

Cosgrove, Marybeth

From: Inmanstreet103@aol.com
Sent: Wednesday, October 19, 2016 10:06 AM
To: Kelley, Craig
Cc: Lopez, Donna; City Council; Peterson, Lisa; O'Riordan, Owen; joanne_solet@hms.harvard.edu
Subject: Re: Electric Powered Leaf Blowers on Council's Monday night agenda

Dear Councillor Kelley,

Thank you for your update on the electric-powered leaf blower plans the City is considering. Unfortunately I won't be able to attend the meeting.

To spend our tax money on all-new electric-powered leaf blowers, after hearing all the very real objections to them from experts in human health, workers' safety, gardening and landscaping, and environmental science, is to throw good money after bad.

This idea is doubtless driven, as are so many poorly-thought-out ideas, by liability concerns expressed to City administrators by the legal department. You can always frighten people into bad choices by threatening them with the specter of lawsuits. But since we have to have trees, and trees drop leaves (and flowers and fruits and acorns and pine cones, and whole limbs sometimes) we already have leaves underfoot, and we would even if we had an army of leaf-blowing crews out at all times. People walking around on public ways can't expect to be safe if they don't pay attention to where they step. And we are not going to cut down all the trees in town because someone might get hit on the head by a falling branch.

Electric leaf blowers might give dB readings lower than gas-powered versions. But they still produce far too much noise, in very high registers, which can't be good for people or other beings. I find the tones they produce to be quite painful, even at some distance; imagine what those high sounds do to any dog's ears.

I respectfully entreat the City Council not to support the industry which makes leaf blowers by buying a whole new suite of their products. Those of us -- and our ranks may be growing -- who object to blowers on multiple counts will not go away because electricity takes the place of gasoline.

Thank you for your kind attention,

Megan Brook 103 Inman St.

In a message dated 10/17/2016 12:08:40 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time, ckelley@cambridgema.gov writes:

FYI Folks:

I'd just as soon have NO leaf blowers (though as a City we'd have to be okay with the less 'pristine' look our parks and paths might have, not to mention any added issues about slipping on leaves), but short of that, at least the City is trying to see what electric landscaping equipment might do. And it's not cheap, in either money or time, so this isn't just a throw away idea that someone dreamed up to pretend to do something. I think it's a good faith try to look at the noise issue without looking at the other issues associated with leaf blowers like all the junk they blow in the air, etc. Better than nothing, but I'd still rather something much closer to a ban if not a complete ban.

If you'd like to come talk about this issue at City Council, you can sign up by phone between 9 AM and 3 PM on Monday at 617-349-4280 and in person from 5-6 PM at the Sullivan Chambers at City Hall. Public comment, limited to three minutes per speaker, starts at 5:30(ish) and lasts at least until 6:00, though if there are enough speakers we often go later. At the end of public comment, people who

missed the sign-in window are generally asked if they'd like to speak anyway. The entire Council may be emailed at Council@Cambridgema.gov.

Thanks a lot.

Craig

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Cambridge
MA

City Manager's Agenda Item

3465

Transmitting Communication from Lisa C. Peterson, Acting City Manager, relative to the appropriation of \$125,000 from Free Cash to the Public Investment Fund Public Works Extraordinary Expenditures account for the purchase of green landscaping equipment for various City departments to begin using this fall.

Information

Department: City Manager's Office
Category: Appropriation

Sponsors:

Attachments

Version History

1. [Printout](#)

Body

I am hereby requesting the appropriation of \$125,000 from Free Cash to the Public Investment Fund Public Works Extraordinary Expenditures account for the purchase of green landscaping equipment for various City departments to begin using this fall.

DPW will purchase a full set of battery powered leaf blowers for use by all City departments. This equipment costs approximately \$25,000 and includes 21 Battery operated blowers, 21 chargers, and 42 batteries to ensure we have 2 batteries for every blower. This equipment will be used by City staff and its performance will be gauged in comparison with gas powered equipment. This equipment has noise levels at or below 60 decibels to comply with the City's leaf blower ordinance. Equipment will be used by the Water Department, Human Services Department, Traffic Department and Department of Public Works.

Additionally, the Department of Public Works will seek to use green (battery and electric powered equipment) in two parks as part of a spring of 2017 pilot. The two parks have yet to be definitively identified but we expect them to be representative parks in terms of equipment needs. The City will measure the effectiveness of such equipment through the spring of 2017. This equipment will be operated by DPW crews. The cost of this equipment will be approximately \$100,000 and will include, string trimmers, and both walk behind and ride-on mowers. The purchase will also include a charging trailer along with additional batteries.