



VILLAGE OF SCARSDALE

Open Letter to Scarsdale Community

COVID-19 and Other Updates: October 13, 2020

Dear Scarsdale community,

COVID-19 remains a public health threat.

As responsible adults with an obligation to help reduce the spread of COVID-19, we must all continue to maintain vigilance in adhering to public health guidance and legal mandates so as to help avert a local resurgence of the disease. [Recent news](#) about the appearance of transmission hotspots in New York, referred to as "[Cluster Hot Spot Zones](#)," serves as a stark reminder of our collective duty to continue to be attentive by making personal choices and taking necessary actions in support of the guidance and mandates that protect ourselves and others from COVID-19 exposure.

Please continue to practice social distancing, comply with the NYS mandate that you wear a face covering in public spaces where you are unable to maintain at least six feet separation from others, and adhere to any applicable self-quarantine mandate triggered by travel to NY from a [designated state](#).



Our safety is in our hands. The best way to remain safe and healthy while helping to slow the spread of COVID-19 is to continue to follow these CDC and the NYS Department of Health guidelines:

- Wear a mask.
- Wash or sanitize your hands frequently.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Practice social distancing (6 feet).

Undertaking these efforts, including encouraging children, teens, and young adults, will reduce the likelihood that rigorous restrictions on businesses and our daily activities may need to be reinstated.

We've done a great job locally, so let's keep it up!

The following pages provide Halloween information and guidance, notice of an upcoming Village Board work session focused on Village finances, encouragement to become active in your Neighborhood Association, a reminder to vote, and other news and information. Please be sure to review closing remarks for an important message.



Halloween Amidst a Pandemic

Halloween is a fun time of the year, a period when a seemingly incompatible mixture of terror and creativity blend into a concoction that builds community. It is a day celebrated by youth and adults, alike. For some, costume and party planning begins months ahead. As fall colors begin to emerge, our residents and Village staff, alike, look forward to special programs and community events coordinated by our Parks, Recreation and Conservation personnel.

With the backdrop of COVID-19, we have been forced to modify our offerings this year. The Scarecrow Festival, which incorporated social distancing and other public health precautions, took place last week and was sold out! A great time was had by all.

Status for each of our remaining Halloween [programs and events](#) is as follows:

- Bat and Owl Prowl – This popular [Weinberg Nature Center](#) program was cancelled for this year. However, take a look at some of the other fun offerings below.
- Storywalk at [Weinberg Nature Center](#): A partnership between the Weinberg Nature Center and Scarsdale Public Library, experience the story, *Room on the Broom*, as you walk the Nature Center’s front trail from October 10 through 17.
- [Halloween Window Painting](#): Scheduled for October 18.
- Halloween Parade: Normally on Halloween, but cancelled. However, there will be a Virtual Costume Contest – watch for more details next week on the Parks, Recreation and Conservation [website](#).

Importantly, the Village continues to await Trick-or-Treating guidance from the New York State Department of Health. In the interim, however, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) cautions that many traditional Halloween activities can be high-risk for spreading COVID-19 and has published [guidance for holidays](#), including recommendations specific to [Halloween](#). The CDC urges residents to avoid specified higher risk activities, such as traditional trick-or-treating, employing appropriate precautions when participating in identified moderate risk activities, such as attending a costume party held outdoors where protective masks are used and people can remain more than six feet apart, and considering low risk alternatives, such as having a virtual Halloween costume contest. For more details on the CDC recommendations, review their online [Halloween advisory information](#).

At this time, and consistent with the CDC guidance regarding higher risk activities, as well as the NYS prohibition on public gatherings in excess of fifty individuals, the Village does not anticipate being able to approve requests similar to last year's for neighborhood street closures to facilitate traditional trick-or-treating.

Village Board Work Session – Finance

The Village Board will hold a [finance work session](#) at 5:00 pm on Tuesday, October 27, to review status of the FY 2020-21 budget against the backdrop of continuing financial management activities in connection with COVID-19 revenue impacts. We will also discuss FY 2021-22 budget planning, as well as the appropriate target for Unassigned Fund Balance.

As you may be aware, prudent fiscal management contributes significantly to the Village's Aaa bond rating from Moody's. The Village Board and staff have continuously monitored the Village's financial position throughout the pandemic, having undertaken a variety of austerity measures to ensure continuing financial stability during a period of upheaval. Because of our early and aggressive efforts, we remain on solid footing today. Our continuing efforts, as reflected in the public work session scheduled for October 27, underscore our commitment in that regard.

Please see future announcements from the Village and/or check the [Village website](#) to obtain information on how to attend this and other important Village Board meetings.

Ad Hoc Council to Combat Racism and Bias

The Ad Hoc Council to Combat Racism and Bias, formed by [resolution](#) of the Village Board on July 14, 2020, continues to conduct invitation-only listening sessions in order to enhance their awareness of salient themes and to gather and consider insights and perspectives from persons of varied racial and ethnic backgrounds residing in Scarsdale. Because of the potential sensitivity of the topic and the need to offer a safe space for persons to express concerns and experiences freely, the listening sessions have not been open to the public. However, as the Council's work continues, there will be opportunity for broader public engagement.

As a refresher, the Ad Hoc Council's mission is to:

1. Create an anti-racist and anti-biased environment in Scarsdale that encourages inclusion and a sense of belonging for all residents – an environment that recognizes the value that each individual brings to our community.
2. Focus on listening and engagement to identify areas of tension in the community (specifically, where and how residents are experiencing discrimination or bias).
3. Use the information gathered to construct actionable recommendations, which may include such elements as educating the community, creating a safe and open place for

the community to bring any race or bias issues to seek resolution, and other concrete recommendations derived from the work of the ad hoc Council.

The Council’s members are diverse and include a majority of people of color, including individuals representing Scarsdale Family Counseling, the School District, Board of Education, Village staff, and Village Board.

Scarsdale Neighborhood Association Presidents (SNAP) – Are you Active?

For those who may not be aware, SNAP is an organization comprised of the presidents of each of Scarsdale’s 15 Neighborhood Associations (“NA”). Every resident of Scarsdale is eligible to join his/her NA, which is designated based on street address. See the [Scarsdale NA Map](#) to determine your NA. Then, use the table below to get in contact with the president of your NA and be placed on any mailing list s/he maintains in order to help you remain informed and engaged in matters of interest and import in your neighborhood.

The purpose of SNAP (the “Scarsdale Neighborhood Association Presidents”) is to help facilitate communication between the Village, School District, and residents, and to promote the welfare and neighborly spirit of Scarsdalians - both in each of their Neighborhoods and collectively as a group. The SNAP presidents meet together monthly, usually with the Mayor as well as other Village staff members. The NA's are a great source of information, they advocate for common causes and issues, and they organize neighborhood events.

On behalf of the Village Board, I encourage every resident to join their Neighborhood Association and actively participate in the types of activities that make Scarsdale a wonderful community.

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Joyce Chan Russell	craneberkley10583@gmail.com	917-297-5958
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Sarah Bell	westQRNA@gmail.com	

Library Tour

I recently toured the Scarsdale Public Library and was very impressed with the renovation and addition work that has been completed – you’re not going to believe the transformation! On behalf of the Village Board, I commend all who have contributed to the project’s success, including Library and Village staff, the Library Board, and the many generous members of our community who contributed the funding necessary to make the project a reality.

Watch for more library reopening information over the coming weeks.

Vote!

With the registration deadline having passed, all registered voters are strongly encouraged to take the next step—vote! For information about Early Voting, Absentee Ballots, and more, visit the Westchester County Board of Elections online.

Closing Remarks

I saved this important piece of community information for last:

On the morning of Wednesday, October 07, Beverly Samuels, a 79 year-old pedestrian walking on Crane Road near Church Lane, was struck by a vehicle and died as a result of her injuries.

I cannot begin to imagine all that Ms. Samuels' eyes saw during her 79 years, nor can I fathom the profound influence the images had on her as an individual walking her path in life.

What I know for fact today, unfortunately, is that her 79 year-old eyes were unable to see the vehicle that took her life, at least not sufficiently ahead of time to enable her to escape the heartrending outcome.

As a human being, I am deeply saddened by this tragedy.

As a community leader, I believe we must redouble our efforts to move in the direction of safer roads for all users. More on this topic to come.

Sincerely,



Marc Samwick
Mayor