

Nathan Giacalone

From: Karen Bray [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 5, 2022 6:42 AM
To: Joshua Krintzman
Cc: City Council; Ruthanne Fuller; John Carmichael; John Lojek; Nathan Giacalone
Subject: Leaf Blowers on the agenda 4/6/22

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Dear Councilor Krintzman,

We understand that leaf blowers will be discussed again at the Programs and Services Committee on Wednesday, April 6.

Many Newton residents feel it is time to act with urgency to assure that our leaf blower ordinance will be fully enforced and that landscapers will abide by Newton's noise ordinance.

The ordinance was passed in 2017 and enforcement has yet to be robust year 'round. Many municipalities around the country are banning gas powered leaf blowers (see attachment below) for health and environmental reasons. Many residents in Newton believe that our local landscapers have gotten more aggressive in their use of leaf blowers (using > 4-5 at a time, for example).

We would like to suggest items for consideration at your upcoming P & S meeting:

1. Currently, the wording of the registration form states that landscapers need only sign to say that they "understand" the ordinance. Our recommendation would be to have them sign that they will "abide" by the ordinance, (not simply understand) and, the consequences of not abiding should be spelled out clearly when they sign. How can their behavior change if they need only "understand" the ordinance?
2. Currently, the 311 system on newtonma.gov website has no system by which residents may report leaf blower violations to Inspectional Services. Calling IS usually does not result in action toward violators. Cambridge and many municipalities around the country use a software system called "SeeClickFix". It would be worth considering for Newton; it would reduce calls to police and IS, simplify communication, and save time and money.
https://www.civicplus.com/seeclickfix/request-demo?utm_medium=email&_hsmt=207241544&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-9KodPxxHj_TRm5ek4SU8LCbu30sVNfU3ctyFMV8Zv3QSD-cKG7M-cCQY6xrNCnW2ZMfA0OmHpeEGqQTWNvu7UoKEr2VQ&utm_content=207239479&utm_source=hs_email3.
3. Also, the leaf blower brochure on newtonma.gov website has not yet been updated to reflect the changes made requiring landscapers to register and has not yet been updated to say that homeowners are liable if they do not hire registered landscapers.
4. We would like to see a list or recommended landscapers on the newtonma.gov website. Green Newton's & NewtonCALM's has compiled a list of landscapers who abide by Newton's Leaf Blower Ordinance.
<https://greennewton.org/gn-recommended-lawn-care-provider-info/>
5. Lexington voters approved a year-round ban of gas leaf blowers:
<https://www.boston.com/news/local-news/2022/03/08/lexington-leaf-blowers/>

6. Washington DC leaf blower ban:

Article: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/jan/05/gas-leaf-blowers-banned-washington-dc>

DC's Leaf Blower Information page, with a complaint form for reporting violations:

<https://dcra.dc.gov/leafblower>

Thank you very much for your continued efforts toward making our Newton homes less polluted and less noisy.

Sincerely,

Karen Bray,

Newton Centre

with contributions from members of NewtonCALM - a group of more than 200 Newton residents, fighting for regulations on leaf blowers for more than 20 years.