



Programs & Services Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, April 5, 2017

Present: Councilors Rice (Chair), Leary (Vice Chair), Baker, Kalis, Schwartz, Sangiolo and Auchincloss

Absent: Councilor Hess-Mahan

City Staff Present: Karyn Dean (Committee Clerk)

A Public Hearing was held on the following item:

#31-15(5) Citizens Petition to amend the noise ordinance relative to leaf blowers
PHILIP JEPSEN ET AL. submitting a petition, pursuant to Article 10, Section 2 of the City of Newton Charter, to amend Section 20-13, Noise Control, in the City of Newton Ordinances as it relates to dates and hours of operation of leaf blowers and types of leaf blowers allowed. [02/21/17 @ 8:37 AM]

Action: Hearing Closed; Programs & Services voted No Action Necessary 7-0

Note: Chair of the Committee, John Rice, opened the public hearing. He explained that the reason the Committee is conducting a public hearing on the leaf blower ordinance is because a Group Petition was filed by 50 registered voters under Section 10-2 of the City of Newton Charter. The submittal of this kind of petition requires that a public hearing be held within 90 days. No ordinance amendments can be voted on at this public hearing. The appropriate action by the Programs & Services Committee on this petition is No Action Necessary.

If a Committee member feels that they would like to move forward and docket the ordinance amendments proposed in the petition, they could do so. However, as stated in the City Council Rules and Orders, Section 3, D., the full City Council would have to vote by a majority, to accept the item to the docket and refer it back to Committee because this subject matter (number of blowers per lot, dates and times of use and decibel levels) has been voted upon within the last 12 months.

Councilor Rice explained that the petitioners made a request that Chief Proia of the Newton Fire Department and John Lojek, Commissioner of Inspectional Services, provide information about fires in the City that have been related to battery powered leaf blowers. Letters from both Chief Proia and Commissioner Lojek are attached to this report. Councilor Rice read both letters to those in attendance.

Councilor Rice invited Jon Sneider, spokesperson for the petitioners, to present and explain the petition. A copy of the proposed changes to the leaf blower ordinance, as stated in the petition, is attached to this report.

Petitioner's Comments

Mr. Sneider stated that after the January 17th vote of the leaf blower ordinance, many of the landscapers and residents felt unrepresented and helpless. He said that Councilors made false and misleading statements on the topic and he felt they did not understand the issues. Therefore, the decisions they made were not well researched and were illogical. He felt a true compromise needed to be reached.

Mr. Sneider said that Councilor Leary had an article in the Newton Tab the week before the vote. He did not agree that her facts were accurate and he asked her to supply sources but she did not.. He provided government, university and manufacturers studies in support of his information to the City Council.

Mr. Sneider said CFM (Cubic Feet per Minute) is how one judges power, not decibels. In reality the 65db machines provide 50-75% less power than the machines they have been using. This is crucial in understanding why the difference is a big deal to landscapers. Councilor Leary claimed 77dB is 16 times louder than 65dB but it is 2.3 times louder which is not very much. It is the difference between a car and a bus driving past you. His daughter's special safety headphones that comply with volume levels recommended by the World Health Organization have a limit of 94dB. OSHA recommends hearing protection at 85dB with 8 hours of consecutive use. Instant hearing damage occurs at 140dB which he found at OSHA.gov. Newton Safe and Sound has referred to 65dB as the safe limit, but he would like to know how 65dB was decided upon. He believes it is a made up number. How would louder equipment be safe to sell if that was the magical number?

Newton Safe and Sound focuses on leaf blowers which is unfair. City DPW workers use lawnmowers, backhoes, dump trucks, tree chippers etc. which are all 80-90dB on average. All vehicles are allowed and they run 85-86dB on average.

He said that some people have stated that battery powered outdoor equipment is the wave of the future but many manufacturers are not expanding in the market. Battery powered blowers last 120 minutes on low mode, but when used normally last 20 minutes and need 2-4 hours to charge. Studies show some long lasting batteries last only 8 minutes on the highest setting. Some cannot be used over 85 degrees as a safety precaution. Landscapers can't work this way.

Newton Safe and Sound and Councilor Leary said some companies will use ecofriendly methods or rake for the same costs as traditional companies. He called some companies from a list Councilor Leary provided. One is out of business and 2 others told them someone had called them to ask them if they would be willing to rake or use battery powered blowers. They said they would but the reality is their primarily blowers are gas. They said they would do it at their typical rate but it would take a lot more time. The customer would pay more for a less satisfactory outcome. He felt Councilor Leary's information was misleading.

Mr. Sneider said Councilor Baker made false statements saying he raked the same square footage that a blower did in a minutes and a half in a demonstration when the truth is he didn't clean the

whole lot and he took 5 minutes. He said Councilor Baker then admitted in conversation that the results of hand raking were not the same. There is a YouTube video of the demonstration.

Mr. Sneider said the Town of Arlington representative told the Programs & Services Committee that their leaf blower law was not working for them. But the Committee dismissed it and didn't share the information. The Committee did not ask for input from professionals in the field or manufacturers of leaf blowers. The landscapers suggested that the City form a task force to look at the issues but it was denied. Newton Safe and Sound and the landscapers met before the vote and some progress was made. A second meeting was cancelled and that was their only opportunity to have a voice to make sure the Councilors understood the machinery and the work.

Mr. Sneider said that it was discussed at Programs & Services meetings that City workers and subcontractors would resort to using mowers as blowers which would send rocks and debris flying. The equipment manual states mowers should be used on grass only. This is a potential OSHA and public safety violation. Landscapers and City workers are being forced to resort to unsafe measures.

Another safety issue is with batteries. A landscaping company would need 20-150 batteries. Charging this many is not possible through typical available circuits and is unsafe. During summer months only electric or battery blowers would be allowed. Some homes don't have outdoor outlets and older homes may have outdated outlets which could cause a fire. Without outlets a generator would be needed and using cords long enough to reach certain parts of a property could be an OSHA violation. Using a blower with moisture in the area could also be an OSHA violation. Depending on the weather, they would have to rely on battery powered blowers which need 1-2 batteries per house. He said that Hover boards, laptops and cellphones with batteries have been spontaneously combusting and this is a risk that he and his colleagues are not willing to take. Their garages store fertilizers and gas containers and adding the batteries is an explosion waiting to happen. He said he spoke to the Newton Fire Dept. Fire Prevention Division, State Fire Marshall's Office, National Fire Protection Association and the electrical inspector for Newton and they agreed this was not a good idea.

Serious OSHA, fire and electrical code violations will occur with the new regulations. Homeowners insurance is for home and not businesses. Technically they cannot charge batteries in their house. The City did not consider this. Whether they have use a plug in electric blower or have a generator on a trailer constantly charging batteries, they will be running generators at 90dB which is ironic. Generators use 2-4 gallons of gas where backpack blowers use 1 liter per day. A leaf blower on its own would be quieter and produce fewer emissions.

Mr. Sneider said that Newton Safe and Sound and Councilor Leary have been stating that cancer and asthma are caused by animal feces being blown into the air by blowers. If this were true, then why would they be allowed to do the same with any kind of blowers. If the issue is emissions then all gas powered outdoor equipment should be banned such as cars, trucks and boats. Pollen is a major irritant of asthma so maybe all the trees should be cut down. There was a significant

increase in tree removals in Brookline when their leaf blower ban passed. It would be cheaper in the long run to remove all trees on properties than to pay for an expensive clean up. One Newton property has already taken down dozens of trees. Battery and electric blowers create greater amounts of dust because of their narrow chute. They are also 80-100dB. The gas powered blowers have a wider chute to move leaves and grass rather than the fine sediment below.

Lincoln, Wellesley and Framingham bans have not passed. In Marblehead, Dr. Becker, from their Board of Health reviewed data and the evidence wasn't there for a ban. Swampscott reversed their ban because their need outweighed other issues.

Mr. Sneider said there are 20,000 landscaping customers who are on their side. Mayor Warren did not sign the new ordinance. The landscapers tried to gather the 2,500 signatures for a petition but they didn't have time to get them all, but got 1,800 signatures. A City employee who works on blowing off the city greens said there is no way the City could keep those areas clean without a gas blower. During the summer there is so much debris that it is impossible and there will be an increase in squirrels, mice and rats in grassy areas where families picnic.

Many contractors have multi-year contracts. They will be spending much more time and money on a contract they already have negotiated. They were initially told there would be a 2 year grace period for landscapers but it did not happen. He has many clients who are Jewish and that prohibit him from working on their home on Saturdays. If those clients needed services on a Sunday, they would not be allowed.

He feels the ordinance is extremely flawed and passed under false pretenses. Maybe when the technology improves they could move in that direction. Consequences of using generators outweigh the positives of eliminating the 77dB blowers and using the 65dB blowers. Requiring the use of battery powered blowers forces them to violate many state and federal safety codes as well as jeopardizing their families and employees. In the end there is no lessening of noise and more pollution. He urges the Council to review his proposal.

Committee Comments/Questions

Councilor Baker said he did not recall saying that he matched the time of the leaf blower and was 30 seconds slower than the leaf blower, but for someone who is 73 he felt he did pretty well.

The Chair thanked Mr. Sneider for his presentation and opened the meeting to public comment.

Public Comment

In Favor of the Petition

Joanne Caruso, 61 Sheridan Street
Philip Jepsen, 43 Anthony Road
Mia Jepsen, 43 Anthony Road
Bernhard Metzger, 65 Stonybrae Road

Their comments included concerns about landscapers inability to make a living without more hours and dates of use and higher powered leaf blowers; City Council targeted their industry and it was unfair; City Councilors did not do enough research and claims were false and exaggerated; noise is not as bad as claimed by City Councilors and a certain amount of irritation is required to get by in society; dangers and costs associated with battery and electric powered leaf blowers; and City Council did not understand their industry or their equipment.

Opposed to the Petition

Al. Leisinger, 1002 Beacon Street
Priscilla M. Leith, 162 Islington Road
Carolyn Lattin, 277 Park Street
William Joplin, 24 Oak Terrace
Marianne Karmel, 391 Highland Street
Katherine Howard, 84 Fenwick Road
Richard Primack, 16 Stiles Terrace
Jim Buechl, 118 Clark Street
Alex Blumenstiel, 40 Collins Road
Susan Mirsky, 68 Hyde Street
Cathy Goode
Esther deGrurifen
Jennifer Weitzman
Karen Bray, 38 Stearns Road
Lynn Slobodin, 61 Washburn Avenue
Leah Bird, 34 Marshall Street
Robert Ellertsen, 837 Chestnut Street
Leonard Kurzweil, 32 Holden Road
Marcia Cooper 170 Evelyn Road

Their comments included concerns about air pollution the dangers of particulate matter especially to those with respiratory diseases, the young and old, runners and bicyclists; concerns for leaf blower operator's respiratory and hearing health; interference of daily life with excessive noise and general noise pollution; inability to sit outside and enjoy yards, unable to work at home; unnecessary need to use blowers in the summer months since there are no leaves to clean up; disturbance of topsoil; success and more availability of eco-friendly, non-blower using landscaping companies; positive examples of other communities employing similar bans with good results;

environmental awareness and regulations across the country are heading in this direction; and the City Council reviewed ordinance for almost 2 years and the overwhelming majority voted in favor.

Submitted written comments are attached to this report.

The Chair thanked the petitioners and all the speakers for their input. The Chair explained that the Committee will be meeting on budget issues over the next several meetings. No other items related to the leaf blower ordinance would be taken up until the fall. There was a suggestion to docket an item for discussion in the fall to review how the new ordinance had worked over the summer months.

The Committee voted No Action Necessary.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

John B. Rice, Chair

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEWTON AS FOLLOWS:

That the Revised Ordinances of Newton, Massachusetts, 2012, as amended, be and are hereby further amended with respect to **CHAPTER 20, CIVIL FINES AND MISCELLANEOUS OFFENSES, Article II Noise** as follows:

1 Sec. 20-13. Noise control.

On January 17th 2017 the City Of Newton voted on a leaf blower ordinance that limited the times of day and year that a leaf blower can be used and also regulated the type of blowers. The landscapers have informed several city councilors that they are misinformed. Landscapers were not given the opportunity to have experts in the leaf blower industry to testify on the noise, pollution and health issues allegedly caused by blowers, even though every blower is certified by the EPA. A certain city councilor which will remain nameless was notified several times prior to the hearing that she was disseminating false information to the public and to other city councilors that were voting. This was misleading and unfair. We asked for sources and proof and were never answered. We would like to appeal the vote on leaf blowers, as we feel the decision makers were not well informed and do not understand our equipment, the way they work, and the various uses we and other industries have for them in addition to the schedule we follow.

Whether we use battery or electric blowers, we need a power source of some sort to either use or charge. Most battery operated blowers need up to 2-3 hours of charging for a MERE 20 minutes of use. We will need a generator constantly going to charge batteries and/or use for electric blowers, and we know that this is even louder than the blowers with more emissions that have been deemed "annoying" and "unhealthy." This is why we proposed the following...

We The Landscapers Suggest The Following: (Less Hours Of Use Than The Current Vote As It Stands)

- January 1st to February 29th.....only 1 gas blower per property (>65dB(A))
- March 1st to May 15th..... no more than 3 gas leaf blowers per property (>77dB(A))
- May 16th to September 14th..... only 1 gas blower per property (>65dB(A))
- September 15th to December 31st..... no more than 3 gas leaf blowers per property (>77dB(A))

Hours Of Use: (Less Hours Of Use Than The Current Vote As It Stands)

- Monday – Friday 7:30am-5pm (refers to leaf blower use only)
- Saturday 8am-5pm (refers to leaf blower use only)
- Sunday 9:30am-2pm (refers to homeowner leaf blower use only)

Exemptions: (Same As Current Vote)

City of Newton may use blowers Monday – Friday starting at 5:30am for village greens
A minimum of thirty acres used for institutional or recreational purposes between 9:30a.m. and 12:00 p.m.

How This Current Vote Will Affect You

The current vote is actually worse for everyone. With the current ruling, the noise and pollution amount will stay the same or be greater due to generator use during the non-gas blower days. The amount of labor will have to increase significantly to get the work done in compliance, so everyone who lives in Newton will be affected since we all pay taxes and the cost to maintain the city will increase. Additionally, 70% of residents who use landscapers will be paying significantly more for their services as well. Currently there will be no lessening of noise in the summer months - this is because the focus and goals of the councilors were not aligned.

How Our Ordinance Will Be Better:

We propose a bill that limits the amount of leaf blowers used per property. We also reduced the number of days which you can use a leaf blower as well as the amount of daytime hours it can be used. Overall, our proposal is better for everyone. We can continue to do our job in a quick manner and move on, as opposed to using equipment that is 50-75% less powerful which will just increase the duration of a job with a 80dB(A) generator replacing a 65dB(A) blower. How does can one argue that the current ruling makes sense???

Our Compromise:

We the landscapers and Newton Residents are willing to reduce the number of daytime hours available to use a leaf blower. We are stressing that a small compact backpack or handheld gas leaf blowers are necessary for the summer and winter months to expedite the cleaning and clearing of all hardscapes. This will also allow for sealcoating, tree service, gutter cleaning, and construction companies to make their work satisfactory. Also, many homeowners, commercial spaces, and camps use powerful blowers during the summer months to dissipate water off tennis courts to eliminate the possibility of injury. It is imperative that we have access to the equipment we need at certain times of the year.

Final Point:

This current bill is one of the strictest regulations on leaf blowers in the entire United States. Many commercial properties and city and towns are exempt. In some cases, the city and towns are not only exempt, but they are allowed to use more powerful equipment than homeowners and landscapers (such as is the case in Brookline). The town of Arlington has recently retracted parts of their ban since they found it wasn't practical.

WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO VISIT NEWTONLEAVES.ORG AND CLICK THE TOP RIGHT CORNER TAB CALLED "RESOURCES" TO LEARN MORE **TRUE** FACTS WHICH ARE COMPLETED BY THE GOVERNMENT OPPOSED TO A PERSON WHO WROTE AN ARTICLE ONLINE WITH NO CREDENTIALS

ORIGINAL FILERS OF THIS PETITION

Nathan Sneider	634 Saw Mill Brook Parkway
Anna Sneider	634 Saw Mill Brook Parkway
Phillip Jepsen	43 Anthony Road
Phillip Jepsen	43 Anthony Road
Lia Jepsen	43 Anthony Road
Wyle Jepsen	43 Anthony Road
Michael Butera	32 Elm Street
Christine Butera	32 Elm Street
Brandall Sneider	18 Sevlard Road
Anda Sneider	18 Sevlard Road



Bruce A. Proia
Chief

CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS
FIRE DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS

106 Waban Street, Newton, MA 02458
Chief: (617) 796-2210 Fire Prevention: (617) 796-2230
FAX: (617) 796-2211 EMERGENCY: 911



Setti D. Warren
Mayor

Chairperson Rice
Programs and Services Committee

Sir,

I have been asked to provide some information on the fire hazard associated with battery powered leaf blowers. I know that we have not had a fire caused by these items in Newton during my tenure, but I did reach out to the State Fire Marshal to collect data on a State wide level.

Since 2001 there have been 19 fires in the Commonwealth where the ignition source was identified as a leaf blower. Of those 19, 12 were gasoline powered leaf blowers, 6 were non fuel powered leaf blowers (either electrical or battery powered), and 1 undetermined.

The total dollar loss associated with those fires was assessed at \$51,250.

I have attached a spreadsheet with the information provided by The Fire Marshal's office.

Please do not hesitate to call if you have any questions.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "BRP".

Bruce Proia
Chief of Department

Leaf Blowers	All Fires						
Year	# of Incidents	Fire Service Deaths	Civilian Deaths	Fire Service Injuries	Civilian Injuries	Dollar Loss	
2003	1	0	0	0	0	\$ 1,050	
2005	2	0	0	0	0	\$ 4,500	
2006	2	0	0	0	0	\$ 1,400	
2007	1	0	0	0	0	\$ 35,000	
2008	1	0	0	0	0	\$ -	
2009	3	0	0	0	0	\$ 3,000	
2010	1	0	0	0	0	\$ -	
2012	3	0	0	0	0	\$ 2,300	
2013	3	0	0	0	0	\$ -	
2015	1	0	0	0	0	\$ 4,000	
2016	1	0	0	0	0	\$ -	
Total	19	0	0	0	0	\$ 51,250	

Leaf Blowers	All Fires						
Incident Type	Incident Type Description	# of Incidents	Fire Service Deaths	Civilian Deaths	Fire Service Injuries	Civilian Injuries	Dollar Loss
111	Building fires	6	0	0	0	0	\$ 42,350
141	Wildland fires	1	0	0	0	0	\$ -
142	Brush fires	1	0	0	0	0	\$ -
160	Special outside fires, other	2	0	0	0	0	\$ 3,500
162	Outside equipment fire	9	0	0	0	0	\$ 5,400
Total		19	0	0	0	0	\$ 51,250

Leaf Blowers	All Fires						
Conty	Department	# of Incidents	Fire Service Deaths	Civilian Deaths	Fire Service Injuries	Civilian Injuries	Dollar Loss
Barnstable	MASHPEE	1	0	0	0	0	\$ 2,000
Bristol	SEEKONK	1	0	0	0	0	\$ 300
Essex	NAHANT	1	0	0	0	0	\$ -
Essex	NORTH ANDOVER	1	0	0	0	0	\$ 3,500
Hampden	LONGMEADOW	1	0	0	0	0	\$ -
Middlesex	FRAMINGHAM	1	0	0	0	0	\$ 1,400
Middlesex	NATICK	1	0	0	0	0	\$ -
Middlesex	WALTHAM	1	0	0	0	0	\$ -
Middlesex	WESTON	2	0	0	0	0	\$ -
Norfolk	BRAINTREE	1	0	0	0	0	\$ 4,000
Norfolk	CANTON	1	0	0	0	0	\$ 1,000
Norfolk	DOVER	1	0	0	0	0	\$ -
Norfolk	WESTWOOD	1	0	0	0	0	\$ 1,000
Plymouth	CARVER	1	0	0	0	0	\$ 2,000
Plymouth	HANOVER	1	0	0	0	0	\$ -
Plymouth	WAREHAM	1	0	0	0	0	\$ -
Worcester	AUBURN	1	0	0	0	0	\$ 35,000
Worcester	WEST BOYLSTON	1	0	0	0	0	\$ 1,050
MA	Total	19	0	0	0	0	\$ 51,250

Leaf Blowers	Building Fires						
Year	# of Incidents	Fire Service Deaths	Civilian Deaths	Fire Service Injuries	Civilian Injuries	Dollar Loss	
2003	1	0	0	0	0	\$ 1,050	
2007	1	0	0	0	0	\$ 35,000	
2012	3	0	0	0	0	\$ 2,300	
2015	1	0	0	0	0	\$ 4,000	
Total	6	0	0	0	0	\$ 42,350	

Leaf Blowers	All Fires						
Power Source	Power Source Description	# of Incidents	Fire Service Deaths	Civilian Deaths	Fire Service Injuries	Civilian Injuries	Dollar Loss
11	Electrical	6	0	0	0	0	\$ 45,550
20	Gas fuel	6	0	0	0	0	\$ 4,400
31	Gasoline	6	0	0	0	0	\$ 1,300
UU	Undetermined	1	0	0	0	0	\$ -
	Total	19	0	0	0	0	\$ 51,250

Karyn Dean

From: John Lojek
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 3:24 PM
To: Karyn Dean
Subject: Leaf blowers

Karyn,
We have had "0" experiences of battery powered leaf blowers causing fires in our years of enforcing the leaf blower ordinance.

John Lojek

Public Statement
by Ken Foster, Owner
Terra Nova Ecological Landscaping
Santa Cruz, Ca.

”We can do better then this!”

“I am a landscape contractor and have been in the industry for over 30 years. I am a business owner and have owned two-stroke back-pack and hand held leaf blowers for years. I have used them myself and have had my employees use them in the past. This was part of the experience that drove me to become a dedicated ecological landscaper. I personally know more than a few landscapers that quit the industry specifically to escape the pollution and noise. I have been working out in the field all of my career. The only reason I still love what I do is because I have chosen to leave many of the 'tools-of-the-trade' behind. One of these quintessential 'tools' is the gas leaf blower. I now believe that the use of loud gas leaf blowers are an affront to the communities in which we work. Of the landscapers arsenal they are one of the easiest to misuse. They cause dust and particulate matter pollution including heavy metals, fecal matter, fungus spores and toxic chemicals, they cause gas and oil exhaust pollution and noise pollution. They threaten human health including auditory, respiratory and nervous system health. They threaten animal health for these same reasons in both domestic and wild animals, they threaten beneficial insects (like bees), they threaten plant health with the dust and they threaten soil health in the form of denuding. Some might claim to be improving the environment with their 'Mow, Blow and Go' landscaping and I beg to differ. Enough is enough! It is not okay to destroy the sound-scape, the air and the soil in our communities in the vain pursuit of the perfect landscape especially when rakes and brooms can do the job just fine. This in No way is a word against the workers using leaf blowers. They are just trying to earn a living and are the ones most at risk. Every single one of us including the workers will benefit from moving away from the gas leaf blower.

Hit and run landscaping makes a mockery of the art of landscape gardening.

This is a call to raise the bar to the industry.

We can do better then this!”

(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/324146424312199/permalink/1367651056628392/>)

Statement to the City Council of Newton, Massachusetts
Program and Services Committee
by Alexander D. Blumenstiel
40 Collins Rd.
Waban, MA 02468

Landscape Workers Suffer Leaf Blower Noise and Filth

Decibels (dB) are measured on a logarithmic scale. Every additional 3dB is twice as loud.

- **ONE 77dB LEAF BLOWER IS AS LOUD AS *SIXTEEN* 65dB leaf blowers.**
- **THREE 77dB LEAF BLOWERS ARE AS LOUD AS *FORTY-EIGHT* 65dB leaf blowers.**

Landscape workers in Newton suffer this horrible noise hours per day, five to six days/week for years.

- Who profits from their hearing-loss and tinnitus? The workers don't. They pay for the rest of their lives!

Landscape workers in Newton breathe leaf blowers' toxic gas engine exhaust, the fecal matter, mercury, arsenic, lead, rubber-dust, pesticides, other poisons and infectious agents in the filth they blast up, which they inhale for all those hours, days, weeks and years.

- Who profits from their cardio, cerebral-vascular and respiratory diseases, their tularemia, their cancers? The workers don't. They pay!

Councilors of the City of Newton: Thank You so very much for taking the right step forward toward stopping this abuse of landscape workers in Newton.

#

Subject: Please VOTE for Summer Ban tonight
From: Marianne Karmel <mkarmel@photobymmk.com>
Date: 1/17/17, 1:52 PM
To: dolson@newtonma.gov
BCC: Karen Bray <karenlanebray@gmail.com>

Hello -

I am a longtime resident of the "garden city" and I hope to be able to enjoy my garden next summer without being constantly assaulted by noise and pollution from needless leaf blowers.

Although I believe that more regulation is needed - I urge you to at the very least implement at summer ban, maintain and set procedures to enforce the 65 decibel noise level maximum, and only allow one leaf blower for every 10,000 square feet.

I hope this vote is not delayed again - and I hope that the vote of each member goes on record so I can know who to vote for next election.

I grew up in Manhattan - and lived in Cambridge - before moving to Newton in 1994 - and I was shocked to find out that what I thought would be a peaceful suburb was as noisy and as polluted as the city.

I raised both my children here - and as babies neither they nor I could take a nap. I now work at home and find it hard to concentrate at times due to the noise. I have stopped walking my dogs in the neighborhood because of the pollution and noise from leaf blowing. I have a screen porch which I would love to enjoy on a spring or summer day - but typically I give up and move back indoors within 30 minutes due to noise from leaf blowers.

Please respect the needs and desires of your constituents and VOTE TONIGHT so we can know where you stand.

With Regards -

Marianne Karmel

391 Highland Street

West Newton, MA 02465

I am here as a one of the many residents of Newton who have been hoping for some common sense restrictions and meaningful enforcement of existing regulations on leaf blowers for over 10 years.

Finally - after many hours of discussion by many people voicing opinions on both sides of this issue -

a leaf blower ordinance was approved last January

- by a substantial vote of 20- 4

to make modest improvements in the quality of life in Newton during the summer months.

Now we are here again?

Tonight - 20th meeting of this Committee on the leaf blower issue since 2015

Why? To date the compromises have all been in favor of the commercial interests over those of residents.

The landscaper lobby should be thrilled with their success at blocking meaningful action to place any restrictions on leaf blowers.

The Jan ordinance was a small step toward taking our interests into account and now they want to repeal those.

Please protect this ordinance so that we, the residents of this "garden city", can look forward to enjoying our gardens for at least a few hours each week this coming summer.

Marianne Karmel
391 Highland Street
West Newton, MA 02465

RECEIVED
Newton City Clerk
2017 APR -6 PM 6:27
DAVID A. OLSON, MC
Newton, MA 02459