DEPARTMENT OF
LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

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July 15th, 2026

Fox Pest Control
703 N Hickory Farm Ln
Appleton, WI 54914

This letter is to notify you that we are in receipt of your applications for a Commercial Solicitor's Company & Employee Licenses. The Health Inspections Supervisor has recommended that Fox Pest Control's company application as well as the 19 employee applications for a Commercial Solicitor's License be denied based on the reasoning in the enclosed memo, provided to our office.

The denial of this license will be placed on the Agenda for the next scheduled Safety and Licensing Committee meeting. This meeting will take place on Wednesday. July 22, 2026at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 6th floor of City Hall, 100 N Appleton St., Appleton, Wisconsin. You are invited to appear at this meeting to address the committee.

If you have specific questions relating to the denial please contact Eric Maggio at 920-832-5539.

Respectfully,

Amy Molitor
City Clerk

CITY OF APPLETON

MEMORANDUM

Date: 7/15/2026
To: City Clerk Molitor
From: Eric Maggio, Health Operations Supervisor
Subject: Fox Pest Control License Denial

Purpose and Background

The purpose of this memorandum is to document my decision to deny the Commercial Solicitation License applications submitted by Fox Pest Control.

The City of Appleton requires businesses conducting door-to-door commercial solicitation to obtain a valid Commercial Solicitation License before engaging in solicitation activities within the City. The licensing process exists to protect the health, safety, and welfare of Appleton residents and to ensure that companies understand and comply with City requirements before beginning door-to-door sales activities.

In evaluating a Commercial Solicitation License application, I consider the information available to the City regarding the applicant's solicitation activities and its demonstrated willingness to comply with City requirements.

Prior to Fox Pest Control submitting its applications, the City received multiple independent complaints alleging that representatives of the company were already conducting door-to-door solicitation within Appleton without the required Commercial Solicitation Licenses. The complaints described similar conduct occurring over multiple months and in different Appleton neighborhoods.

In addition to reviewing the complaint history, I spoke directly with Fox Pest Control's identified local point of contact on July 15, 2026. Information provided during that conversation raised additional concerns regarding the company's knowledge of municipal licensing requirements and its response after becoming aware of internal licensing deficiencies.

Based on the totality of the information available, I have determined that issuance of Commercial Solicitation Licenses to Fox Pest Control is not appropriate at this time.

Key Reasons

1. **Pattern of Unlicensed Solicitation and Resident Complaints**

Prior to applying for Commercial Solicitation Licenses, the City received multiple complaints indicating that Fox Pest Control representatives were conducting door-to-door solicitation within Appleton without the required licenses.

The complaints included reports of:

- Solicitation occurring after 8:00 p.m.
- Representatives using forceful or persistent sales tactics.
- Representatives refusing to accept "no" as an answer.
- Representatives following residents while they were walking through their neighborhoods.
- An older resident reportedly feeling uncomfortable because a representative would not end the interaction.
- Residents contacting the City specifically to determine whether the company was properly licensed to solicit.

The City received complaints concerning Fox Pest Control's solicitation activities in May, June, and July 2026. Although the complaints originated independently and involved different residents and neighborhoods, they described substantially similar concerns regarding the company's solicitation practices.

The consistency of these reports raised concerns regarding the training, supervision, and oversight of Fox Pest Control representatives operating within the City of Appleton.

2. **Failure to Stop Solicitation After Licensing Concerns Were Identified**

The City's primary concern is not simply that Fox Pest Control initially began operating without the required Commercial Solicitation Licenses.

The greater concern is that multiple opportunities existed for the company to identify the licensing deficiency, stop solicitation activities, and correct the issue. That did not occur.

In early July, a Fox Pest Control representative was directly informed during a residential interaction that the company did not have the required City license. Despite being made aware of this concern, representatives reportedly continued soliciting neighboring residences.

The company did not immediately contact the City to verify its licensing status or voluntarily suspend door-to-door solicitation while the issue was reviewed.

Instead, City staff were required to identify the company, determine the appropriate contact, and initiate communication. A response from the company was not received until approximately one day later and after the possibility of citations for unlicensed solicitation had been discussed.

Had Fox Pest Control immediately acknowledged the licensing issue, voluntarily stopped solicitation activities, and proactively contacted the City to correct the deficiency, that response would have weighed favorably in my evaluation of the applications.

That did not occur.

3. July 15, 2026 Conversation with Fox Pest Control

On July 15, 2026 at approximately 10:30 a.m., I spoke by telephone with Jacob Vaughan after locating contact information through his assistant.

Mr. Vaughan identified himself as the new owner of the local Fox Pest Control operation and stated that he has worked for Fox Pest Control for approximately four years as a door-to-door sales representative.

During our conversation, I asked whether he was familiar with other municipalities having commercial solicitation licensing requirements. Mr. Vaughan indicated that he was well aware that licensing requirements commonly must be completed before beginning work in a community.

I asked Mr. Vaughan to explain the disconnect regarding Appleton's licensing requirements. He stated that a former assistant, Jordan, had been assigned responsibility for obtaining the necessary licenses. According to Mr. Vaughan, Jordan was terminated in May after the company discovered that he had not been completing assigned duties.

This information created an additional concern.

By the company's own account, Fox Pest Control identified in May that the employee responsible for completing licensing responsibilities had failed to perform assigned duties. Despite identifying that failure, Fox Pest Control representatives continued conducting door-to-door solicitation in Appleton during May, June, and July.

The company did not appear to conduct an immediate verification of whether required municipal licenses had actually been obtained before allowing solicitation activities to continue.

Subsequent resident complaints regarding unlicensed solicitation and late evening solicitation did not result in the company stopping its door-to-door activities or promptly confirming its licensing status with the City.

The failure of one employee to complete an assigned licensing responsibility may explain how the initial oversight occurred. It does not explain why solicitation continued after the company became aware that the employee responsible for licensing had failed to complete his duties.

It also does not explain why the company continued soliciting after additional concerns regarding licensing and solicitation practices were raised.

This distinction is central to my decision.

4. **Compliance and Management Responsibility**

The responsibility for obtaining a Commercial Solicitation License rests with the company conducting the solicitation.

A company cannot delegate a licensing responsibility to an employee and then continue operations without verifying that the required licenses were actually obtained, particularly after discovering that the employee responsible for those duties had not been completing assigned work.

Fox Pest Control's management was familiar with municipal solicitation licensing requirements. The company identified an internal failure involving the individual responsible for obtaining licenses. Complaints continued to be received. The company was directly informed of a licensing concern. Despite these opportunities to identify and correct the issue, door-to-door solicitation continued.

The complaints regarding late evening solicitation and persistent sales practices further compound my concerns. The licensing deficiency is only one part of the City's review. The broader concern is the apparent failure to recognize multiple warning signs and take immediate corrective action.

Appleton residents should not bear the responsibility for repeatedly reporting a company's sales practices before the company reviews and corrects its own operations. Likewise, it is not the City's responsibility to locate and pursue a company to ensure it has obtained required licenses before beginning door-to-door sales. That responsibility belongs to Fox Pest Control.

Recommendation

Based on the documented pattern of unlicensed solicitation, repeated resident complaints, continued solicitation after licensing concerns were identified, and the information provided by Fox Pest Control during my July 15, 2026 conversation with its local owner, I deny the Commercial Solicitation License applications submitted by Fox Pest Control.

This decision is not based on a single complaint or an isolated administrative oversight. I recognize that Fox Pest Control has attributed the initial licensing failure to a former employee who was assigned responsibility for obtaining municipal licenses. However, the company's own explanation indicates that it became aware in May that this employee had failed to complete assigned duties.

The company nevertheless continued door-to-door solicitation without verifying that the required City of Appleton licenses had been obtained.

Further, complaints involving late evening solicitation, persistent sales practices, and unlicensed activity did not result in the immediate suspension of solicitation activities or proactive contact with the City.

The issue is not simply that Fox Pest Control failed to obtain a license. The primary concern is that the company had multiple opportunities to identify the problem, stop its activities, and bring itself into compliance, yet solicitation continued.

Based on the totality of these circumstances, I am not persuaded that issuing Commercial Solicitation Licenses to Fox Pest Control at this time would be consistent with the City's responsibility to protect the health, safety, and welfare of Appleton residents.

Authority and Future Applications

The City's commercial solicitation licensing process is intended to ensure that businesses engaging in door-to-door solicitation comply with City requirements and conduct their activities in a manner consistent with the protection of the public.

Based upon the documented complaint history, unlicensed solicitation activity, continued solicitation after licensing concerns were identified, and the company's response to its own internal licensing deficiencies, I have determined that Fox Pest Control has not demonstrated that issuance of Commercial Solicitation Licenses is appropriate at this time.

This denial applies to the current applications and does not permanently prohibit Fox Pest Control from seeking licensure in the future. Any future application will be evaluated based on the information available at that time, including the company's demonstrated compliance with City requirements, corrective actions implemented following this denial, and its ability to provide appropriate oversight of representatives conducting door-to-door solicitation.