



Agenda Item Summary

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Agenda Item Title

Presentation and Discussion of the Environment and Energy Commission's Recommendation to Amend the Village Code Regarding Gasoline Powered Leaf Blowers

Overview

This presentation provides the recommendation of the Environment and Energy Commission concerning gasoline-powered leaf blowers.

Recommendation

Direct staff to prepare a feasibility analysis of the proposed amendment to the Village Code regarding gasoline-powered leaf blowers and any associated program.

Fiscal Impact

None. Discussion only.

Background

During the Board of Trustees meeting on 6/28/21 (ID 21-82 "Leaf Blower Ban - Discussion"), the Trustees discussed a review of the current leaf blower ordinance and research on other local approaches. During the meeting, Village staff raised the following questions that should be addressed if the ordinance is amended or replaced:

1. Whether to continue to regulate leaf blowers on the basis of noise, or some other characteristic.
2. Whether to revise the ban period. Anecdotally, staff have observed most complaints occur during the time of year when the ordinance is not in effect (Spring and Fall). The ordinance is silent about the time of day.
3. How to notify landscapers who work in the Village. Landscapers are not currently required to be registered with the Village.
4. How to enforce the ordinance, e.g., proactively or on a complaint basis; warnings and citations/fines; responsible party (property owner, lawn care company, landscape worker); and administrative burden and departmental responsibility.

The provisions of the Village Code regarding gasoline-powered leaf blowers are attached to this agenda item.

A limited review of ordinances identified Washington D.C.'s Leaf Blower Regulation Amendment Act of 2018 prohibiting the use of gasoline-powered leaf blowers, and California Executive Order N 79 20's goal to transition off-road vehicles and equipment operations (including lawn-care equipment) to 100 percent zero-emission by 2035 where feasible. - -

A limited review of public comments received by the Village Board, EEC, and Climate Plan community engagement process identified some support for leaf blower bans from community members, and opposition from the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association.

The Board of Trustees referred the issue to the Environment and Energy Commission (EEC). The EEC deliberated the question and voted on a motion during the May commission meeting.

The EEC approved this motion to recommend the following to the Board:

- Ban on all (gas or electric) leaf blowers before 8 a.m., effective upon ordinance adoption.
- Total phaseout within one year for all gas-powered lawn care devices except lawn mowers.
- Ban gas lawn mowers when electric alternatives are readily available.
- Enforcement through the Village code enforcement staff, not through the Police Department.
- Dedicated staff email for resident complaints.
- Provide education for contractors and residents.
- Look to other municipal program examples for how to support transition for small businesses.

Staff recommends conducting a feasibility analysis of the proposed ordinance amendments and associated small business assistance program. A feasibility analysis would include stakeholder outreach, technical analysis, fiscal analysis, and options for Board review and approval. Staff recommends contracting short-term specialized expertise to support these activities. Subject to the Board's concurrence, Staff will issue an RFP and present a budget amendment to the FY22 Sustainability Fund.

Alternatives

- Seek additional information from staff.

Previous Board Action

- During the Board of Trustees meeting on 6/28/21 (ID 21-82 "Leaf Blower Ban - Discussion"), the Trustees discussed a review of the current leaf blower ordinance and research on other local approaches. The Board of Trustees referred the issue to the Environment and Energy Commission (EEC).

Citizen Advisory Commission Action

- The EEC has discussed the issue on July 29, 2021; December 7, 2021; and May 10, 2021.
- At the May 10, 2021 meeting, the EEC voted to approve a motion to amend the leaf blower ordinance as described above and to identify examples for supporting small businesses during the transition to electric lawn care equipment.

Anticipated Future Actions/Commitments

Following feedback from the Village Board, direct staff to prepare an RFP for policy development consulting services to conduct a feasibility analysis of the proposed ordinance amendments and associated business

assistance program.

Intergovernmental Cooperation Opportunities

The stakeholder engagement process for the policy development process will include the Village's intergovernmental partners.