



Westchester County Legislator RUTH WALTER

Proudly Serving the 15th District



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COVID-19 Response

Westchester County was one of the first and most dramatic hotspots in the country. All local and state resources were deployed to handle the first outbreak. Daily updates on cases gave us real-time information about where caseloads were decreasing and our hospitals, although stressed at the beginning, were able to benefit from “flattening the curve” of overwhelming cases to a manageable level.

Face masks became an important way to keep ourselves and others safe. My office has handed out thousands of free masks to small businesses, religious organizations, community centers and other places who need PPE to reopen safely.



In the photo above, taken during the first weeks of COVID, I am giving hand-sewn cloth masks as well as N95 masks to our local police to distribute when supplies were scarce. We continue to highlight the importance of keeping each other safe with our mask giveaways and social media campaign to encourage people to wear them. ■

[#IWearAMaskForYou](#)

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

COVID-19 Testing and Information Hotline: (888) 364-3065

Mental Health Hotline: call (914) 995-1900 or text (914) 461-7287

NYS Unemployment Hotline: 1-888-209-8124

Food Insecurity (SNAP Benefits): (914) 995-3333

Eviction Prevention (Westchester Residential Opportunities):
(914) 428-4507



Westchester County Board of Legislators NEWS

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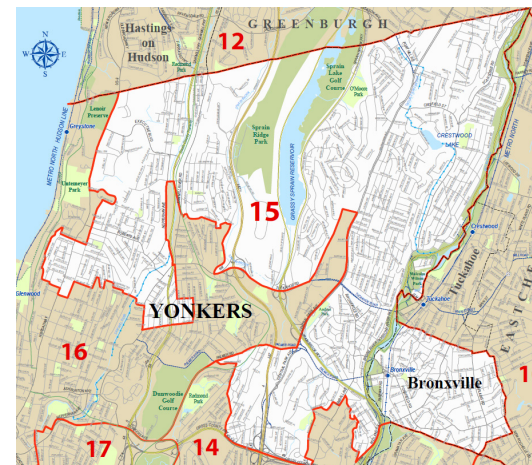


Fall 2020 Newsletter

Ruth Walter

District 15 ~ Yonkers and Bronxville





Our District

Here is a map of District 15. One interesting thing about the County Legislature is that most districts cross municipal lines. District 15 comprises a small village (Bronxville) and part of the 4th largest city in the state (Yonkers). District 15 has beautiful neighborhoods, commercial and retail areas, parks and vital roads. Residents in neighborhoods of Colonial Heights, Bryn Mawr, Crestwood, Runyon Heights, Homefield (among many), have separate issues, but also share concerns over traffic, the economy and, of course, community health. Spending wisely at the County level during the pandemic has meant support for mental health, grants for local businesses, expert community health testing and contact tracing and employing people to work on our infrastructure repairs. Westchester was recently rated the fourth safest area of the country in part because our local government works. Local residents trust that information coming from officials is both truthful and useful in their daily lives. ■

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

When I started my term in January 2020, I could never have imagined that I'd be writing my first newsletter to you in the midst of a global pandemic. Who could have predicted that my office would become my dining room table, and Zoom would be the way we would learn to work together? “Please mute yourselves” is our new call to order! We have faced some major challenges, most tragically the loss of close to 1,500 Westchester lives, but also the economic harm to businesses and the social and emotional fallout on our young people. Even still, I am writing to you with hope and optimism because I have seen what good can happen when local government works for the people.

Much of my first year has been spent tackling unforeseen challenges. How do we make sure everyone has a mask? How can we support local businesses while they were closed and when they reopen? How do we ensure that everyone can vote safely? How do we repair and restore power after a major storm? How do we respond to the national conversation around racial injustice?

These are the questions that have defined life in Westchester in 2020. At the same time I have not forgotten the issues that brought me to the Board of Legislators in the first place: the environment, small business and cybersecurity. In this newsletter, I will tell you about what I have worked on so far this year and detail my longer term goals for District 15. As a public servant, this is my job—tackling problems as they arise, and implementing legislation to make my constituents’ day to day lives better.

Sincerely,

Ruth Walter



Visiting with Westchester Disabled on the Move Director Maria Samuels, Carole Conklin and Sarah Carbonaro, my Legislative Aide in March 2020. Our last pre-COVID meeting!



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Our award-winning County Parks system has always been one of the wonderful things about life in Westchester, but this year, with so many families home from work and school, I think we've all gained a new appreciation for just how



At the Westchester Parks Foundation's Pitch in For Parks Oct 17 event

Improving Our Parks

important our parks are to the quality of our physical and mental health.

At the Board, our commitment to improving our parks is as strong as ever.

I was so happy that we were able to open the restored Sprain Ridge Pool facility for families to be able to enjoy this summer. I grew up just a few miles away, and for my family a trip to Sprain Ridge Pool was always a special occasion. I've heard from so many residents about how glad they were to have the pool open and operating this year, after it had fallen into disrepair for so long.

I want to thank the County Executive, our Parks Department staff and our County Police for the amazing job they

did to insure County parks were open during the pandemic. In our district, Sprain Ridge Pool, Bicycle Sundays on the Bronx River Parkway and the Spain Lake Golf Course were open for all County residents to enjoy. ■



County Legislators Shimsky, Tubiolo and Walter with County Executive Latimer at Sprain Ridge Pool

Legislators Approve Infrastructure Repairs to Roads and Bridges

As we move forward with our recovery from the pandemic, we must make sure that we're building on a strong foundation of 21st century infrastructure.

Making capital improvements now, when interest rates are historically low, is a smart investment in Westchester's future. That's why the Board has continued our work to restore and improve our local roads, bridges and environmental facilities.

As you drive through our district,

you may have seen our many projects to repave and restore the Bronx River Parkway, as well as the restoration of 2 major bridges over the Sprain Brook Parkway and the completion of the work on the Palmer Avenue Bridge. These projects will offer an important improvement to the quality of life for area residents.

Earlier this year, we also approved new road projects that will help residents and businesses in our area, including projects to repair and repave heavily-travelled

stretches of Palmer Road and Tuckahoe Road to be completed early 2021.

Residents also will be happy to know that this summer we approved a program of major upgrades to the Yonkers Wastewater Treatment Facility. These improvements included replacement of diesel-fired engines with efficient, gas-fired ones; aeration system upgrades; upgrades to generators, blower and electrical systems; and modernization of odor-control technologies. ■

Helping Our Neighbors

In the first half of 2020, my office helped hundreds of people with problems big and small. From unemployment insurance, to applying for an absentee ballot to reporting trash in the district, we are here to help.

After Hurricane Isaias, I knew that many of my constituents were facing hard times, especially the Greenwood Road neighborhood. Residents were trapped



Meeting with residents who were affected by Hurricane Isaias

in their homes for days due to a live wire lying across the street. We worked with the Bronxville Chamber of Commerce, State Senator Shelley Mayer, Blue Moon Mexican restaurant and Ladles for Love to deliver 75 meals to people who had lost food and had their sense of safety shaken. Bringing together a neighborhood after a catastrophic event was very affirming and makes me glad to be in this position. ■

Ready to Serve Westchester

This year, the Appointments Committee (which I chair) has reappointed or interviewed for appointment over 80 people to our forty-plus County Advisory Boards. It is truly amazing to see both the caliber of our Westchester residents and their willingness to serve. These advisory boards formalize citizen input to advise both the Executive and Legislative Branches of our County Government. ■

Protecting Our Environment

In my first weeks as Chair of the Environment and Health Committee, we talked about Black maternal health, single-use plastics, lead poisoning, noise pollution and fossil fuel instruction. We heard from experts on all these issues and look forward to working on these problems with my colleagues. Some of our environmental accomplishments this year include the following:

Food Scrap Recycling: This year

we approved plans for a dramatic, expanded food scrap recycling program for Westchester County. Food scraps are one of the biggest components of the material sent to landfills. Instead of discarding them, we now can recycle them into useful compost, or convert them to energy. In the process, we can reduce greenhouse gases and save money on trash disposal for our local municipalities.



Electric Vehicles: We also worked this year to encourage the use of electric vehicles and to prepare our mass transit system for a cleaner, electric future. ■

Supporting Police Reform

At the County, a Police Reform and Reimagining Task force is underway. Leg-

The first half of 2020 saw us dealing with another crisis -- responding to the calls for police reform sparked by the killing of George Floyd by police officers in Minnesota. I was proud to sign a letter, along with all of my colleagues, to officials in Minneapolis urging justice for Mr. Floyd.

When our State Legislators began consideration of police reform bills in Albany, I also joined my colleagues in a letter urging changes to state laws, which passed in 2020.



With officials and activists at a Black Lives Matter rally this summer

islators Terry Clements, Damon Maher and Colin Smith, among other, are participating in the conversation regarding how our County Police officers conduct their duties.

Both Bronxville Village and the City of Yonkers have also begun the process of convening these Task Forces. A healthy dialogue with constituents is how we continue the excellent police work in our County and reinforce the trust and appreciation we have for our local police forces. ■

PHOTO GALLERY



1. My Legislative Aide Sarah and I making sure everyone at Crestwood Lakes Apartments has a mask; 2. Encouraging people to fill out the 2020 Census with Yonkers City Councilwoman Tasha Diaz; 3. With Legislator Alvarado and his son at the renovated Wasicsko Park in Yonkers; 4. At Lenoir Preserve honoring the memory of the Westchester residents we lost to Covid-19; 5. Pre-Covid celebrating new Eagle Scouts; 6. Bicycle Sundays along the Bronx River Parkway was one of my favorite socially-distant activities this summer.