



VILLAGE OF NORTHBROOK ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION



Thursday, July 15, 2021
Terrace Room – Second Floor
Village Hall – 1225 Cedar Lane

AGENDA

7:00 P.M.

- 1) Call To Order
- 2) Review of Minutes – June 17, 2021 Meeting
- 3) Hear From the Audience – Items not on the agenda
- 4) Community Planning Report
- 5) Leaf Blower Update
- 6) Updates on Other Items:
 - a) Communication Initiatives & Messaging
 - b) Solar Permit Data
 - c) Recycling & Waste Data – Solid Waste, Recycling, Compost, E-waste, Textiles
- 7) Old Business
- 8) New Business
- 9) Remarks for the Good of the Order
- 10) Next Scheduled Meeting – August 19, 2021
- 11) Adjourn.

The Village of Northbrook is subject to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Individuals with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and who require certain accommodations in order to allow them to observe and/or participate in this meeting, or who have questions regarding the accessibility of this meeting or the facilities, are requested to contact Greg Van Dahm or Debra J. Ford (847-664-4014 and 847-664-4013, respectively) promptly to allow the Village of Northbrook to make reasonable accommodations for those persons. Hearing impaired individuals may call the TDD number, 847-564-8465, for more information.

Jeremy Reynolds, Chair of the EQC



MEMORANDUM

VILLAGE OF NORTHBROOK

DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING SERVICES DEPARTMENT

TO: ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION
FROM: TESSA MURRAY, SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR
DATE: JULY 15, 2021
SUBJECT: GOGREEN LEAF BLOWER WEBINAR SUMMARY

On April 9, 2021, GoGreen Wilmette held a virtual leaf blower forum with multiple organizations and communities in attendance to discuss how both public education and ordinances are important in creating cleaner and quieter communities.

The webinar first included panelists from the American Green Zone Alliance (AGZA) and Quiet Communities. AGZA provides certifications to municipalities and professional landscaping groups that complete training and investment in clean equipment. They mentioned Langton Group (based in Woodstock IL) as the only AGZA-certified professional in our state. Webinar participants mentioned the following landscapers in our region that use electric equipment: Chalet, Greenwise, and Sebert Landscaping.

Quiet Communities is a non-profit organization whose goal is to promote research and evidence-based education to spread awareness about this public health concern. They shared that gas engines emit predominantly low frequency noises, which can penetrate structures like windows and travel significant distance. The World Health Organization advocates for safety standards that consider this: “when noise includes a large proportion of low-frequency components, values even lower than the guideline [maximum sound level] values will be needed because low-frequency components in noise may increase the adverse effects considerably”.

The next section of the forum included multiple municipalities speaking on their ordinances relating to leaf blower noise and activity. For a full list of participating communities, please see the database of ordinances in each community attached below this document. The presenter determined the most rigorous ordinance is in Kenilworth, banning all blower activity from May 15-September 30 and any equipment that exceeds 75 decibels (older models), including Village and Park District properties. State Senator Laura Fine spoke on the Senate Bill 3313 she introduced in early 2020, that would ban the use and sale of all gas-powered leaf blowers if passed in Illinois. The legislative session for SB3313 was adjourned without a date for reassignment in January 2021.

Some presenters raised concern of enforcement procedures that may place financial burden on small landscaping businesses, considering the cost of switching to electric equipment and fines associated with non-compliance. In consideration of environmental justice, Wilmette’s ordinance provides an example in which the homeowner must be notified of the infraction, and the landscaping company itself is fined (rather than the operator). Some landscapers say they must raise the price to homeowners by at least 50% to afford upgrades. Webinar guests responded with ideas to incentivize electrics: lifting annual licensing fees, credit programs, or cost-sharing program. An example of this on the webinar included multiple homeowners within a neighborhood purchasing shared equipment for a landscaping crew to use throughout the participants’ yards.

Communities	Ordinance? (Y = yes, N = no, U = unknown, P = pending)	Fine? (Y/N)	Fine amount?	Who is fined?	Notes	2021 Updates	Add. Notes
Barrington	None				Non-home rule community		
Buffalo Grove							
Deerfield							
Elmhurst	None						
Evanston	Noise + leaf blower ordinances	First violation letter, but if second offense	For second offense, fine is \$100. Fines remain \$100 each time no matter how often person offends	Person using leafblower - homeowner or worker	Prohibited May 16-Sept. 29 as well as after first Thursday in December until March 29. When allowed, M-F 7am-9pm and S/S/Holidays 9am-5pm	Notes section updated in 2021	
Glen Ellyn	Only nuisance regulation	N/A	N/A	N/A	Restricts the use of tools for home and lawn maintenance to between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and sunset. Arguably, a leaf blower would fall under that regulation.		
Glencoe	Noise + leaf blower ordinances	Yes - no first warning	\$250 each time	Landscaping company	Gas-powered leaf blowers permitted between March 15-May 15 and Sept. 15 - Dec. 15.		
Glenview	Noise ordinance	Yes - determined by police department	Determined by police department	Determined by police department	Noise ordinance exists.		
Highland Park	Leaf blower ordinance	Yes	Between \$200 and \$500	Landscaper company	Only electric leaf blowers allowed between May 15 and October 1 on M-F between 7am-9pm and Saturday between 9am-5pm. No leaf blowers allowed on Sundays.		No changes. Ticketed on a complaint basis only.
Kenilworth	Leaf blower ordinance				Village's ban on gasoline-powered leaf blowers from May 15 - September 30. The ban includes electric leaf blowers connected to portable gasoline-powered electric generators. Until that time, residents may continue using their leaf blower between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday - Friday, and between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays. Leaf blowers, regardless of power source, may not exceed 75 decibels when in use.		Notes entered for what the ban is exactly (see Notes); their PD is NOT excluded; called on 4/8/21 for more information on fine amount/who is fined, waiting for return call

Lake Bluff	Noise Ordinance	Yes	\$25-\$750	Contractor or company	M-F 8am-6pm; S/S/Holidays 9am-6pm.		
Lake Forest	Noise Ordinance	Yes	\$10-\$750 per offense	Determined by police department when citation is written - case by case basis	M-F 7:30am-7:30pm. Sat. 8:00am-5:30pm, Sun./Holidays 10am-5pm.		
Lake Zurich	Noise Ordinance	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Libertyville	Probably none						
Lincolnshire	Noise Ordinance only for contactors, not homeowners	Stop work order and potential fine - ONLY contractors will get fined, homeowners can use leafblowers whenever (outside of any noise ordinance times)	Up to \$500	Homeowners never fined - contract companies may be fined depending on police decision	Permitted 7am-7pm M-F; 8am-6pm Sat.; no work Sunday or holidays.		
Lincolnwood	Noise + usage ordinances	Speak to contractor + homeowner, give violation notice. Second offense = citation.	Judge gives fine; village suggests fine	Contractor definitely - but also perhaps homeowner (both have been cited for breaking construction ordinances in the past, just not leaf blowers)	When permitted, can be used between 7am-6pm M-F or 7am-12pm Saturday. Not permitted between May 15 and September 30		

					Response from Gia: When we discussed this organizing opportunity/possible ordinance within our group there were lots of questions about enforcement. Who is enforcing these regulations/ordinances and who is targeted by these ordinances? When we discussed current regulations in other municipalities it seems those targeted with ticketing and violations/fines are those doing the work - not the home owner or business owner. This brings up sticky social justice issues for us and we have major concerns as a social justice group with the implications of such an ordinance on the workers getting the fines and situations. Likewise in Morton Grove the village staff is a very small group so it's likely the enforcement would fall to the police department. Our group actively advocates for downsizing the police budget and the relocation of funds to other services within a social justice framework, so adding additional tasks or getting the MG police involved would definitely be a major concern for our group members.		
Morton Grove	Noise ordinance	N/A	N/A	N/A		Beth asked Gia and Andrew on 3/30. Notes updated accordingly.	
Mount Prospect	Noise ordinance	Unclear	Unclear	Unclear	Unclear - the person I spoke with was not very willing to help		(Beth has not been active)
Northbrook	Noise ordinance	Yes, if person refuses to comply with citation	Up to \$750/day/offense	The person holding the leaf blower	No specific ordinance for leaf blowers; the ordinance is for all power lawn equipment; the fining is rarely given at 750\$, and this is subject to the assessment of the Hearing Officer	Updated 4/8/21	

Oak Park	Noise + leaf blower ordinances	Yes	Determined by judge	Homeowner if homeowner is operating; landscape company if worker is operating	The use of gas-powered leaf blowers emanating more than 65 decibels or failing to meet federal emission regulations is prohibited from June through October. The ban applies to both landscapers and homeowners. Gas-powered blowers that emanate fewer than 65 decibels and meet emission standards may be used during the ban if they have been tested and approved by the Village.		
Park Ridge	Noise ordinance	Yes, after warning	Determined by police	Unclear - case by case basis	Allowed on M-F 7am-7pm; Sat 8am-5pm		
Riverwoods	Noise ordinance	Yes	\$75-\$750	Person holding leafblower.	Allowed between M-F 7am-7pm; Saturday 8:30am-5pm		
Skokie	Noise ordinance	No	N/A	N/A	Can be used any day of the week between 9am-8pm. If someone using outside of that time frame, can call non-emergency police. No ticket guaranteed.		
Vernon Hills	Noise ordinance	Unclear	Unclear	Unclear	Allowed between M-F 7am-7pm; Saturday 8:30am-5pm		
Wilmette	Noise + leaf blower ordinances	First offence: 80\$ to user and company owner Second offence and above: 160\$ to user and company	Not determined by village	Person holding leafblower - homeowner or worker. If worker from landscaping company, then the company also gets charged.	Between May 15 and September 30, the Village of Wilmette prohibits the use of gasoline-powered leaf blowers. Between October 1 and May 14, the Village of Wilmette permits the use of gasoline-powered leaf blowers, however use of a gasoline-powered leaf blower during that time.	Hiring a part-time staff member in 2021 solely for GLB enforcement.	
Winnetka	Noise + leaf blower ordinances	Yes	Increasing fine over multiple offenses, but the police create the fines. At least \$100.	Unclear - determined by police	Oct 1 - May 31, M-F 8-7; S/S 9-6. Can't use gas between June 1 and Sept 31		