



CITY OF MEDINA

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Date: October 10, 2022

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Stephen R. Burns, City Manager

Subject: Gas-Powered Leaf Blower Discussion

At the September 12, 2022, Medina Council Meeting, staff was given direction to research options regarding gas-powered leaf blowers. This memo is just a starting point for Council discussion since there are many ways to address this issue.

Below is a brief recap of previous City actions regarding gas-powered leaf blowers and lawn equipment.

In October 2020, the Medina Council amended Chapter 8.06 of the Medina Municipal Code:

- Limited sounds created by powered equipment when used by a resident or by the Overlake Golf & Country Club to:
 - Weekdays: 7:00 AM – 7:00 PM
 - Saturdays: 9:00 AM – 7:00 PM
 - Sundays: 9:00 AM – 7:00 PM

- Limited professional yard maintenance and landscaping in the city to the same hours as commercial construction and development activities:
 - Weekdays: 7:00 AM – 7:00 PM
 - Saturdays: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
 - Sundays: No work allowed
 - Legal Holidays: No work allowed

In June 2021, then-City Manager Michael Sauerwein held a virtual community forum on gas-powered lawn equipment. The purpose of the forum was to collect citizen input regarding the impacts of yard maintenance and landscaping. ([Virtual Community Forum](#))

October 11, 2021, City Manager Sauerwein gave presentation to City Council on “Gas-Powered Lawn Equipment for Yard Maintenance & Landscaping.” His goal was to “*Establish a set of clear, concise, and easily enforced rules for yard maintenance & landscaping that balance citizen’s need to maintain their property with the need to maintain Medina’s unique character.*” ([October 11 Meeting](#))

In December 2021, the City Council tabled discussion of gas-powered lawn equipment due to the City Manager transition.

At the September 12, 2022, Medina Council Meeting, staff was given direction to research options regarding gas-powered leaf blowers. This direction is specific to gas-powered leaf blowers and not gas-powered lawn equipment.

For the October 10, 2022, Medina Council Meeting -

This memo is attempting to identify complaints, comments, and concerns regarding leaf blowers that have come up regarding this topic. This is a starting point in discussion on how to address gas-powered leaf blowers.

Discussion Point – Council could delay discussion to see if either King County or the State of Washington will pass legislation banning gas-powered leaf blowers.

- Council could table discussion and potential decisions to see if this option occurs.
- Council could take proactive steps to recommend that King County and/or the State of Washington pass legislation restricting gas-powered leaf blowers.

Discussion Point – Council could refer, reprioritize the Planning Commission Workplan and provide specific guidance to the Planning Commission to review and to provide recommendations regarding gas-powered leaf blowers.

Discussion Point - Council to provide staff direction for any of the following:

- Ask staff to get community feedback through another community forum, Engage Medina, mailers, City webpage, etc. This would allow Council to gain a level of interest from residents.
- Direct staff to include information regarding gas-powered leaf blowers in future City Newsletters, create topic page in Engage Medina (with options for surveys), and add information to the webpage.
- Recommend or require Medina City Public Works to replace gas-powered leaf blowers with electric or battery operated – either immediately or when phasing out old equipment.
- Encourage residents to voluntarily replace gas-powered equipment with electric or battery operated.

Discussion Point – Council could direct staff to prepare a resolution which could include any of the items discussed.

Discussion Point – Council could address increase noise issues in the community.

- Review all ordinances pertaining to noise.
- Research other issues pertaining to noise – power washing, etc.

Discussion Point – Council could pass an ordinance to ban gas-powered leaf blowers – see examples from other jurisdictions.

Existing Medina Code Sections

As a reference, the current MMC language regarding landscaping hours for professional and residential use.

8.06.160. - Work hours for commercial construction and development activities and professional yard maintenance and landscaping.

A. *General.* Commercial construction and development activities and professional yard maintenance and landscaping may take place only between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on weekdays. On Saturdays, commercial construction and development activities may occur between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. and professional yard maintenance and landscaping may occur between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. No such work is allowed on Sundays or legal holidays set forth in RCW 1.16.050(1).

8.06.140. - Exemptions—Sounds exempt during daylight hours.

The following sounds are exempt from this chapter between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. on weekdays, and between 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. on weekends, unless different hours are specified:

- A. Sounds created by bells, chimes, or carillons not operating for more than five minutes during any one-hour time frame;
- B. Sounds created by blasting, provided their operations are between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on weekdays, and between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. on Saturday.
- C. Sounds originating from lawful pickets, marches, parades, rallies, and other similar public events.
- D. Sounds created by powered equipment when used by a resident or by the Overlake Golf and Country Club for the temporary or periodic maintenance or repair of their property or its appurtenances, including lawnmowers, leaf blowers, powered hand tools, and snow-removal equipment, provided such use is between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on weekdays and between 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on weekends.
- E. Sounds originating from the required testing of emergency equipment such as generators.