

November 24,2015

Hon. Mayor Jonathan Mark and Hon. Board of Trustees of the Village of Scarsdale
Scarsdale Village Hall
1001 Post Road
Scarsdale, New York 10583

Re: 2 Morris Lane, Scarsdale, New York

Dear Hon. Mayor Mark and the Hon. Board of Trustees:

Our family has lived and raised our children on Heathcote Road for the past twenty-four years. During that time period, we have seen many changes in school curriculum and personal, the relocation of health facilities and ambulance services, and the addition of traffic lights near the Heathcote Elementary School and at the High school. All these changes supported the excellent quality of life we have come to expect and addressed safety concerns of the community in the productive manner. Unfortunately, the proposed residential treatment facility under consideration on Morris Lane in the Heathcote section of Scarsdale does not benefit the community and in fact presents several problematic concerns worth exploring.

I should begin by saying that I am employed by the State University of New York as a Sociologist with expertise in Deviant Behavior. In my role as educator and researcher, I am familiar with the literature and treatment of adolescent disorders including but not limited to eating disorders. As anyone with children already knows, adolescence is a difficult time physiologically, emotionally as well as socially. Eating disorders are one of many dangerous behaviors that are socially created and supported. The media often describes the popularity of “purging” as an epidemic; rather, it is learned behavior supported by an informal social system that provides rewards in the form of status for those children that engage in it.

Most teen treatment facilities are located in isolated areas for a reason. Children learn how to manage their stress and dissatisfaction with themselves from their peers. Excessive behavior such as drug, alcohol, exercise, or eating too much or too little causes an endorphin rush most commonly known as addiction. Most teens suffering from one form of addictive behavior, engage in several types. That means that children with addictive disorders including patients, family members, and their friends will be interacting with local people.

The intention of proposed treatment center is not to address the needs of our community but rather, to charge exorbitant rates so that “outsiders “ can send their children to our community for treatment. In the commercial section of Scarsdale, we have a Teen Center and provide counseling for our families in need. The location of this proposed treatment facility is dangerously close to the middle and high schools. It is where our children walk to school and to activities. Will they wall off the property or gate it? Will our teens curiously try to interact with patients? Can they guarantee that their patients will not talk or connect with our kids? Are you willing to take that chance?

Deviant behaviors continue because they are socially supported with little negative reaction or consequences. We already have factors that could lead children down this unfortunate path. Must we show them that the worst that will happen is a move to Morris Lane?

Sincerely yours,

Professor Alice Michaeli