

**REGIONAL WORKING GROUP
LEAF BLOWER REGULATION REVIEW
MEETING NOTES**

Monday, 3 October 2022

1:30 PM

Virtual Meeting

ATTENDEES:

- Sam Barghi
- Mike Braiman, Co-Chair
- Anthony Blumberg
- Beth Drucker (arrived at 1:40 PM)
- Scott Grams
- Marc Hornstein
- Drew Irvin, Co-Chair
- Joe Kenney
- Justin Keenan
- Phil Kiraly, Co-Chair
- Tessa Murray
- Chuck Myers
- Jeff Nehila
- Ghida Neukirch, Co-Chair
- King Poor
- Brian Rener (arrived at 1:37 PM)
- Heather Ross
- Fred Wacker
- Alison Winslow

Absent:

- Karen Glennemeier
- Hall Healy
- Joe Scopelliti

Guest:

- Joshua Glucksman

Welcome

Mike Braiman welcomed everyone and indicated that the purpose of the meeting today was to review the draft final report. The updated draft will be shared with all village/city managers and then it will be shared with each respective municipality.

Municipalities were asked to review the municipal research section to ensure the information is accurate.

The Working Group Scope of work, member list, subcommittee notes and Working Group notes can be found at [City of Highland Park,IL \(cityhpil.com\)](http://City of Highland Park,IL (cityhpil.com))

Review Draft Report Dated 9/28/2022

A review of the draft report was presented.

Purpose Section

It was emphasized that, “municipalities which determine that new or expanded leaf blower regulations are appropriate for their community are encouraged to work together on drafting of ordinances to ensure uniformity of regulations throughout the North Shore” (Page 1).

Reasonable Policy Options

It was noted that a seasonal ban based on time period is more preferred than a ban based on weather temperatures.

Scott Grams indicated that the industry does not support a 10-month gas powered ban. It was noted that there is not reasonable electric-powered options to support the compressed time period coupled with the amount of debris that needs to be removed.

Fred noted that if electric was readily available with sufficient power and the given cost structure of gas, the industry would likely see a transition to electric or ZEE (zero emission equipment) options. There is low decibel equipment available. It was recommended that the future section be strengthened in this regard.

Standardized language among municipalities is desired by the landscape industry; this will help with equipment, trip generation and other factors.

It was recommended that the report include a statement that the research and consideration pertain to commercial use only and not residential. There should be information how residents are impacted. It was noted that it will be easier for residents to transfer to ZEE versus commercial contractors.

As it pertains to an 8-week window, Grams and Wacker noted that a “reasonable” time period would be April 1 – May 1, or April 1 to May 15.

Grams suggested that modifications may be made based on weather conditions. Ordinances should contemplate an administrative extension to spring clean-up dates due to weather conditions changing.

Policy Implementation

Phasing times were recommended by the Group. Examples include 1 to 5-years in order to properly communicate and implement new regulations.

Grams noted the longer the phase-out period, the less of a need for an immediate buy-back program to support particularly small businesses.

An inquiry was phased if consideration should be given for a shorter phase out period for businesses that are larger, versus small-based businesses. Braiman responded this would be very challenging for staff to enforce.

Enforcement

Heather Ross suggested the Group consider one general application that could be used by multiple communities.

The Group discussed that licensing is generally important for communication, but licensing doesn't do much for landscapers adhering or not adhering to regulations.

Grams suggested that the report and communication emphasize that by enacting this type of ordinance doesn't mean quiet, it means less loud.

Poor commended the landscape industry for compliance (specific to Winnetka).

Hornstein indicated that starting on July 1, the Village instructed officers to document landscapers using battery powered equipment. The Village was keeping a tally of the number of equipment so they could understand the volume of landscapers and the type of equipment being used.

Grams suggested that communities standardize an in-take process for a complaint – how do residents relay a complaint, photo/email etc.

Public Education

Special thanks to Go Green for drafting templates for the Group; they are also making a video to share with the Group for public promotion purposes.

Grams suggested a change to the door hangers and indicated that door hangers and flyers should match the data contained in the report. There was inconsistency in decibel levels and pollutants from equipment.

Environmental

Renner suggested that we are missing an educational component if we keep focusing on noise and not emphasize emissions.

Grams suggested presenting two options: offer low noise options below 65 dB and have as many exemptions such as golf, public works etc. If this is emissions only or emissions and noise, then don't have exemptions. Consider 2-stroke and 4-stroke engines. Different scenarios occur depending on the path a municipality may pick.

Blumberg noted that noise was the principle driving factor in Highland Park, followed by environmental concerns. It was noted that regulating noise is extremely challenging. In order to manage expectations, it should be noted that noise reduction will take place (not elimination).

Poor added the noise from electric is higher-frequency which is a different sound than two-stroke engines.

Cost Considerations

Braiman reviewed the cost considerations on page 6 thoroughly.

Renner suggested that residents consider offering an electric battery for their landscaper to use. Drucker and Grams indicated they are not aware of anyone offering this option.

Grams suggested that units per crew would be necessary; the costs are not in totality. Also, because of the length of the charging time, charging at the shop would be imperative; field charging is unlikely due to cost consideration.

Grams noted that contractors are experiencing 40-minutes based on Evanston's experience.

Barghi inquired about the return on investment from gas to electric. Grams responded that it would be decades. The cost recovery can't be attained based on the life of the unit. Braiman indicated that it could be 4-6 years although the equipment is being replaced so frequently that users won't benefit from the ROI. Also, the barrier to entry is so high on the front end due to the significant cost that the ROI isn't a factor.

Exemptions

Barghi inquired about the size of "large properties" or golf courses. The most common size will be added to the report.

Grams inquired about the exemption for roof gutter cleaning. Murray noted that the exemption was included as part of the municipal research; the rationale is not known. Renner indicated that it is possible the exemption exists for property maintenance purposes.

Neukirch supported striking Roof Gutter Cleaning as an exemption; there were no objections.

The Group discussed the advantages and disadvantages of exempting homeowners conducting maintenance on their own property. It was agreed that this exemption was political and should be made by each respective community.

Financial Incentives

Grams suggested including a statement that the AGZA will help manage these incentives for communities. Braiman will follow-up on behalf of the Group.

Barghi inquired about the rebate and other incentives. It was noted that these incentives were provided as options with specific information to be determined by each municipality.

Other

Grams suggested that front side door hanger be struck due to the inaccuracy. Drucker will review and update accordingly.

Grams suggested that corporation counsels review noise standards and pollution control regulations; are any restrictions on noise

Next Steps

Special thanks to Mike Braiman for doing the heavy-lifting and drafting the final report that was presented at the meeting.

Neukirch reviewed the draft schedule that the Working Group established in January:

- October 31, 2022 - A draft report should be provided to each city/village manager. They will review and coordinate with respective boards, commissions and their corporate authorities.
- November 15, 2022 – Deadline for comments and questions from the city/village managers.
- December 1, 2022 - Final report submitted to city/village managers.

It was recommended that the village/city manager and the Working Group communicate with each other prior to any public presentations so everyone is apprised.

The updated draft report will be shared with this Group by next Monday and then shared with City/Village Managers thereafter. If anyone has changes please email the co-chairs.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 2:52 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ghida S. Neukirch
City Manager, Highland Park