

EXHIBIT A

Message From the Mayor

Several residents have recently brought to my attention the placement of what is known as an *eruv* on utility poles owned and operated by Orange and Rockland in the area of Lark Lane bordering on Chestnut Ridge, New York. In response to these inquiries, I contacted Orange and Rockland and consulted with our municipal attorney. I wanted to briefly address this issue to provide some background information concerning the *eruv* and the way that our courts have handled prior disputes on this issue.

For those who are unfamiliar with the term, an *eruv* is a ritual enclosure that allows members of certain Jewish communities to carry objects and move more freely in their neighborhood on the Sabbath. An *eruv* typically consists of a network of thin wires and posts that are attached to the top of utility poles. Ordinarily, an *eruv* is constructed in a way so as to be unobtrusive and nearly invisible to the general public. For example, they are located all throughout Manhattan, and I personally have never noticed one in all my time in the City.

Courts in both New York and New Jersey have addressed lawsuits filed to either block or permit the construction of an *eruv*. Most recently, in a decision issued on January 6, 2015, the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit dismissed a lawsuit seeking to prohibit an *eruv* in the Long Island community of Westhampton. The Second Circuit relied upon a 2002 Federal decision concerning Tenafly, New Jersey, which affirmed the right to place an *eruv* on utility poles in the municipality with the permission of the utility. In these and other cases, it has been universally held that the construction of an *eruv* serves the “secular purpose of accommodation” and does not violate the separation of Church and State. Absent any

compelling safety concerns, there is little role for Montvale to play in what amounts to a private negotiation between Orange and Rockland and the community that requested the *eruv*.

I understand that members of the public may have additional questions, and I would be happy to discuss this matter further. If you would like to speak to me about this issue, or about any other issue concerning the Borough, please feel free to contact me at mayorfyfe@montvaleboro.org or to attend one of our council meetings which are held on the second and last Tuesday of every month.