

## RESOLUTION #2-R-20

Designating the month of May, 2020, as **No Mow May**

*Date: February 5, 2020*

*Submitted By: Alderperson Schultz – District 9, Alderperson Martin – District 4, Alderperson Meltzer – District 2, Alderperson Otis – District 15, Alderperson Fenton – District 6, Alderperson Firkus – District 3*

*Referred To: Municipal Services Committee*

**WHEREAS**, as a BEE CITY USA affiliate, the City of Appleton and its designated community advocacy group for pollinator awareness and engagement, Pollenablers-Fox Cities, is directed to “Develop and implement a program to create or expand pollinator-friendly habitat on public and private land, to galvanize communities to adopt sustainable pollinator-friendly land management practices, and;

**WHEREAS**, the City of Appleton is in a unique position, being both a BEE CITY USA affiliate and also hosting a BEE CITY CAMPUS, to leverage both designations to significantly increase pollinator-friendly habitat by encouraging pollinator-friendly lawn-care practices and by incentivizing its citizens to take direct and meaningful action on their own properties, and


**WHEREAS**, ideal pollinator-friendly habitat is comprised of mostly native wildflowers, grasses, vines, shrubs, and trees blooming in succession throughout the growing season, is free or nearly free of pesticides, is comprised of undisturbed spaces including leaf and brush piles, un-mown fields or field margins, fallen trees and other dead wood for nesting and overwintering; and provides connectivity between habitat areas to support pollinator movement and resilience; and

**WHEREAS**, the formative period for establishment of pollinator insect species occurs in late spring and early summer when pollinator species emerge from hibernation or suspended animation and when supporting plants emerge and blossom, offering crucial life cycle habitat and forage opportunities; and these opportunities are dramatically reduced with early spring leaf litter removal and grass mowing; now, therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the City of Appleton and Pollenablers-Fox Cities, along with their partnering organizations, jointly recognize **No Mow May** to actively promote and educate the community about the critical period of pollinator emergence, generation of crucial pollinator-supporting habitat and early spring foraging opportunities, and;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that for the duration of the month of May, the City of Appleton shall suspend the enforcement of Municipal Code Chapter 12, Article III - Weeds and Wild Growth, permitting all residents to voluntarily delay lawn-care and litter removal practices until June, allowing pollinators to emerge and early flowering grasses and forbes to establish, which may result in ground-cover exceeding established ordinance height restrictions, and; that following the month of May, the City of Appleton shall not issue citations for excessive “weed” growth for an additional grace period of 2 weeks.

TO: Municipal Services Committee

FROM: Kurt W. Craanen, Inspections Supervisor   
Paula Vandehey, Director of Public Works

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION #6-R-20 (No Mow May)

DATE: February 7, 2020

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Resolution #6-R-20 would suspend enforcement of the high grass and weeds for the month of May and first two weeks of June. Things to consider when deliberating on this resolution:

- 1) **Complaints.** Our Department receives the most complaints for high grass and weeds in the months of May and June. Below is a chart with the average number of complaints by month over the last six years.

January	0.00
February	0.00
March	0.00
April	0.00
May	69.17
June	85.17
July	58.50
August	44.33
September	38.00
October	14.50
November	3.00
December	0.00

- 2) **Increase Cost.** Once we do begin enforcing the regulations of Section 12-57 of the Municipal Code, the grass and weeds will be very high and difficult to mow. The mowing contractor will charge considerably more to cut the vegetation. (see attached examples).
- 3) **Essential Service.** Many Appleton residents consider the City function of cutting high vegetation to be an essential service and will not understand or tolerate excessively high vegetation in residential neighborhoods. Our department will experience higher call volume and many multiple complaints on the same property.
- 4) **Noxious Weeds.** State statute 66.407 requires municipalities to destroy noxious weeds. Allowing noxious weeds to grow, in some cases, will affect neighboring property owners because noxious weeds could spread to other properties.
- 5) **Managed Natural Landscape.** Section 12-59 of the Municipal Code (attached) already permits property owners to maintain grass over eight inches, as long as the standards of the ordinance are met. Therefore, anyone who is motivated to allow grass to grow long may do this and comply with existing code.

**Sec. 12-59. Landscape maintenance.**

(a) *Purpose.* The use of wildflowers and other native plants in a managed landscape design can be economical, low-maintenance and effective in soil and water conservation. However, it is not the intent of this section to allow vegetated areas to be completely unmanaged or overgrown.

Areas that present either a direct health hazard or provide a demonstrated breeding ground for fauna known to create a safety or health hazard will not be permitted. Certain noxious weeds defined in this section are recognized indicators of neglect. The City recognizes the desirability of permitting natural vegetation within the city limits while maintaining public health and safety at the same time.

(b) *Managed natural landscaping.*

- (1) Native and naturalized plants including, but not necessarily limited to, ferns, wildflowers, grasses, shrubs and trees may be grown in a managed landscape design provided said plants were not obtained, or are not growing, in violation of any local, state or federal laws.
- (2) Nuisance weeds and noxious weeds are defined by W.S.A. §23.235 and §66.0407, respectively, as amended, and also include those weeds set forth in §12-56. Such weeds are prohibited in all cases and shall be subject to destruction under §12-59 and §12-58.
- (3) Natural landscape areas shall be set back a minimum of seven (7) feet from all property lines and driveways unless the property is abutted by a roadway, fence or similar barrier separating it from adjoining residential properties, then the natural landscaping may be planted up to the property line (inside the sidewalk).
- (4) Natural landscape areas shall be subject to §6-6 governing fire hazards. Those areas located within residential districts and containing dense plantings of tall grasses (in excess of 8") or similar light weight fuels (as determined by the Fire Department) shall be limited in area to two hundred (200) square feet, separated from other like areas according to the setback requirements in sec. (3) and set back a minimum of seven (7) feet from all structures.
- (5) This section shall not apply to properties owned by governmental entities or where federal, state or local regulations provide otherwise.