

No Mow May Resolution Substitute

Whereas the No-Mow-May initiative was made a permanent part of the city's ordinances in 2022, based on the data provided in a study looking at the quantity of bees and other pollinators found in mowed vs. non-mowed lawns, and;

Whereas the initially challenged data in the study presented in 2022 to the Common Council as evidence that non-mowed lawns showed higher levels of bee diversity and abundance, specifically the accuracy of visual species identification, was subsequently rectified and bolstered with follow-up research that led to the program being permanently adopted by Appleton and hundreds of other municipalities in Wisconsin and around the United States who followed Appleton's lead, and;

Whereas the No-Mow-May initiative has had a significant and lasting impact upon the communities it has been adopted in leading to, among other things; lowered frequencies of mowing, reduced greenhouse gas emissions from 2-cycle mower engines, reduced use of non-organic and harmful chemical pesticides, reduced organic matter and chemical fertilizer uptake into watersheds from surface runoff, increases in insect populations supporting a more stable and resilient urban wildlife food web, increases in song bird and raptor populations, proliferation of early flowering non-grass species, and significant engagement with citizens who are more cognizant of the impacts lawn management practices have on their own lawn micro-environments, and

Whereas many of the communities which adopted the simple "No-Mow" model of allowing turf grasses to grow unattended until the implied target date of June 1st for enforcement are increasingly challenged with an earlier growing season and many participating homeowners committed to reaching that target date, resulting in grass lengths far exceeding the intended beneficial turf heights and duration of the natural lawn "awakening" period which leads to necessary stressing of managed lawns, increased use of pesticide controls, and potentially problematic increases in populations of unwanted pests and noxious weeds in our urban neighborhoods, and;

Whereas many communities across the United States are now pivoting toward, or fully adopting, a "Slow-Mow" model, extending the narrative to include the entire growing season.

Whereas the authors of the original resolution recognize that continued refinement of the No Mow May ordinance is part of evolving the best practices in pollinator conservation, and continued climatic environmental change is expected to impact growing season length and

Whereas, best practices in pollinator conservation require a balanced approach that satisfies environmental needs with community aesthetic needs;

Be It Resolved that the City of Appleton Common Council remove the adopted language from 2022 from municipal code which allowed for weed ordinance to be suspended and unenforceable during the month of May, and

Be It Further Resolved, the Council direct staff to amend Section 12-58 of the city's long grass ordinance by increasing the acceptable lawn height to ~~12"~~10"* for both residential and commercial lawns for the entire growing season, including the month of May.

**Amended at committee from twelve (12) inches to ten (10) inches.*