

# ALTERNATIVE EQUIPMENT – LEAF BLOWER REVIEW

## SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

25 May 2022

10:00 AM

Virtual Meeting

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### Attendees

- Co-Chair Mike Braiman
- Co-Chair Ghida Neukirch (departed at 10:15 AM)
- Beth Drucker
- Tessa Murray
- Chuck Myers
- Brian Rener

### Absent

- Fred Wacker
- Alison Winslow
- Hall Healy

#### I. Cost considerations – Nick

Mike Braiman reported that Wilmette reached out to Dan Mabe at the American Green Zone Alliance to see if they would serve as a paid consultant to prepare a cost analysis. More information will be reported when Dan responds.

#### II. Buy-back program and possible financial incentives – Tessa

Tessa informed the group that Grayslake & Naperville have incentive programs for the purchase of battery operated lawn mowers. In Grayslake the annual budget is \$1,500 and participants can receive a maximum reimbursement of \$100. The program has been in place for 10 years and has grown in popularity with 29 participants in 2021. The program is open to residents and businesses which are based in Grayslake. Naperville is starting a program this year with \$2,000 budgeted. Neither community is taking back the gas-powered leaf blowers. The subcommittee discussed the importance of taking back the equipment so it is not used elsewhere and if such a program is to be considered we will need to determine how to properly dispose of the equipment. Tessa is going to draft a memo summarizing these programs and research whether there are similar programs nationally. Tessa will also reach out to Edith Makra at the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus to see if they would be interested in coordinating a regional buyback program.

#### III. Advantages/disadvantages of not mowing – Hall

Beth stated that a member of Go Green Wilmette is working on public education templates for the working group. The templates will include a flyer, short stories/tips for social media and door hangers. The goal is to have drafts completed for the next committee meeting at the end of June.

#### IV. Technology Options – Beth, Fred

Fred was not present but submitted the following from a time study he conducted:

Rake vs. Blower Spring Clean-up, Performed by Mariani Landscape

With regards to the time study summary data the following was our findings. We designated the total turf area into (2) 35'x65' sections. Both included compatible turf, ground cover and shrub beds. Test one was done with 1 person 1 blower. Effectively able to clean ground cover/turf, and underneath boxwood hedges(time includes picking up debris). Total time 29 minutes to execute. Test two was done with 2 persons and 2 rakes. Ground cover/boxwoods had to be cleaned by hand as rake was ineffective and would damage the plants. Turf raked (time includes picking up debris). Total time to execute 54 mins....this would be considered an easy cleanup as there were zero perennials to cut back and minimal debris present. So to clarify it is 54 total minutes between the two guys by hand where we had one associate for almost half as long a time with the blower.

Fred also provided a spreadsheet comparison of the technology.

Tessa stated that Kenilworth prohibits the use of gas-powered generators to charge batteries and this may be a consideration for some communities.

V. Exemptions and phase-in options – everyone

The subcommittee discussed exemptions and there was discussion that neighborhood parks and municipal facilities likely do not require an exemption but that golf courses could still require gas-powered leaf blowers (it was noted that the use of leaf blowers on golf courses is often not close to residential properties thereby mitigating the noise impacts). Schools are another consideration for possible exemptions to the size of their property.

The subcommittee discussed the importance of phasing in any new regulations, especially in communities which do not currently have any gas-powered leaf blower prohibitions in place. The phase-in period would be important to educate residents, educate landscapers and provide time for landscapers, especially smaller companies, to build capital and purchase the equipment. The length of a phase in period was not discussed.

Beth Drucker suggested that licensing landscapers would be a helpful way for communities to educate landscapers about new regulations. Wilmette indicated that they currently license landscapers while Northbrook and Lake Bluff do not.

VI. Other Considerations

Brian suggested that the larger Working Group confer annually after any new policies are implemented to discuss the impacts/results and to consider emerging technologies.

VII. Next Steps

The next subcommittee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 29 at 10am. The goal is to complete the subcommittee's work at this meeting.

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:50 AM.

Respectfully,

Michael Braiman  
Wilmette Village Manager

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**Resources:**

- Regional Working Group Scope of Work, Working Group Agenda and Notes available via link below [City of Highland Park,IL \(cityhpil.com\)](http://cityhpil.com)