

Scarsdalians should have a choice

To the Editor,

I am puzzled by a letter in the March 3, 2017, *Inquirer* titled "Beware of alternative facts...." I have questions: Why oppose citizens having choices as to who will represent them? If an objective of Scarsdale's nonpartisan system is to avoid divisive politics, why invoke invective to attack those with other views?

Today, the term alternative facts implies lies. But many articles published in this very newspaper have exposed questionable practices in the village assessor's office and by the contractor, J.F. Ryan Associates, hired to do the 2016 revaluation. The texts of documents released in response to legal Freedom of Information Law requests provided this information. In addition, the village is withholding payments from Ryan, considering legal actions against his firm and contemplating spending for an outside assessment of the assessor's office. These are facts; there is nothing alternative about them.

During every local election cycle, local media outlets publish letters extolling the nonpartisan system for eliminating discord. Introducing incivility in what should be a good discussion of the issues that face our community is not helpful. I, for one, look forward to questioning the candidate who responds to taxpayer concerns about the amount of taxes they pay each year by saying we should "keep an open mind." — *Scarsdale Inquirer*, Feb. 17, page 3. As the kids say, "really?" Open mind or open wallet? Scarsdale voters understand sometimes costs rise; we also believe those increases and the distribution of those taxes must be logical and defensible.

To serve Scarsdalians well, trustees should be committed to good governance, good process, fiscal responsibility and open discussion. For a citizen-driven council, this means candidates are asked to bring to bear the best of their skills and experience.

Years of volunteering in local organizations is good ... and not enough.

Equally, candidates must bring the wisdom they have gained through their experiences as business leaders, entrepreneurs, analysts, managers, consultants and in other leadership roles. To our detriment, the past two boards of trustees have failed this standard. They did not heed citizens' good advice not to conduct the 2016 revaluation and then would not postpone and reconsider the flawed results.

There is nothing inherently wrong with selecting candidates via confidential search per another letter in the March 3 *Inquirer*. There is also affirmative value to giving voters choices and letting us hear from the candidates.

This year, let's hear from all the candidates and vote for those determined to make good decisions, eager to find appropriate solutions and compromises in the public interest rather than spending public money defending mistakes.

MICHELE BRAUN
Wakefield Road