



The voice
of our
community

IE15.8.36

September 16, 2020

Councillor Pasternak, Chair and Committee members
Infrastructure and Environment Committee

IE15.8 - Request to Study the Environmental Impact of Two-Stroke Engine Garden Equipment

The Deer Park Residents Group (DPRG) urges your Committee to support the undertaking of a study of the impact of two-stroke engine garden equipment as set out in the motion moved by Councillor Shelley Carroll, and seconded by Councillor James Pasternak, that:

“City Council request the City Manager, in consultation with the Medical Officer of Health, to report back in the first quarter of 2021 on the environmental and associated health impacts of gasoline-powered two-stroke engine leaf blowers and other similarly operated garden equipment, including the feasibility of a year-round ban or a ban from May to September.”

Like communities across the City, many residents in Deer Park are disturbed by the noise and pollution from garden equipment like gas-powered leaf blowers which result in environmental and health hazards. Many of our residents are willing to use alternative means, such as battery-powered blowers or raking.

- An example from our neighbourhood: Chris Keating, a DPRG Board member, provided 10 of his neighbours with a flyer, content attached, with his concerns and options. Seven of those 10 no longer use gas-powered leaf blowers.

Given the greater attention to the quality of our air in the times of COVID, it seems the time is right to look objectively at the health costs of gas-powered garden equipment.

Yours truly,

Cynthia Cryslar

President, Deer Park Residents Group
141 Farnham Ave
Toronto ON M4V 1H7

CC Councillor Josh Matlow



The voice
of our
community

Deer Park Neighbourhood flyer - Noisy Leaf Blowers, Pollution and Covid 19

Chris Keating, Noise and Pollution Lead, Deer Park Residents Group

DPRG has become aware that many members are concerned with the high frequency noise that gas-powered leaf blowers generate. This causes stress to people trying to work at home and to children trying to learn at home. We all find the noise from leaf blowers annoying and might cause loss of hearing in the workers who operate these machines, but are you also aware that the pollution created by gas-powered leaf blowers is in-itself a health crisis and, combined with Coronavirus, a particularly dangerous cocktail?

Pollution from the leaf blower engine:

Scientists have acknowledged that the pollution from the inefficiency of the gas-powered engine on a leaf blower is a hazard that makes the health crisis worse. Researchers at Harvard found that long term exposure from leaf blowers may significantly raise the risk of deaths from Covid-19. One microgram increase in concentration of fine particulates was associated with a 15% increase in risk of Covid-19 related deaths. The oil and gasoline mix in the engine of the leaf blower emits high levels of ultrafine particles that hang in the air for hours after they have been shut off. Why? Because of the released pollution from the combination of the engine combustion and the unburned 30% of gasoline /oil fuel in the atmosphere. Short-term exposure to these clouds of toxic dust can be absorbed into the lower lungs causing acute respiratory infections, asthma, COPD, heart attacks, heart failure and developmental disorders. If you smell the fumes you have ingested them.

Pollution from the dust:

The powerful air jets -200 miles per hour- propelled from a leaf blower pulverizes the coarser particulates that it hits off the ground into highly concentrated fine and coarse toxic dust that can stay airborne for days for all to breathe in. These particulates contain pollen, animal fecal matter, mold, fungus, fertilizer, pesticides from lawns and gardens, carcinogenic carbon black from tire wear and asbestos from brake linings off the street. Inhalation of these small airborne particles by landscape crews in proximity can provoke asthma and other respiratory diseases in children and can increase the severity of chronic lung disease in our elderly, including the possibility of viral spread of airborne Covid-19.

The magnitude of the problem cannot be overstated. Once people learn of the dangers from gas-powered leaf blowers, they can influence their landscape contractor to a less toxic alternative such as a battery-powered blower. Since this is the beginning of the summer, when away on vacation, perhaps you would consider asking your landscape company not to use a leaf blower. This would mean less disturbance for your neighbours.