

3 Montgomery Road
Scarsdale, New York 10583
January 28, 2018

Board of Trustees
Village Manager
Conservation Advisory Council
Village of Scarsdale
1001 Post Road
Scarsdale, New York 10583

Re: Sanitation Study Recommendations

Mayor, Trustees, Village Manager, Conservation Advisory Council:

This letter is regarding the December 2017 Sanitation Study prepared by the Conservation Advisory Council and concluding recommendations to be further reviewed by the Board of Trustees, in particular at a meeting scheduled for January 30, 2018.

As background, I have read the Sanitation Study, reviewed the presentation on that study and followed the press including resident letters on the Study and its recommendations. As further background, when one of the prime recommendations of residential pickup of food scraps was proposed by a committee of the Scarsdale Forum, we spoke against that plan at the General Meeting of that organization.

As it turned out, the Village did institute voluntary food scrap recycling at the Recycling Center sometime after the proposal of the Scarsdale Forum committee. Recognizing the bulk of some food scraps, we did start to collect those items and take them to the Recycling Center for the food scraps bins, which we have done at least through 2017.

While we appreciate the time and effort of the CAC in preparing the Study, there are substantial concerns about the first two of the three recommendations.

Focusing on weekly curbside pickup of food scraps for recycling, we are not convinced that this should be implemented. Despite having the voluntary program, there is limited data on participation. Having purchased the disposable bags at the Recycling Center, we know that we had to register for the first time purchase for the purpose of collecting data. What were the results? Instead, there is only estimated participation by residents. In addition, what will be the requirements for placing food scraps

for collection at the curb? Just the bags (probably not) or what type of bin? Right now, we collect small scraps in the three gallon bags, but hold larger, bulky melon rinds in shopping bags to be discarded loose in the food bins at the Recycling Center. However, these are just some technical issues.

According to the Study, “concurrent adoption of recommendations is important for successful implementation.” This requires discussion of at least the first two recommendations together. One of these is for weekly pickup of paper and commingled recycling, but this requires curbside placement of those items. This is a change in practice that will somehow offset the cost of the food scrap collection.

We are not in favor of these two recommendations for several reasons already expressed by others:

The weekly pick-up of additional containers – for paper, commingled and food scraps – adds to the blight from these items out on the street (especially in Edgewood), as well as possible dangerous obstructions. Residents are not very diligent in retrieving these containers (if at all) now, which may lie in the road with tops askance until late in the day. In addition, food scraps left the night before can attract pests.

We agree that placing an additional item curbside – the commingled recycle items – can be a problem for a substantial number of seniors in more than half of the households in the Village. Also, if this is necessary to make residential pickup of food scraps feasible, then keep the food scraps recycling voluntary and the pickup of commingled items at the house rather than the curb.

Last, we are not convinced that these additional pickups of recyclable items will really make non-committed residents more disciplined and diligent. For food scraps in particular, it has been noted that it is difficult to get to the Recycling Center before 3p, especially when many families have only Saturday available for this chore. We agree that this is a hindrance. The newly opened Greenburgh food scrap program is open every day from 8a to 8p. This could be considered (before starting any residential pickup) at the Recycling Center where the food scrap bins are tucked away from the main area and easily approached from the entrance.

So the first two recommendations are not desired.

The last recommendation regarding a furniture donation container at the Recycling Center seems fine. However, it is not fully clear that the other two must be implemented for this one to occur. Somehow, having the first two in place will alleviate other activities at the Recycling Center so that this

can be attended. Again, some technical details are not clear. Will the Sanitation dept. personnel pick up these items from resident households? Or will they just offload the items from residents' vehicles at the Recycling Center? Either way, this recommendation may be considered.

Beyond the three recommendations, some items in Appendix D: Overview raise concern and are not desired.

Reduce trash pickup to once per week: This could severely impact the other half of the households, namely young families and is not recommended. The senior half does not necessarily need to put garbage out for each collection day, if insufficient (such as ourselves).

Requiring clear plastic bags for trash (no pickup if bags contain recycling): This seems very onerous. Aside from the limited availability of such bags, will Sanitation personnel be able to inspect contents while collecting trash? What disqualifies collection? – A scrap of paper? A lemon peel? (Who will handle the neighbor complaints?)

Discontinue grass clipping pickup: While we have invested in a more powerful mulching lawnmower that is used almost all year (even for leaves), there are times that clippings need to be bagged and collected.

In conclusion: we are strongly opposed to the first two recommendations of the CAC Sanitation Study. In fact, if residential pickup of food scraps does take place, we will continue to take the 8 lbs. to 12 lbs. accumulated every two to three weeks to the Recycling Center, rather than put such items at the curb. We will handle the other recycle items the best we can.

Please consider these comments in your upcoming review of the CAC Study recommendations. If there are any questions on these comments, please contact me at 914-723-1626 or giordanotf@verizon.net. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Thomas Giordano