

Newsday

Long Island/Suffolk

Huntington Town officials further limiting gas-powered leaf blower use



The Town of Huntington has updated its noise code on gas-powered leaf blowers. Credit:

Newsday / John Paraskevas

By Deborah S. Morris

Deborah.morris@newsday.com

October 24, 2021

Town is further restricting the use of gas-powered leaf blowers following complaints from residents over noise and odor disturbances.

Updated town code now bans the use of the devices any time on Saturdays between Memorial Day and Labor Day — for both residential and commercial uses. Violators will be subject to town code chapters that deal with landscapers and noise. Previously, gas leaf blower use was allowed year-round on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The updated law also prohibits commercial landscapers from operating gas leaf blowers on residential properties on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays; previously the ban applied only on Sundays and holidays.

These restrictions do not apply to battery-powered leaf blowers. The changes were approved 5-0 at the Oct. 13 town board meeting.

Town Board member Joan Cergol said she heard from many residents working, schooling and convalescing at home during the pandemic who were awakened to the "highly unpleasant noise and odor disturbances" created by the use of gas-powered blowers.

"Every small step matters in moving toward a cleaner, greener and quieter Huntington," Cergol said Thursday. "Migration to battery-powered vehicles and tools across a wide spectrum of industries has not hurt anyone yet."

Deputy Supervisor Ed Smyth, who co-sponsored the resolution to update the town code with Cergol, said most of the landscapers were amenable to the changes.

"It's a reasonable compromise," Smyth said. "The dates coincide with when leaves are actually on the ground."

According to town code, a first offense will result in a fine of not less than \$250 and not more than \$500. A second of two offenses within a 3-year period will incur a fine of not less than \$500 and not more than \$1,000.

A third or subsequent offense within a 5-year period will result in a fine of not less than \$1,000 and not more than \$5,000 or by imprisonment not exceeding 15 days, or both.

Mark McAteer, owner of Huntington based-The Laurel Group, a landscape architect and landscaping business, said easing away from gas-powered leaf blowers is best for everyone to adapt.

"If the productivity were better we would all switch in one second but the productivity is not as good, it [battery-powered blower] costs more in labor because it's [battery-powered] slower and less powerful; that means higher labor costs and if we're going to spend more on labor ultimately the homeowner will absorb those costs."

By Deborah S. Morris

Deborah Morris is a native Long Islander and covers the town of Huntington.