

Remarks for the CNC  
Trustee Jane Veron  
December 4, 2016

Good evening, members of the CNC. I would like to begin by thanking you so much for your service to the community. The work you do on behalf of Scarsdale is extraordinarily important, and we are sincerely grateful for the countless hours you devote to considering and vetting candidates for the Village Board.

I am a fervent believer in the nonpartisan system and know that our unique process is envied by many other municipalities. Our system has enabled Scarsdale to recruit and elect dedicated and engaged community members; most of these individuals would be unwilling to serve if it required contentious public campaigning and significant fundraising. Our system yields a Village Board with diverse perspectives, competencies, backgrounds and temperaments. The one unifying force is the Board's love for Scarsdale. Despite its flaws, our system has produced responsible government for decades, and we are lucky that you have given of yourselves to keep our system running.

I know it is not easy and requires a special kind of dedication, but it is because of you that our nonpartisan system continues to thrive.

As you begin your search, I encourage you to keep in mind several qualities that I believe enable a Trustee to make a lasting contribution to our town.

### **1. A Commitment to Serve, Represent, and Lead**

It is an awesome responsibility to serve as Village Trustee. You are entrusted to preserve and protect what makes Scarsdale special; but you must also imagine the Scarsdale of the future so that we can adapt, evolve, and continue to be the best place to live. You must represent the diverse perspectives of our community and balance competing interests, but you also must make tough decisions based on thorough analysis and your own best judgement. Governing in our best collective interest requires a distinct blend of representation and leadership.

### **2. Connecting with the Community to Listen and Engage**

It is important that a Trustee actively engage with the community. Only a tiny fraction of our job is done at Board meetings. We constantly interact with individuals, community groups, neighborhood associations, and Boards and Councils. We talk with residents on the fields, in town, in the schools, by phone and by email. Scarsdale benefits from Trustees with community service experience who understand our culture and know how to navigate our exceptional network of volunteers. Listening to the loud and vocal dissenters is essential. So is soliciting input from the silent and often less actively engaged majority.

The best Trustees figure out how to reach out to the broadest possible groups of all residents.

### **3. Not Agenda Driven**

As I have seen in my short tenure, the topics we expect to pursue are not always the items that occupy the Village agenda. Trustees should not be guided by a single agenda item. They must be ready and able to tackle unpredictable matters that regularly arise. The guiding principle should be an overarching desire to better the community.

### **4. Open Mindedness**

As Trustees, we use an iterative process with multiple inputs to reach informed decisions. We study the issues, learn the facts and incorporate feedback from others. It is essential to keep an open mind, welcome contrary views, allow new information to inform our judgements and be willing to pivot from previously held beliefs.

### **5. Belief in Collaboration and Partnerships**

I firmly believe that collaboration begets success. We are fortunate to live in a town with incredibly talented citizens, and we are at our best, when we pull together to propel issues forward and find creative solutions. Critical and constructive questioning is paramount to getting it right. We do not all need to agree, and in fact, very often we will not, but we want to create an open, positive, and collegial environment. To be most effective, a Trustee should eagerly collaborate, with other members of the board, with village staff, with Boards and Councils, with community organizations, and with all residents.

### **6. Good Governance and Policy Making**

Our form of government intentionally prescribes frequent turnover of our elected officials, ensuring a regular supply of new ideas, but we also need continuity to run our town. The Village staff is the constant, the dedicated individuals who operate our town on a day to day basis. The relationship between the Village Board and the Village staff relies upon open and honest dialogue. It is the Village Board's job to ask questions, examine the status quo, seek best practices, and set policy. The Village staff provides the deep and seasoned knowledge of Village management. There is a vital give and take, and the results redound to the entire community.

### **7. Doing the Work**

Being a Trustee is very fulfilling; but it takes a lot of work. It requires critical thinking, research, synthesis and a willingness to dig deep. Trustees must adhere to good process, seek compromise, and take action. We have fiscal responsibility, constantly balancing cost controls with investments in our future. We manage precious resources and make decisions that have far reaching implications. Given the weight of our responsibilities, we must always invest the time to be prepared.

## **8. Integrity, Trust and Respect**

While obvious, it should be stated: Trustees must conduct themselves with the utmost integrity. Our individual actions reflect on the entire Board and on the community at large. Residents must be able to trust us; we must model and operate with decorum and respect.

While it is very helpful to have specific professional expertise on the board – be it legal, business, public sector or other experience, in the end, I believe the qualities I described are truly the most important. Please remember, that after you have done the difficult task of selecting your candidates, you will need to support them. Encourage your friends and neighbors to engage in the election process and come out to vote.

I truly love what I do and feel honored to be able to serve Scarsdale in this way. I look forward to your thoughtful selection of our new proposed slate.