

March 9, 2007

## **LICENSING AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE:**

City Council on March 5 to 8, 2007, referred the following Motion to the Licensing and Standards Committee:

### **M22 Leaf Blower Use Restriction in City of Toronto**

*Moved by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Mihevc*

#### **SUMMARY:**

At the present time, the Noise By-law Chapter 591 for the City of Toronto prohibits the creation of noise by the use of leaf blowers between the hours of 9:00 p.m. one day to 7:00 a.m. the next day, 9:00 a.m. Sundays and statutory holidays.

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

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

The Noise By-law Chapter 591 authorizes City Council to 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.

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.

Precedent exists. The City of Vancouver, BC, has already taken the initiative to support a City-wide ban of leaf blowers (Noise Control By-Law No. 6555 – November 18, 2003).

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. City Council amend the Noise By-law (Chapter 591-4), adopted by Council June 18-20, 2002, 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:
  - a. at all times in Quiet Zones;
  - b. at all times on residential properties [during the months of May, June, July, August and September];
  - c. between 6:00pm and 8:00am Monday to Saturday and at all times on Sunday on non-residential properties; and
  - d. on Smog Alert days.
  
2. The Licensing and Standards Committee, 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.

for City Clerk

M. Toft/cd