
Scarsdale's Non-Partisan System

Pros

- Any qualified voter can run for the CNC, and the CNC election is contested.
- CNC members are elected by their neighbors.
- The CNC deliberations are confidential and thus potential nominees can be discussed thoroughly.
- Any qualified voter can be nominated for Village office without regard to political affiliation.
- Candidates for Village office are selected for their qualifications rather than their positions on issues.
- The system attracts qualified candidates who might not run in a partisan system where campaigning is required.
- Most candidates for Village office assume they do not have to campaign.
- Candidates are not required to finance a campaign personally.
- Partisan politics and negative campaigning are avoided in years when elections are uncontested.
- Mayors and trustees can make informed decisions without being beholden to campaign statements or promises.
- According to NYS law, any qualified voter can get a petition signed and run for mayor or trustee in opposition to the non-partisan slate.
- Due to the general practice of a two-term limit for trustee and a single term limit for mayor, elected officials do not become entrenched.

Cons

- Candidates for the CNC are not required to disclose their positions on issues when running.
- The Chair of the CNC is the sitting president of the TVCC, who is also the sitting president of the Scarsdale Forum. Previous service on the CNC is not a requirement for chairing the CNC.
- The TVCC, a single community civic organization, leads the CNC. This has the appearance of influencing the selection of candidates for Village office.
- The Scarsdale Non-Partisan System is perceived as a closed system. Many residents feel that only “insiders” run for the CNC and are chosen to run for mayor or trustee.
- The nominating process is confidential and closed to the public – deliberations are closed and names of potential nominees are not released.
- Candidates for Village office are selected only for their qualifications and not for their positions on issues.
- Issues are not discussed during the campaign.
- The voters do not have a choice on Election Day (if the race is uncontested) as only one slate is put forth by the CNC.
- Voter turnout is low unless the election is contested.