

Donna Conkling

From: Mayor
Sent: Monday, July 09, 2018 9:44 AM
To: Donna Conkling
Subject: Fw: Scarsdale Mayor and Trustees are Ignoring Residents' Safety

From: Roger Neustadt <rknatty@aol.com>
Sent: Sunday, July 8, 2018 9:51 PM
To: Mayor
Subject: Fwd: Scarsdale Mayor and Trustees are Ignoring Residents' Safety

Mr. Mayor -

I am writing to you a second time to discuss the hiring of armed, retired police officers for the schools. Despite our cordial conversation a few months ago, my recent email went unanswered, as did my email to Scott Silberfein (?sp). I sincerely hoped, and still hope, that this will be a collaborative effort. As an attorney, and admittedly not knowing all of the facts, the hiring of such an inexperienced attorney to the Village position seems quite troubling on its face, especially at the alleged cost. I sincerely hope that you and I can be truly engaged on the school security matter.

If I do not hear from you, I will be quite disappointed.

Sincerely,

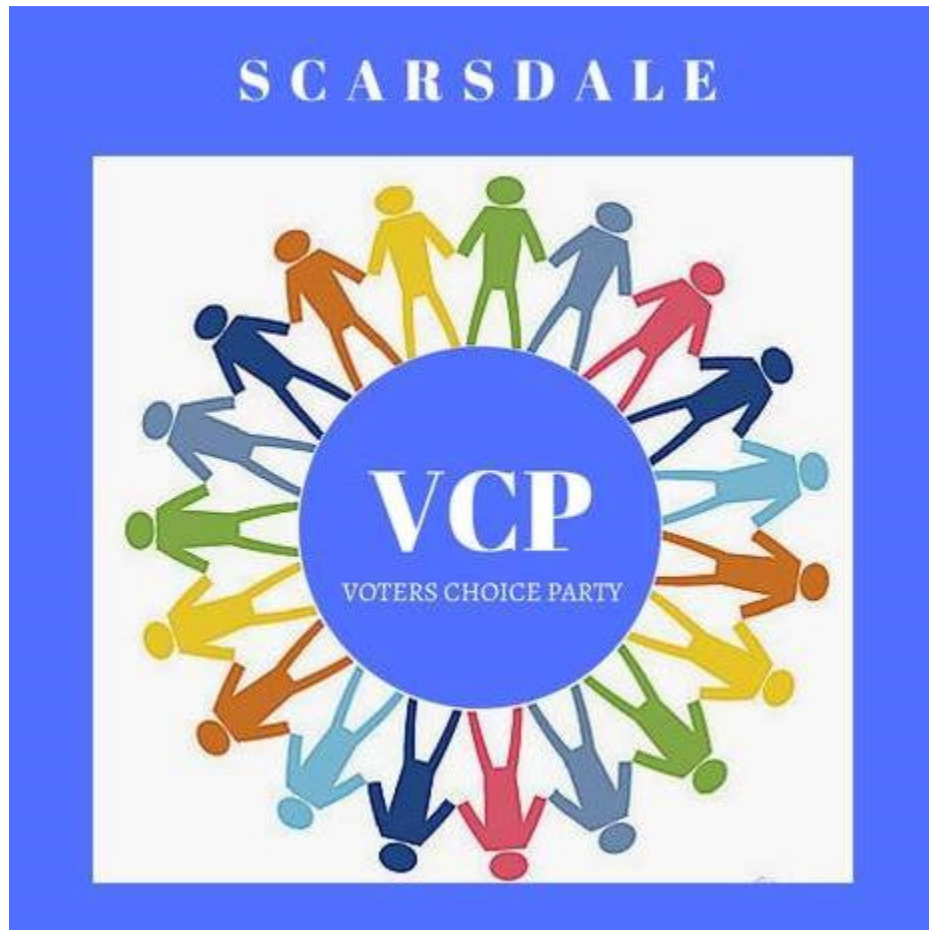
Roger

Roger Neustadt
rknatty@aol.com

-----Original Message-----

From: Scarsdale Voters Choice Party <VotersChoiceParty@Gmail.com>
To: Dear Scarsdale Friends and Neighbors, <rknatty@aol.com>
Sent: Sun, Jul 8, 2018 7:45 pm
Subject: Scarsdale Mayor and Trustees are Ignoring Residents' Safety

[View this email in your browser](#)



Voters Choice Party Newsletter

July 8, 2018

Dear Scarsdale Friends and Neighbors,

We hope that you are doing well and that you enjoyed the 4th of July! In the spirit of what American independence stands for, the Voters Choice Party reminds the

Scarsdale administration that it should not suppress or inhibit residents' freedom of speech in any way. *The VCP requests that the Administration stop wasting taxpayers' funds to fight a law suit that defends residents' right to free speech.* Details of the case are [here](#).

At Board of Trustee meetings since April, members of the Voters Choice Party have been recommending to the Administration that it create and implement a survey or conduct focus groups to determine Scarsdale residents' priorities and to use that information to create a long-term financial plan. Unfortunately, the Administration refuses to find out what our needs are. *The Administration's refusal to create a long-term financial plan is irresponsible in light of market and credit signals that show that the probability of a recession in the next two years is rising.* The Administration should not leave a mess for future administrations to clean up.

Even more egregious is this Administration's significant disregard for residents' safety. Despite the availability of data showing that Scarsdale residents fear walking, driving and cycling in town, the Administration has not undertaken any initiatives to improve safety for residents. Additionally, despite three requests to meet a wireless radiation expert to discuss the dangers of Distributed Antennae Systems (DAS), Mayor Hochvert refuses to meet this expert.

*The Voters Choice Party urges residents to demand that this Administration places our safety and health as its key priority. **Scarsdale residents deserve better!***

Please write us with your questions and concerns at VotersChoiceParty@Gmail.com.

We want to hear from you!



Mayor and Trustees Refuse to Follow Best Practices in Village Appointments

The Voters Choice Party is compelled to point out once more the utter inability of our Mayor and Village Trustees to follow elementary best practices in important Village appointments. This time, sadly, it's a critical Village position -- the replacement of the Village attorney, Wayne Esannason, who retired after 19 years in the position, the recent ones, such as the Ryan revaluation, mired in controversy.

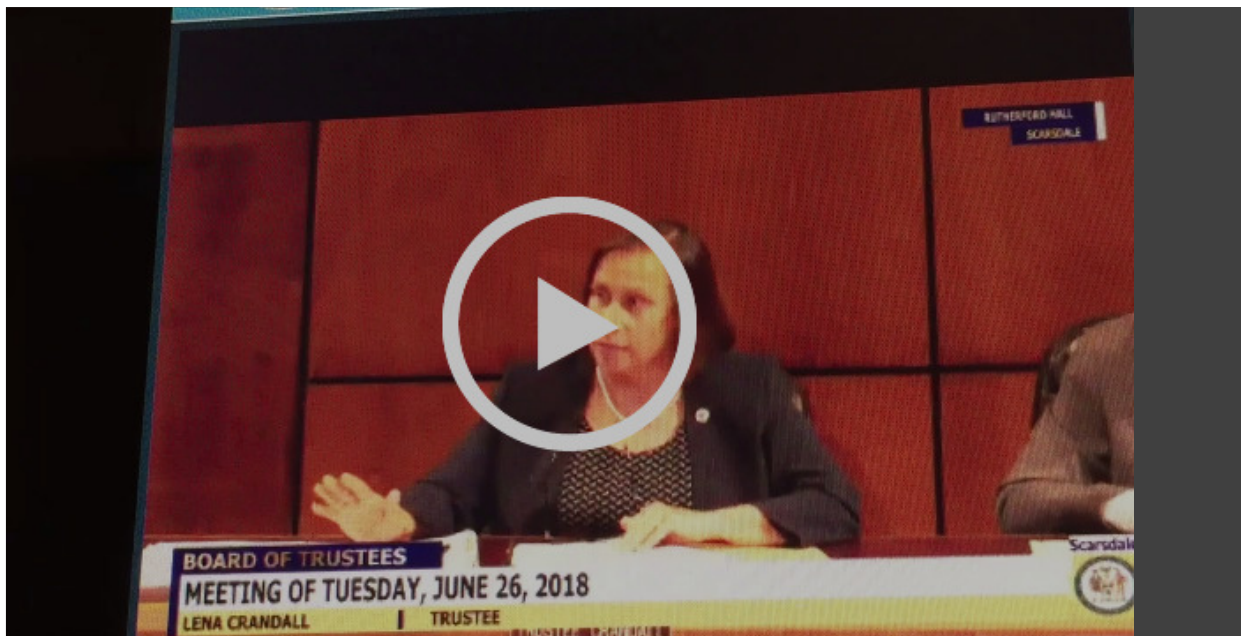
Mr. Esannason's retirement was announced to Village staff on June 8, but was not announced publicly. Robert Berg, a Voter Choice Party leader, was tipped off about the retirement, and wrote the Mayor, Trustees, and Village Manager, a letter on June 9, 2018,

stressing the importance of the job and the need to find an experienced, highly skilled replacement with input from Scarsdale's incredibly talented pool of resident attorneys. Mr. Berg reiterated the importance of a search process guided by the nation's best lawyers who live in Scarsdale to assist the Board and Mayor at the June 12 Village Board meeting. At the end of that meeting, Mayor Hochvert publicly stated that the Board had not voted on a replacement Village Attorney. Yet, by June 22, 2018, when the Village issued its agenda for the June 26, 2018 Village Board meeting, it included a signed employment contract and a draft resolution appointing Angela Martin as the replacement Village Attorney. Ms. Martin was until recently, the Director of Human Resources for the Scarsdale Village, earning a salary of \$148,000. She is 35 years old and graduated Pace University Law School in 2009. *She has only practiced law for less than three years*, working in HR the rest of her career. Her new salary will be \$175,000; she will have five weeks paid vacation per year; three weeks paid sick leave; health benefits for life after another 3 years; and will be getting a \$26,133 raise. Most egregiously, **NO ONE ELSE WAS CONSIDERED FOR THE JOB.** The Village Manager recommended Ms. Martin and the Mayor appointed her with the approval of the rest of the Trustees, except for one. **THE JOB WAS NOT ADVERTISED. NO SEARCH WAS MADE FOR ANY MORE QUALIFIED CANDIDATES.**

Why? Because our Village Manager and our Mayor like Ms. Martin. *Is that good enough?* **No.** We residents are entitled to have the best qualified Village Attorney work for us, not simply that the Village Manager and Mayor like. Not the one who is friends with the Village staff and Mayor and Trustees. The Village Attorney position is a plum job. It is the second highest paid position in Village Hall. It comes with incredible benefits. Had the position been advertised, doubtless dozens or scores of excellent municipal attorneys with decades of relevant expertise would have applied. Many incredibly talented Scarsdale attorneys likely would have applied too.

That's precisely why the Village Manager and Mayor DID NOT conduct an open search for the best qualified candidate -- because Ms. Martin likely would not have had the best qualifications simply because she lacks the relevant municipal attorney experience to hold this critically important job. Our Mayor and Village Trustees -- except for Trustee Arest (who in this instance opposed the appointment on process grounds) -- are enablers of the patronage system that plagues our Village Government. The VCP has pointed this out repeatedly with respect to appointments to Village Boards and Councils.

There needs to be accountability and transparency in Scarsdale Village. That's why the Voters Choice Party exists.



Scarsdale Village Trustees expressed reservations about hiring Angela Martin, who has less than three years of formal legal experience and served as the former HR Director for Scarsdale. The Village did not solicit public opinion or conduct a formal job search before hiring Ms. Martin. Nonetheless, she was appointed five minutes after the Trustees' read their prepared remarks.

Despite Data Availability, Scarsdale Mayor and Trustees Ignore Residents' Safety

The Voters Choice Party strongly recommends that the Scarsdale administration take meaningful steps to improve pedestrian, driver, and cyclist safety in Scarsdale. In the fall of 2017 and spring of 2018, VCP members Brice and Mayra Kirkendall-Rodríguez led the effort to design two surveys and to analyze a significant amount of data for the purpose of determining how to improve traffic safety and to resuscitate moribund downtown retail. The reams of data they analyzed and with which they created graphs were utilized by the Municipal Services and Downtown Revitalization Committees of the Scarsdale Forum in their reports published this year in January and May 2018.

The full traffic report was published January 2018; you may read respondents' comments about potholes and their concern about pedestrian, driver, and cyclist safety [here](#).

Unfortunately, despite the significant interconnection between the Scarsdale Forum and elected Village officials, Village officials have not used the data or reports to solve the problems identified in the surveys. This administration insists on not being data driven. The mayor and trustees have yet to prove with any data or facts what drives their priorities other than what their campaign supporters want.

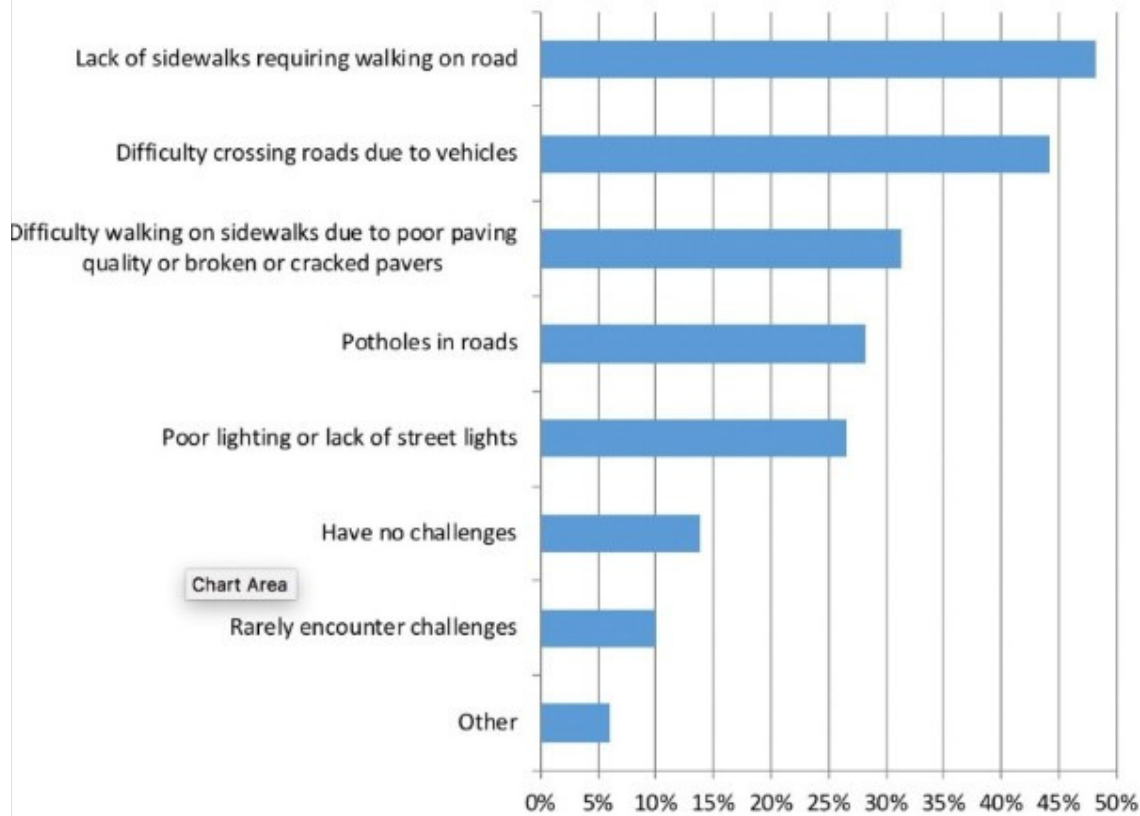
Unlike this administration, the VCP is data driven. In this newsletter issue, we focus on three key areas where we have data that demonstrate that Scarsdale residents place a high priority on:

- improved safety when cycling, driving, and walking
- repairing Scarsdale roads, and
- improving significant problems with parking.

The Traffic Survey found that the majority of Scarsdale residents fear walking, driving and cycling in Scarsdale. *Seventy-five percent of the 706 Scarsdale respondents in the Traffic Study cited that they had challenges when walking in Scarsdale.* The main challenges were lack of sidewalks in numerous parts of Scarsdale, impediments to crossing roads due to unsafe or illegal motorist behaviors, poor quality of roads and sidewalks, and lack of lighting on streets.

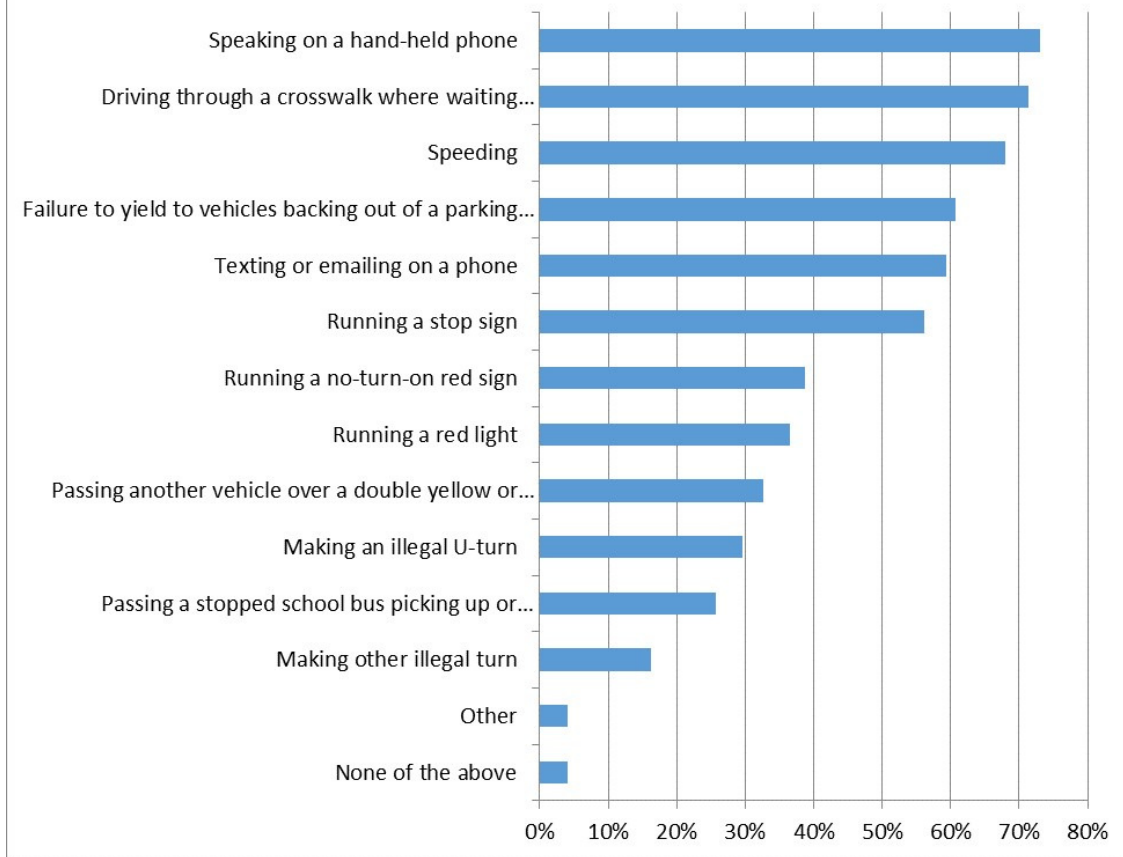
Fox Meadow Road, Popham Road, the intersection of Crane Road and East Parkway, and the area near Brewster Road and Fenimore Road were cited most frequently as difficult places for pedestrians to cross and places where excessive vehicular speeds are observed. Challenges in walking or crossing streets were present on Heathcote Road in front of the Congregational Church, Murray Hill Road, Mamaroneck Road, Griffen Avenue, Weaver Street, Church Lane, Butler Road, Olmsted Road, Drake Road, Ferncliff Road, and Wayside Lane.

When walking in Scarsdale, do you encounter any of the following challenges?



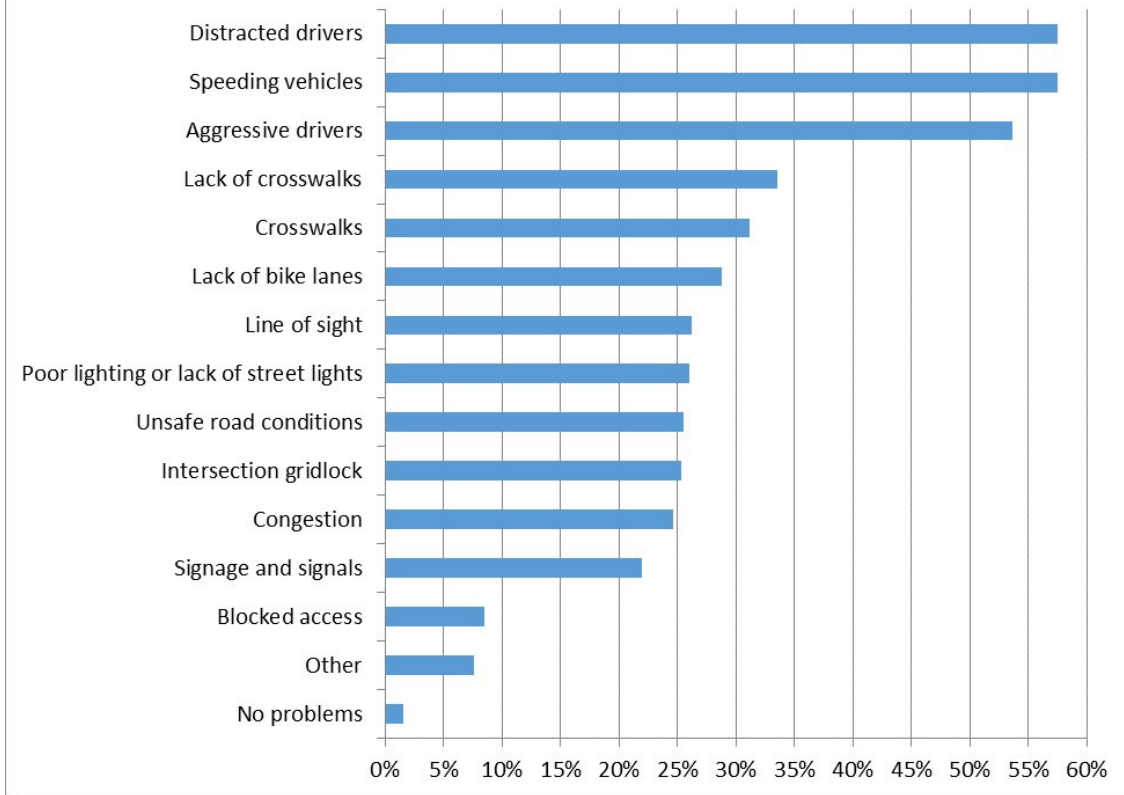
Driving infractions are significant. Over 70% of the respondents stated that they have observed drivers speaking on a hand-held phone. Drivers who exhibit unsafe practices at intersections are also quite frequently observed. Drivers who drive through a crosswalk where waiting pedestrians have the right of way to cross first was often cited by respondents. Among female respondents, 75% stated they observed motorists drive through a crosswalk where waiting pedestrians have the right to cross first. They also stated that they had observed drivers speaking on a hand-held phone; 74% of female respondents stated they had observed drivers speeding.

Observations of Driving Infractions



Scarsdale residents want solutions to dangers on Scarsdale roads. When asked what problems need to be addressed, more than half of all survey respondents found driver behavior to be the most significant issue on Scarsdale roads. Both female and male respondents cited distracted, speeding and aggressive drivers as their top three concerns; lack of crosswalks was cited as the fourth concern that female and male respondents want solved. Around 30% of survey respondents would like to see improvements to pedestrian and bike safety such as crosswalks and bike lanes.

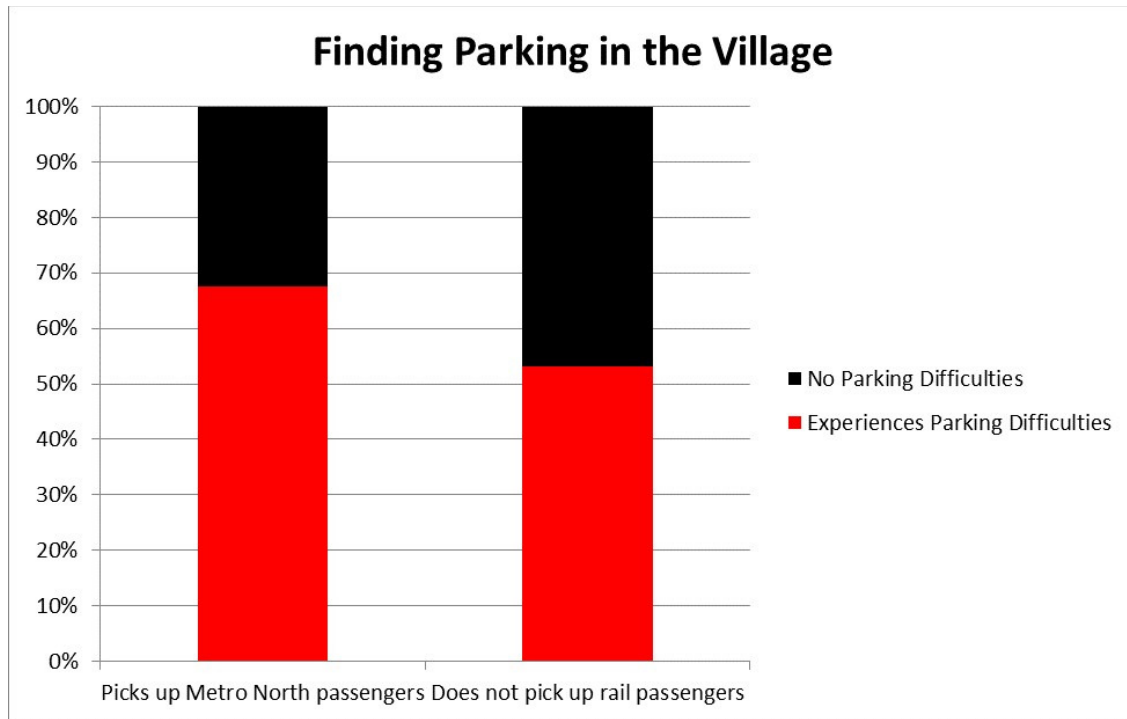
What Problems Exist on Scarsdale Roads that Should be Addressed?



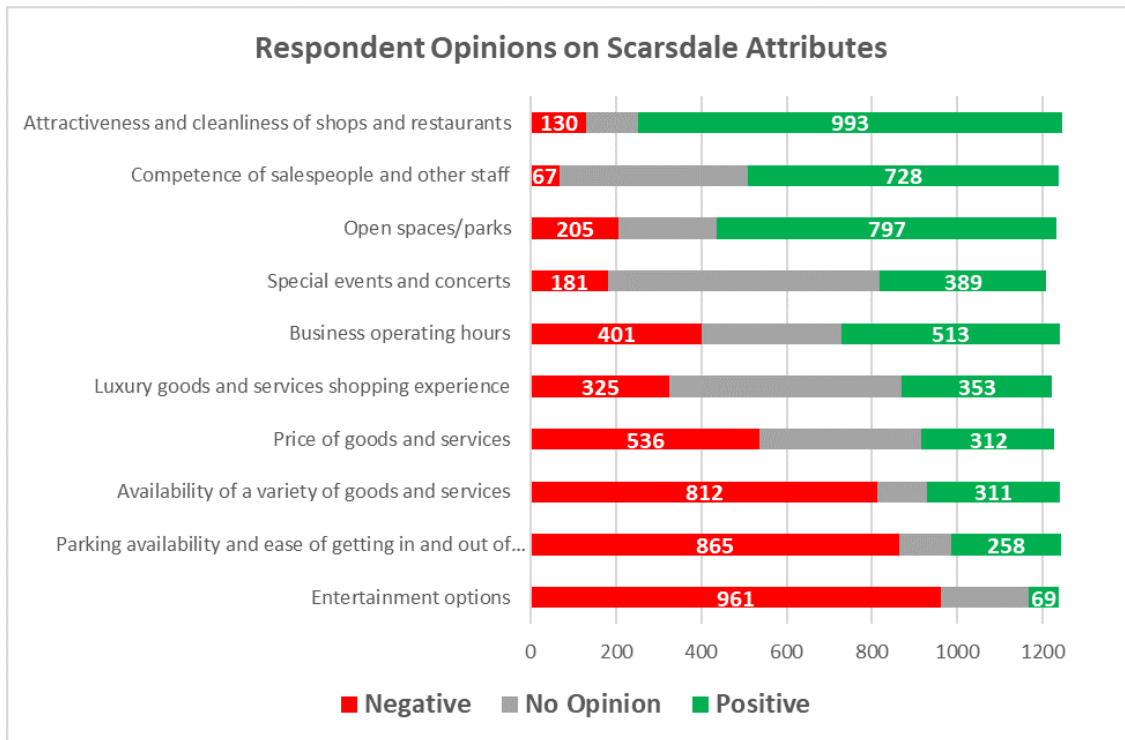
Respondents in both the Traffic and Downtown Revitalization Surveys, repeatedly state that parking and zealous parking enforcers are significant concerns in Scarsdale. A major challenge for respondents was parking. When asked if respondents have difficulty finding parking at certain times of the day, 55% of total respondents stated that they do; 40% responded that they face no difficulties with parking. Among female respondents, 63% stated they had difficulty finding parking, while 32% stated that they did. 41% of the male respondents had difficulties finding parking, while 55% stated that they had no difficulties. Among drivers 65 and older, respondents were very close to evenly split in those who had difficulties with parking (48.9%) and those who did not (47.9%). Those respondents who pick up passengers from Metro North stations were far more likely than other respondents to report parking difficulties.

In the comment section of the survey, respondents cited rush hour during the week as the most challenging time period of difficulty finding parking spots. Many of the respondents cited that in

the Village Center, parking is difficult to find at all times of weekdays and weekends.



Not finding parking is not just an annoyance for Scarsdale residents, it **significantly hinders the revitalization of retail** in Scarsdale. The Downtown Revitalization Survey found that one of the most negative perceptions about Scarsdale expressed by survey respondents was about parking experiences in Scarsdale.



Robert Selvaggio's Remarks Before the June 26th Board of Trustees Meeting

I am the owner of a financial consulting firm in mid-town Manhattan and frequently hire analysts with Masters degrees in financial engineering from Columbia, Cornell and NYU. My quants are top performers and I pay them well. (Of course, the private sector benefits that I pay are considerably cheaper than the rich benefits we pay our municipal workers). When I look to hire a new quant, I review scores of CVs, check references and interview no fewer than five candidates. My clients trust me to have them served by the best financial professionals.

As a Scarsdale resident and taxpayer, I expect no less diligence from our elected officials in the selection process for an important role such as Village Attorney. However, my Voters Choice Party colleague Bob Berg has not been able to uncover any evidence whatsoever that a search is or has been underway for a replacement for Mr. Esannason, and Bob indicates that the Village Board intends simply to appoint the Village's Human Resources Director to that role.

Bob Berg, himself an accomplished attorney, clearly believes that our HR Director has limited experience in the practice of law, having spent a scant two years functioning as an attorney since graduating from law school. I wonder what other attorneys living in Scarsdale think about this potential appointment and whether one or many of these might be interested in throwing his or her own hat into the ring? I wonder whether Scarsdale residents will continue to trust a body that would consider awarding an important job such as Chief Legal Officer of the Village to an individual without a formal search process guiding that decision? Are we residents truly served by excluding a population of willing candidates from consideration at the get-go? I think not.

Let's have a search process for a qualified and experienced replacement for Mr. Esannason. Impanel a search committee of Scarsdale residents with legal expertise and have that Committee vet candidates; and if our HR Director emerges as the best among those candidates by all means let's hire her.

Much as my clients trust that I hire the best quantitative financial analysts, we Scarsdale taxpayers deserve no less than to trust that we are getting the best Village Attorney our \$175K (plus \$100K or more in benefits) can buy.

Assuring that we get the best for our money is what Trustees are supposed to do. Don't fall down on the job here.

Editor's Note: *Unfortunately, Mayor Hochvert and the vast majority of trustees approved a new village attorney without conducting a search to find a new attorney. Moreover, they ignored the Voters Choice Party's recommendation that the Administration convene an ad hoc resident committee to help Village personnel select the new attorney. The previous Village Attorney often disrespected Scarsdale residents, made bad decisions related to the Ryan reveal, and often wasted taxpayers' funds on litigation. **The Voters Choice Party stands firmly against the lack of due diligence that this administration believes in.***



Scarsdale residents were outraged at lack of due diligence in Village Attorney hiring process.



Distributed Antennae Systems Do Not Belong Near Schools or Homes

Despite three requests, Mayor Hochvert refuses to meet wireless radiation expert, Patricia Wood, Founder and Executive Director of Grassroots Environmental Education. The purpose of the meeting is to help educate our Mayor about the biological hazards associated with chronic, low-level exposure to wireless radiation before taking a meeting with any telecommunications firm looking to install DAS antennas in our community, not after the fact.

The Voters Choice Party is very concerned that this Administration refuses to place residents' safety as its top priority.

[Read more](#)

Board of Trustees Meeting

We urge residents to attend the July 10th Board of Trustees meeting and to participate in the public comment session. Since, unfortunately, the Mayor and Board of Trustees refuse to conduct a survey or create focus groups to find out what residents' municipal priorities are, **we must let them know what our needs are.**

Upcoming Board of Trustee Meetings

July 10, 24

August 14, 28

September 12, 25

October 9, 23

Scarsdale Schools

The Board of Education of the Scarsdale Union Free School District will hold the following meetings on **Tuesday morning, July 10, 2018, at 8:30 a.m.**, at Scarsdale High School, 2 Brewster Road (Board of Education wing) in Room 170-172:

***Reorganization Meeting**

***Public Hearing on Code of Conduct**

***Business Meeting**

Highlights of the Business Meeting agenda are as follows:

- Personnel Report
- Consent Agenda
- Information and Action Items, including a review of Board policies, and consideration of the Butler Track and Field renovation project options, and the proposed establishment of a Charitable Education Fund.

At the conclusion of the meeting it is anticipated that the Board will enter into Executive Session to discuss collective bargaining matters.

Members of the public are cordially invited to be present and to speak at designated times on agenda items or other non-personnel related matters.

For additional information, contact the Public Information Officer, Victoria Presser, at vpreser@scarsdaleschools.org.

We Welcome Your Letters

Do you have anything that you want to say to the Scarsdale Mayor and Trustees? Please send [us](#) your letter, and we will publish it in our newsletter insuring that it gets to Village Hall and our thousands of newsletter readers.



The VCP Needs Your Support

The Voters Choice Party respectfully requests a financial contribution from you to help keep free speech and press alive! The funds will be used to pay for hosting this newsletter and to expand its distribution. Also, the funds will go toward updating the Voters Choice Party [website](#), advertising our newsletter on Facebook, and hosting community events to discuss what is going on in our village and your concerns. Any donation is accepted gratefully. Please mail your check in the name of Voters Choice Party c/o 32 Tisdale Road Scarsdale 10583.

Feel free to forward our newsletter to other residents. We welcome them to sign-up by [emailing](#) us.

Recent Voters Choice Party Speeches and Articles

[Scarsdale Mayor Should Stop Wasting Our Taxes to Our Suppress Free Speech](#)

[Need Research and Conversation about Distributed Antennae Systems](#)

[Why Scarsdale Village's Tax Scheme Will Not Work](#)

[Losing and Winning with Tax Reform](#)

[Fixing Scarsdale Roads is a Critical Safety Issue](#)

[What are Scarsdale Residents' Priorities?](#)

[Why Municipalities Need to Create Long-Term Financial Plans](#)

[Empathy and Math Should Be At The Cornerstone of Scarsdale Village Governance](#)

[Let the Sun Shine In At Village Hall](#)

[Where is the Spring in the Spring Scarsdale Housing Market?](#)

[Scarsdale Mayor Denies 90% of Scarsdale is Subsidizing 10%](#)

[Scarsdale Officials Are Ignoring Board of Assessment Review](#)

[Scarsdale Does Not Have Anti-Nepotism Policies](#)

[When Trees Fall in Scarsdale, Do Trustees Hear Them or Us?](#)

[Silence of the Mayor and Trustees is Deafening](#)

[Why are the Scarsdale Mayor and Trustees Mistreating a Volunteer?](#)

[The Scarsdale Forum Is Not Living Up To Its Potential](#)
[Nepotism and Patronage Appointments in Scarsdale Should End](#)
[Scarsdale Budget Does Not Address 800-pound Gorilla](#)
[Scarsdale Water Rates Provide a Discount for Excess Water Use](#)
[Scarsdale Citizens Nominating Committee Needs Serious Reform](#)

Out and About

Lots of fun activities are underway this summer. Come out and meet your neighbors and friends. We hope to see you at these events.

Scarsdale Youth Tennis League Sign Up Tuesday, July 10th

Sign up this Tuesday, July 10 at the Middle School Tennis Courts from 6 PM to 8 PM for the 34th season of the Scarsdale Summer Youth Tennis League for boys and girls between the ages of 6 and 18 . The program continues on weekday evenings for four weeks for \$50.

The program offers up to 32 hours of tennis in round robin matches for all skill levels. Every player receives a participation trophy and a Scarsdale NYJTL T-shirt. Players can pick their nights and play for one or two hours.

Youth and parents interested in the tennis league should **contact Bob Harrison, volunteer director, at 646-4054 or by email at proscars@aol.com** for applications.

Free Band Concerts at Chase Park

The Westchester Band's free outdoor concerts at Chase Park will be celebrating 49 years. The band was created in 1969 by its founder Dr. Joseph Albright. In his 17th season as conductor is

Mr. Alan Hollander. Mr. Hollander is a retired Director of Music of the Edgemont Public Schools. He currently is a professor at Lehman College CUNY. Mr. Hollander teaches and directs the Lehman Community Band. He is also an accomplished oboist, performing and teaching throughout the Metropolitan area.

There will be a concert on five consecutive Thursdays at 8:00 PM in Chase Park. These will be on Thursdays 7 /12, 7 /19, 7 /26, 8/2 and 8/9. Concert audiences are welcome to bring lawn chairs, blankets and picnic dinners. In the event of rain, the performances will be held at 8:00 PM in the Scarsdale High School Auditorium located on Brewster Road. Call the Recreation Department for information at 914-722-1160.

Please forward our newsletter to your friends and neighbors. They can scan this QR bar code or click on this [link](#) to sign-up for the newsletter directly.



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About The Voters Choice Party

The Voters Choice Party was created in 2017 to increase transparency and accountability at Scarsdale Village Hall, to discuss issues relevant to residents, to give voters a choice of different candidates, and to increase voter turnout.

Get Involved in Village Affairs! Decisions at Village Hall Affect Our Pocketbooks!

Our e-mail address is:

VotersChoicePary@Gmail.Com

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