



## VILLAGE OF SCARSDALE

### **Open Letter to Scarsdale Community**

*COVID-19 Update: May 14, 2020*

Dear Scarsdale Residents,

As I am writing this letter, it is a bright sunny day, the temperature is in the 60s, there are leaves on many trees and flowers are in bloom. This is a time of year when Scarsdale is in its splendor – a beautiful spring awakening. Yet, the virus is still with us and our actions are still restricted. The contrast is stark as we complete our second month of lockdown and our “Groundhog Day” is evolving along with the change of seasons.

### **COVID Update**

I would like to start with an update on the pandemic. Westchester County has had 31,384 cumulative positive cases of COVID-19, or about 9.3% of the statewide total. Devastatingly, the County has seen 1,227 fatalities. That is 1,227 people that were here two months ago and have been lost to this disease. We all know people who are included in this staggering number and we are worse off for their departure. One small modicum of positive news in this statistic is that the County’s fatalities total 5.7% of the statewide total, well below our percentage of positive cases.

Now, moving onto Scarsdale: The Village has had 345 positive Corona cases. The County Executive has been tracking “active cases” by subtracting the number of cases that we had two weeks ago. The assumption behind this methodology is that cases usually resolve within two weeks. Based on the County Executive’s methodology, Scarsdale is down to six positive COVID cases. Please keep in mind that all of the statistics I just shared are based on reported positive test results. There are a few reasons to believe that the reported statistics underrepresent the actual number of cases. First, not all positive cases are tested. Second, not all test results may make the State Department of Health list, including tests that occurred out-of-state or out of the County. From the start of the pandemic, it was clear that the statistics were not fully capturing the number of positive cases. While that remains frustrating, important information remains in the data we do have, namely, the trend – and that is unambiguously positive.

### **Reopening of New York**

Based on the positive trends noted above, the Governor has started the process of opening segments of the economy in portions of the state. The Governor has announced [seven metrics](#) that will dictate when the economy may start to reopen, including hospital and infection data and trends as well as testing and tracing capacity. Westchester County has satisfied five of the seven metrics and expects to meet the remaining two criteria within the coming weeks. Once a region is cleared to start opening its economy, there will be a [four-phased reopening of business](#),

starting with lower risk and higher economic impact industries, including manufacturing, construction and certain retail for delivery, curbside pick-up, and in-store pickup.

### **Our Success is in Our Hands**

New York State, Westchester County, and Scarsdale have fared better than original projections of COVID impacts. The single most important reason for the relatively positive performance is that we have collectively listened to the Governor and restricted our movement and social interaction. As we enter the next phase of addressing the pandemic, it is just as important that we follow the Governor's direction. I found the Governor's [NY Forward – A Guide to Reopening New York and Building Back Better](#) to be a useful document to understand the reopening process. You will be able to find the document on the Village website on the [COVID-19 page](#) should you wish to review it.

Please continue to wear a face mask, wash your hands, social distance, and comply with the Governor's guidelines. We will continue to have better outcomes if we comply with these guidelines. Our continued progress and ability to open more segments of our economy is directly linked to our cooperation.

### **Village Updates**

#### *Land Use Boards*

The Village Land Use Boards will restart via teleconference over the coming weeks, with the Planning Board meeting on May 27, the Board of Architectural Review meeting on June 01 and the Zoning Board meeting on June 10. The Village will start accepting new land use applications next week.

#### *Title Searches*

The Village will assist title search services and realtors to enable the transfer of property. A disclaimer form is required to be executed and copying fees for the reproduction of any necessary documents.

#### *Tennis*

The Village is working on reopening its tennis courts in compliance with the Governor's requirements for tennis play.

#### *Scarsdale Pool & Summer Camp*

The operation of the Village Pool and Summer Camp is subject to County Department of health requirements. At this juncture, the State and County have not yet made a final determination

about the potential opening of municipal pools or summer camps. The Village intends to follow State and County guidance and will make an announcement as soon as guidance is received. Keep in mind that it takes time to open the pool complex and coordinate a summer camp and at some point, within the next week or so, it may simply become too late to open the pool or hold our summer camp for this season.

### *Paving*

The village recently entered into an agreement with ConEd to pave streets that were disturbed by ConEd over the past year or two. Streets that may be impacted include: Fenimore Road, “The Ridgecrests,” and portions of Fox Meadow Road and Dobbs Terrace. The Village will contract and oversee the work and ConEd will pay for the paving.

### *Metro-North Maintenance Work*

Metro-North will be starting work on it switches and tracks south of the Scarsdale Station, proximate the Scarsdale Avenue Meter Lot. Portions of the work will include activity through the overnight hours. By completing the work over the coming weeks while ridership and parking demands are reduced in connection with the pandemic, the project can be completed faster and with lesser local impacts. Because of reduced train volumes, this work is expected to be completed on an expedited basis over the next 3-4 months. Staff will provide additional information to nearby Neighborhood Associations once it is received from Metro-North.

### *School Taxes*

The Town of Scarsdale is the billing and collection agent for real estate taxes paid to the School District. Historically, School taxes have been collected once per year, with a September 30 due date. Tuesday afternoon, the Village received a letter from the School Board President in support of a transition to a two-installment collection of School taxes, with collections in September and January.

This topic has been discussed periodically in Scarsdale. At this time of strong economic impacts resulting from COVID-19, we are all seeking ways to make it easier for residents to meet their tax obligations – through austerity spending measures, establishment of reserve funds, reduced tax increases, spreading out payments, and other measures.

The Village Board will discuss the proposed change to the collection of School taxes at a work session at 6 pm on May 26. The work session will be conducted via Zoom and will be open to the public. On Tuesday, the Village Board expressed its steadfast desire to continue to provide relief to residents during this very difficult economic time. As such, there appears to be consensus building to move forward. Because of the fiscal and operational impacts associated with the proposed change to the payment of School taxes, the Village Board plans to meet to review the relevant information to make a fully informed decision on this matter.

## **Closing Remarks**

As we start to carefully venture out into our beautiful springtime, please remain vigilant about wearing a face mask, washing your hands, maintaining social distance, and complying with the Governor's guidelines. Our future is literally in our hands and our diligence today will lead to a brighter tomorrow.

Please enjoy spring in Scarsdale responsibly and be well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'MS', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Marc Samwick  
Mayor