

16. Leaf Blower Use Restriction in the City of Toronto

Communication (February 9, 2006) from the City Clerk, advising that City Council, at its meeting on January 31, February 1 and 2, 2006, referred Item (c), entitled “Leaf Blower Use Restriction in the City of Toronto”, contained in Planning and Transportation Committee Report 1, Clause 13 back to the Planning and Transportation Committee for further consideration:

“**WHEREAS**, at the present time, the Noise By-law for the City of Toronto prohibits the creation of noise by the use of leaf blowers, known as ‘powered property service tool’, between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 7:30 a.m., or 9:00 a.m. in the case of Sundays or holidays; and

WHEREAS gas powered leaf blowers produce sound with a strong tonality, which is particularly objectionable, and levels generally measure in the range of 80-90 dBA; and

WHEREAS as of January 1, 1992, leaf blowers which produce sound levels in excess of 70 dBA at 15 metres are considered to be in violation of the Noise By-law and are, therefore, essentially banned in the City; and

WHEREAS the number of noise complaints resulting from the use of leaf blowers increases steadily each year, as outlined in the Committee Report (January 10, 1996) submitted from the Acting Commissioner of Public Works and the Environment for the City of Toronto; and

WHEREAS the Noise By-law is authorized by section 9(1) of the *City of Toronto Act*, 1971, which reads, ‘...The Council of the Corporation may pass by-laws for prohibiting or regulating the making, causing or permitting of noises or any class or classes of noises within the municipality or any defined area or areas thereof which disturbs or may disturb the quiet, peace, rest, enjoyment, comfort or convenience of the inhabitants, or which, in the opinion of the Council, are objectionable or liable to disturb the quiet, peace, rest, enjoyment, comfort or convenience of the inhabitants.’; and

WHEREAS the pollution caused by leaf blowers extends beyond noise to dust, debris, mould, hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, and ground level ozone, all of which increase the levels of pollution and/or smog in the City, resulting in a loss of quality of life for all residents; and

WHEREAS the City of Vancouver, B.C., has already taken the initiative to support a City-wide ban of leaf blowers (Noise Control By-law No. 6555 – November 18, 2003);

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT City Council amend the Noise By-law (adopted by Council on June 18-20, 2002) to include the following

staff Recommendation (2)(a) contained in the Recommendations Section of the report (November 5, 2001) from the Commissioner of Urban Development Services, as amended by the Planning and Transportation Committee:

‘(2)(a) Section 4 be amended to reflect the prohibited period of time for the operation of a power device that blows or vacuums leaves, grass cuttings, debris or other similar material as follows:

- (i) at all times in Quiet Zones;
- (ii) at all times on residential properties except during the months of October and November for leaf removal;
- (iii) between 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. Monday to Saturday and at all times on Sunday on non-residential properties; and
- (iv) on Smog Alert days;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the appropriate City staff, by mechanism of the Noise and Pollution by-laws, investigate unconditionally banning the operation of any powered leaf blower, electric or gas, in the City of Toronto;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the appropriate City staff take the necessary actions to give effect to the foregoing.”