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September 1, 2024

To Lanelda Gaskins, Townclerk
Natasha Moore, Mayor
David Stern, Vice Mayor

Highland Beach, FL, 33487

Re: Leafblowers

Dear Mrs Gaskins:

I am aware that leaf blowers were discussed on January 1, 2023 and I made a respective public comment in the Commission meeting on February 21, 2023. No discussions or decisions have ever since been made, hence I am reaching out again to the Commission with the following public comment (same as made in February 2023):

Many landscapers and private individuals in Highland Beach use polluting and noisy gas-powered leaf blowers which have been banned in many villages and towns of our calibre, all over the USA.

*These leaf blowers **generate toxic, carcinogenic air pollution and noise that far exceeds health and safety standards.** Using gas powered leaf blowers are very bad for our health, fragile dunes/barrier island environment, and enjoyment of the benefits of living in our five miles of paradise. People come to Highland Beach to enjoy our beautiful nature and beaches and not to be drowned in noise and toxic fumes.*

Toxic pollution – Using a two-stroke gas-powered leaf blower for 30 minutes produces pollutants equal to those generated by driving a Ford F-150 truck 3,900 miles, or as far as from Texas to Alaska.

Harmful health impacts - Ozone and PM2.5s are well known causes of, or contributors to, early death, cardiovascular disease, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, lung cancer, premature births, and other serious health conditions. Even short-term exposure can be harmful.

Damaging noise - Noise from leaf blowers ranges from 102–115 decibels (“dBs”)!

For these reasons, Miami Beach is phasing out gas powered leaf blowers, Naples, Palm Beach, and other towns have implemented leaf blower regulations/bans. Our paradise of Highland Beach cannot afford to wait longer.

We should as soon as possible discuss a regulation stipulating that no leaf blower may be operated except one (1) 65 dB(A) electric or battery powered leaf blower per lot during the permitted hours (TBD), with further specifications about allowed types and some exemptions for larger lots. After a storm or emergency, the mayor could temporarily suspend the law.

Violations should end in suspensions for 60 days or longer and shall be subject to penalty.

I appreciate your attention and look forward to hearing an update in one of the coming Commission meetings. I am happy to help the town drafting a leafblower ordinance.

*Could you pls **schedule this topic for your October 1 meeting** where I can present this as a public comment? Many thanks.*

*Best regards,
Barbara Nestle*