

## NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

**RE:** ORDER OF THE BOARD OF ALDERS REFERRAL –  
A Resolution Calling For A Public Meeting On Phasing Out Gas-Powered Leaf Blowers In  
The City Of New Haven  
(Submitted by: New Haven Advisory Council)

**REPORT:** 1593-08

**ADVICE:** Approve. The City Plan Commission finds that this is an important but complicated issue and encourages the Board of Alders to take extra steps to include the voices of all stakeholders, including the workers who employ these devices in the course of their work.

### BACKGROUND

This request comes from the Board of Alders regarding calling a public meeting to discuss phasing out, banning and/or outlawing the use of Gas-Powered Leaf Blowers within the City of New Haven. The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in a period of increased work and study from home, which has prompted longer term, permanent shifts in patterns of employment in New Haven. The noise and air pollution from leaf blowers can be particularly disruptive to the City's residents at home during the day, reducing their quality of life and their productivity, whether they are young children; school and college students; workers with night shifts; seniors; those on health leave, or stay at home parents. With disruption from noise and air pollution compared to "second-hand smoke"; whereby, those who do not use gas powered leaf blowers are unfairly subjected to noise and air pollution caused by others.

The discussion would be centered around children who are particularly vulnerable to environmental noise which may affect language acquisition, reading comprehension and cognitive development. The conversation may further illuminate that the emissions caused by gas-powered leaf blowers puts children in a vulnerable position since children have less ability to detoxify environmental exposure to pollution than adults.

The public meeting may identify that exposure to gas-powered leaf blowers is a social justice issue; whereby, low-wage workers hired to operate gas-powered leaf blowers are most likely to sustain long-term hearing loss and respiratory and heart disease as a result of prolonged exposure to air and noise pollution from gas-powered leaf blowers and do not always have eye, ear, and breathing protection.

Lastly, the public meeting will allow a dialogue about quieter and more environmentally responsible alternatives to gas-powered leaf blowers that are currently on the market.

Accordingly, the City's Environmental Advisory Council is exploring ways to improve the quality of life within New Haven as it relates to gas-powered leaf blowers through a public meeting with the Board of Alders.

### PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

This proposed amendment is in accordance with Title I, Article XIII, Section 2(A) of the New Haven Code of Ordinances states, "**Every Ordinance or Resolution of the Board of Alders relating to the location and use of any street, bridge, boulevard, esplanade, square, park, playground, playfield, aviation field, parking space, public building, the facilities or terminals of any public utility, or the establishment or change in the boundaries of or regulations concerning zoning, shall be at once**

referred to the City Planning Commission and final action shall not be taken on any such Ordinance or Resolution until the commission shall have reported thereon, provided that the Board of Alders may establish by ordinance a period of not less than sixty (60) Days within which the commission shall file its report with the City Clerk and if no report is filed within such period the approval of the commission shall be presumed.” Accordingly, the Board of Alders seeks guidance regarding the proposed amendment.

The Board of Alder seeks guidance as to:

- Whether the proposal is aligned with the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

**ADVICE**

The City Plan Commission finds that this is an important but complicated issue and encourages the Board of Alders to take extra steps to include the voices of all stakeholders, including the workers who employ these devices in the course of their work.

**ADOPTED:** October 6, 2021

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Leslie Radcliffe  
Chair

**ATTEST:** \_

Aicha Woods  
Executive Director, City Plan Department