



Old Edgemont Block Party

Old Edgemont Civic Association is hosting its annual block party on Doris Drive on Saturday, Sept. 17, 3 to 6 p.m. From 3 to 4 p.m. Manny's ice cream truck and face painters will be back by popular demand, along with local fare from Crazy Taco Mex food truck. Bring your own water bottles and use the association's water refill station; bring your bicycles for a ride around the block.

Electronics disposal

The Department of Public Works will offer curbside e-waste pickup for residents of unincorporated Greenburgh during the week of Sept. 26. Appointments are required for electronic items, such as computers, TVs and printers, to be picked up. Schedule an appointment at <https://bit.ly/3BFwLMc> by Sept. 21 before 3 p.m. Pickups are limited to two to three items per household.

If residents have concerns about pickup on the Jewish holiday (Rosh Hashanah) arrangements will be made for pickup later in the week.

Masks optional

Masks are now optional at Greenburgh municipal buildings as the Greenburgh Town Board voted to lift the mask requirement at a work session held Sept. 13, reversing an action the board took earlier this year to require masks at public offices and meetings.

New York State recently ended mask requirements on public transit systems and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention loosened its recommendations regarding masks in August.

Greenburgh officials request that employees and visitors be respectful to those who opt to wear masks, and wear a mask if anyone nearby has medical issues. The town also is encouraging everyone to get COVID-19 vaccines and boosters.

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'OFF AND AWAY' AT SCARSDALE HIGH SCHOOL

Cellphone initiative calls for 'mindful approach'

By TODD SLISS

SCARSDALE SCHOOLS — Like so many things interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, Scarsdale High School's cellphone initiative was put on hold for more than two years. After being studied and discussed by faculty and administration starting in 2016, and initially scheduled to be unleashed in April 2020, the connection was finally made on the first day of the 2022 school year.

And the reception — overall — has been clear and positive.

Instead of putting a ban on high school student cellphone usage as other schools have, Scarsdale has taken a different approach by asking students to turn phones "off" and put them "away" in their backpacks for (at least most of) the day. The "Off

and Away for the Day" campaign began for students with an honest, informative and at times humorous 17-minute video (<https://bit.ly/3xuA7z4>) watched schoolwide in homeroom on Tuesday, Sept. 6.

Aside from a teacher requesting the kids take their phones out for something class-related that day, students are being asked to use their phones with a "mindful approach" during school hours, including in the hallways, where it had become a sea of teenagers staring at phones, bumping into each other, in addition to faculty and staff, and not making eye contact on the way to their next destination.

"I like to say all of high school is really just awkward eye contact," English teacher Jennifer Rosenzweig said, noting even that has been lost over time.

Principal Ken Bonamo called it a "shared commitment" to cutting down on smartphone and so-

cial media usage in school "so they can enjoy the benefits of sustained focus in the classroom and the ability to engage in interpersonal relationships and interactions throughout the school day because in fact that is why we have in-person education."

He said it was a concern prior to the pandemic, but the pandemic pushed society more toward their electronic devices — "Tech usage skyrocketed out of necessity," Bonamo said — and those effects and habits are still being felt. Bonamo's goal is to "return to a baseline that is productive and wise."

On Tuesday, Sept. 13, Bonamo got feedback in a meeting with about 40 school government students; those who spoke said it was "positive" and that the hallways had a "different feeling than ever before." Bonamo said he is relying on "positive peer pressure" from students, along with parent support, to

keep the initiative moving forward. He said students "appreciate we are taking a tact of encouragement, and not discipline."

"I do believe this is one of the most important things that we can do for the academic growth of our children, but also their social and emotional and mental health," he said.

Bonamo also attended and spoke at a PTA seminar on the cellphone policy Sept. 13 — and another the following night — which featured about 50 mostly moms and an expert panel from the school, in addition to special guest Dr. John Boockvar, a Scarsdale parent and vice chair of neurosurgery at Lenox Hill Hospital, who many may have seen on the popular Netflix docu-series "Lenox Hill."

Parents at the first of two PTA panel discussions
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The Scarsdale Fire and Police departments held their annual 9/11 memorial service on Sunday, Sept. 11 at the Public Safety building to mark the 21st anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. More photos on page 4.

SCARSDALE INQUIRER/JIM MACLEAN

STREET SAFETY

Residents favor stop signs, speed bumps, enforcement

By TODD SLISS

SCARSDALE — Though they don't know the exact answers, Scarsdale residents want safer streets. And they seem to want that to happen quickly, easily and with proper enforcement involved.

Most of the residents who spoke at the village's latest Placemaking and Mobility work session on Sept. 13 favored simple things like additional stop signs and a lowering of the speed limit from 30 to 25 mph. But they want to see police enforce the laws on Sprague Road as opposed to more complex solutions, such as roundabouts, chokers, chicanes and curb radii reduction, which would impact it being a two-way street and would take away parking.

FHI project manager Michael Ahillen said the goal for Sprague was to reduce speeds and the number of cars using the street to pass through with the overall objective of reducing crash risks. Residents have complained of high speed, rolling stops, a narrow roadway and visibility issues on the street.

FHI offered three potential solutions, with speed management systems used every 300 to 400 feet per federal guidance, and lowering the speed limit to 25 miles per hour, which is now allowed by state law, with several options:

- 1) Traditional: All-way stop signs and decorative speed bumps.
- 2) Innovative: Mountable, decorative neighborhood traffic circles; curb radii reduction and chokers. Chokers are curb extensions that narrow a street by widening sidewalks or planting strips to create a pinch point along the street.
- 3) Innovative with traffic diversion: Option 2, but with traffic diversion with a half closure instead of chokers.

Ahillen said the third option would be the "most robust," but would turn part of Sprague into a one-way street, forcing cars to turn left or right at Nelson
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COURTESY FHI STUDIO

One option for Sprague Road is changing to one-way access.

Pool debate sparks heated comments about board, village staff

Ward-Willis named to replace former village attorney Pozin

By TODD SLISS

SCARSDALE VILLAGE — With another placemaking and mobility work session completed Tuesday, Sept. 13, the Scarsdale Village Board of Trustees will shift its focus to the outdoor pool for its Wednesday, Sept. 28 work session. Mayor Jane Veron said at the board's business meeting Sept. 13 that the pool "has outlived its useful life" and that "patches and emergency repairs" are no longer a "sustainable" approach. "Eventually we will have no pool unless we do something," she said.

The pool consultants will share data from the open online survey and the statistically valid survey, in addition to the in-person feedback collected. Concepts based on the results will be presented at the meeting, along with "rough cost estimates."

"The goal of the meeting is to illustrate for the community possible paths forward," Veron said. "A project of this magnitude will be considered in our village budget capital program, and we will continue these conversations into budget season. We anticipate further community outreach throughout the fall."

During the public comment period that followed Veron's opening remarks, longtime Scarsdale resident Bob Harrison said he spends most summer weekends at the pool and he called Veron's assertions about the pool's lifespan being near the end as "totally false." He thinks the possibility of adding a lazy river is absurd and he said he was upset the pool survey results have not been released in full to the community, as only some broad numbers were mentioned at a prior meeting. During a time where we are "heading in a recession," he finds the village's tax increase and other spending to be irresponsible.

Robin Stettinisch, a Yorktown Heights resident who has been picketing around Scarsdale to call attention to personnel issues at the Scars-

dale Public Library, took her public comment time to compare the money spent on the library to what might happen with the pool and wondered if it is a small number — "the richest of the rich" — who are leading unwanted efforts in the village, leading people to be very unhappy with expansions and renovations.

Veron responded to the public comments about the pool, saying it is "on borrowed time," which was "affirmed" by the study put together by the consultants.

Trustee Jeremy Gans agreed that getting up to modern standards is important for health, safety and accessibility.

Trustee Sameer Ahuja said the pool survey results and people he has spoken with made it "clear" that residents "want an upgrade to the pool." Ahuja called the 1,373 responses an "epically" and "shockingly" high number.

Trustee Jonathan Lewis said he has been a "frequent flyer" at the pool for two decades and while he agrees with Harrison that the facility is "remarkably beautiful," "bucolic" and "a gem," he said it is important to separate "aesthetics

from current conditions," which are made clear in the engineering report. He said the "physical plant is simply broken" and that in order to preserve the pool and keep it beautiful it should be enhanced in a "cost-effective manner" for future generations based on the feedback of "several hundred households."

Deputy Mayor Randy Whitestone agreed with his colleagues and said that operating deficits and declining membership have been an issue, so the village has focused on raising those numbers to make the pool self-sustaining as it had been in the past. At that point Harrison shouted, "Tell the truth!"

Later at the town board portion of the meeting, which featured another round of public comment, Stettinisch and Harrison spoke again.

Stettinisch said she understands why Harrison does not believe in the village's "accuracy" on certain issues and wondered, "Who could blame him?" pointing to her own debate with the village as to whether or not she was an employee of the village or the library for decades.
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