



**Town of Atherton
ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS COMMITTEE
APPROVED MINUTES**

November 5, 2020

1:00 p.m.

HOLBROOK PALMER PARK-MAIN HOUSE

150 Watkins Avenue
ATHERTON, CALIFORNIA

SPECIAL MEETING

1. ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Holly Joseph
Diana Hawkins Manuelian
Emily Conn
Kelly Davis

Absent: Elizabeth Lewis

Staff Present: Stephanie Bertollo Davis, Principal Planner
Jake Garcia, Associate Planner

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

3. COMMITTEE AND STAFF MEMBER COMMENTS:

Committee member Hawkins Manuelian proposed that the EPC consider recruitment of a student volunteer or intern to assist the EPC in research and program implementation.

The EPC agreed and directed staff to include into the next meeting to be discussed.

Committee member Hawkins Manuelian requested that staff provide updates from the San Mateo County Indicators report as well as the recently adopted City of Menlo Park Climate Action Plan (CAP).

4. REGULAR AGENDA

a. Approval of Minutes from the September 17, 2020 regular meeting.

The minutes were approved as distributed.

M/S Hawkins Manuelian / Conn Aye: 3 Noes: 0 Excused: 1

b. Draft Leaf Blower Ordinance

Principal Planner Davis presented the staff report.

Committee Member Conn asked if there were any financial rebate programs for gardeners or homeowners.

Chair Joseph highlighted that the EPC has discussed this in the past and that pricing between gas and electric blowers are now similar in price.

Staff indicated that the ordinance as drafted has a two-year time frame to be phased in to allow for adequate public outreach and education, and to allow stakeholders time to incorporate budgetary expenses for introduction for electric leaf blower equipment.

Committee member Hawkins Manuelian shared research for air pollution, noise, and costs between electric and gas-powered leaf blowers relative to Atherton.

The EPC considered nuances of costs, types of blowers, financial responsibility, violations and penalties.

The EPC agreed that the complete ban of leaf blowers would be unrealistic in Atherton.

The EPC expressed the desire to ensure language of ordinance and presentation to the EPC be reinforced with research that explains and supports the need for the ordinance.

Staff highlighted that the Ordinance will have a preface to the purpose of the ordinance and that data and information has been and will be provided in presentation to the City Council.

The EPC expressed the need to include the Town, Schools, and Private Schools should be expected to utilize electric equipment as well with a timeline that would encourage them to implement electric equipment sooner.

The EPC asked Staff to further elaborate on reservations held by the Town, Private Schools, and Circus Club for adopting electric leaf blowers.

Staff responded that Town, Private Schools, and Circus Club expressed challenges with maintaining properties of large acreage with electric blower's vs gas blowers.

The EPC indicated that the leaf blower technology has improved, and that staff should provide additional information comparing electric and gas-powered leaf blowers for consideration.

The EPC discussed the leaf blower permitted use schedule and found that leaf blowers should be permitted at times allowed for construction with exceptions to emergency circumstances.

The EPC communicated that the violations and fees should be comparable to the cost of a leaf blower and that the fine should be the responsibility of the homeowner.

Staff indicated that the fines are established separately for the ordinance and, and further considerations may be clarified by the municipal code and direction by Town Attorney.

Staff further indicated that the fee structure opined by the EPC will can be communicated to the City Council and Town Attorney.

The EPC expressed desires to ensure that public outreach be communicated to all homeowners, and for any outreach to also be provided in multiple languages to ensure understanding by all stakeholders.

Staff indicated that there will be opportunity to provide an extensive public outreach and education program for the ordinance if adopted.

The EPC Recommend the Draft Leaf Blower Ordinance with amendments to include:

- That any leaf blower use is further restricted in allowable hours to the same schedule as construction hours in addition to spare the air days. (Monday-Friday 8-5pm, no holidays and no weekends).
- That more background research and data that supports the reasoning for the adoption of the ordinance is presented in the preface of the Ordinance as well as in the Staff Report upon presentation to the City Council.
- Phasing for residential use is decreased to 1 year from 2 years as currently drafted.
- Recommendation that the gas-powered leaf blowers ban be extended to also include all private Schools, Circus Club and all Town maintained facilities with a longer timeline for compliance. (i.e. 4 years to make the complete transition)
- If possible, to have any fine or penalty be cost of an electric leaf blower (Town staff to verify if possible). Staff has confirmed with Deputy City Attorney that any fine amounts we'll be limited to those general penalty amounts per Chapter 1.20 "General Penalty" and/or Chapter 1.21 "Administrative Citations" of AMC.
- Language added encouraging, but not mandating, residents to not use leaf blowers at all/to consider alternative landscaping methods.

5. SET/ CONFIRM NEXT MEETING

The next regularly scheduled meeting is scheduled for November 19, 2020 from 1-3 PM via Zoom.

6. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 2:57 pm.