eppenstein.com](mailto:meppenstein@eppenstein.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 10, 2016 12:16 PM  
**To:** Mayor  
**Cc:** Deborah Pekarek; [stern\\_william@yahoo.com](mailto:stern_william@yahoo.com)  
**Subject:** Village Board COW Sustainability Meeting May 10, 2016

Dear Mayor,

I am unable to attend the Village Board's Sustainability Committee meeting tonight. The following comments are submitted instead in support of (a) eliminating municipal curbside grass collection, and (b) continuing the educational activities of the Leaf Education Task Force to promote leaf mulch mowing. I would also like to address the inconclusive data on mulch-mowing relative to ticks in the environment, and information that has recently come to my attention regarding the piling of loose leaves on curbs and ticks.

#### Grasscycling

For the same reasons (listed below) for promoting sustainable landscaping practices such as leaf mulch mowing, as stated in the Scarsdale Forum's report on this subject dated May 2014, I support terminating grass collection by the Village, and further support efforts to encourage and continue mulch mowing on residential and Village properties:

- Significant reduction in the costs to the Village for year round grass clipping collection and fall leaf collection and disposal;
- Reduction of localized flood risk resulting from clogged storm drains, as well as diminishment of the cost to the Village to clear clogged storm drains;
- Reduction of the traffic and pedestrian hazard caused by piles of leaves and grass clippings in roadways;
- Reduced phosphate runoff into our waterbodies;
- Improved quality and health of turf, as on-site mower mulching of leaves and grasscycling improve the capacity of soil to absorb water and germinate seed;
- Improved resiliency of turf and plantings;
- Virtually free, high-quality, nutrient-rich and attractive mulch for lawns, gardens and planting areas; and
- Reduced noise and air pollution from leaf blowers.

#### Leaf Education Task Force Program

The following is a recommendation to continue the mulch mowing education program by the LETF and for the Village Board to consider again the discontinuation of annual curbside leaf collection in the fall. The Cornell Waste Management Institute's soil study on the effects of leaf mower mulching in Westchester County, now beginning its second year, includes two properties in Scarsdale: the north meadow at Chase Park where mulch mowing has been conducted for several years, and a residential property in the Village Center where leaves are removed. As a member of the LETF who was introduced

to the CWMI by Anne Jaffe Holmes, I recommended the Scarsdale properties as study subjects to the PRC department and the CWMI, and have been an invitee to local CWMI steering committee meetings as a member of the LETF and an officer of Friends of the Scarsdale Parks, Inc.

I wish to report to the Village Board that during the CWMI steering committee meeting I attended in April with, among others, the Cornell director and another representative of the CWMI, a representative of the local Cornell Cooperative Extension (Jerry Giordano), a certified arborist, and a representative of the NYS Turf and Landscape Association, it was noted that leaving piles of fall leaves on the curbside for municipal collection might create a “reservoir” for certain species of ticks. Also of particular note is that the NYSTLA representative expressed interest in having its members better informed about standards for mulch mowing best practices. These highlights suggest the importance of continuing efforts to promote leaf mulch mowing.

My understanding is that no ticks were detected at the two Scarsdale sites during the first year of the study. It was determined that for the purposes of statistical analysis the program requires a continuation of study and sampling, with some modifications, to get a better representation of tick activity and the effects of geography and lawn maintenance practices, among other factors. The data collected thus far is too early to carry any weight. Yet mulch mowing as a beneficial landscape practice continues to be the subject of the study, is not being discouraged by the CWMI, and has been supported for many years by the Village turf consultant, Chip Osborne.

Sincerely,

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