

A RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING THE INTENTION OF THE CITY OF CHARLESTON TO UPGRADE ALL GASOLINE-POWERED LEAF BLOWERS USED FOR LANDSCAPING TO MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY ALTERNATIVES, SUCH AS ELECTRIC LEAF BLOWERS, AND TO HELP ENCOURAGE AND INCENTIVIZE OUR PRIVATE BUSINESSES AND CITIZENS TO TRANSITION FROM GASOLINE-POWERED LEAF BLOWERS TO MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY ALTERNATIVES.

WHEREAS, leaf blowers are commonly used for commercial and residential landscape maintenance to the extent that they are viewed by professional contractors as being economically essential, but they present a unique nuisance because of the character and volume of their noise and pollution emissions and the dust and debris they project as well as the damage they cause to topsoil;

WHEREAS, in response to complaints by residents of the City of Charleston (“City”) regarding the use of leaf blowers and the problems associated with their excessive sound and environmental pollution, City staff, through the Mayor’s Office of Resilience and Sustainability, researched the use of gasoline-powered leaf blowers used by the City, by private businesses, and by residents, the alternatives to gasoline-powered leaf blowers, and the feasibility of transitioning to quieter, more environmentally friendly alternatives;

WHEREAS, excessive and unnecessary noise can cause adverse psychological and physiological effects on humans, and deprive people of the peaceable enjoyment of their private property;

WHEREAS, unnecessary use of gasoline fuels contributes to the degradation of our environment, and studies, such as those conducted by the Sierra Club, have noted that most gasoline powered leaf blowers use a two-stroke engine which burns fuel highly inefficiently, emitting air pollutants such as carbon monoxide, nitrous oxides, and hydrocarbons, having negative consequences for air and water quality;

WHEREAS, the Mayor’s Office of Resilience and Sustainability’s research finds that the use of gasoline-powered leaf blowers to clear public and private property affects air quality, water quality, and impacts health, noise levels and quality of life citywide;

WHEREAS, after thorough consideration of alternatives available and various regulation options, the Mayor’s Office of Resilience and Sustainability recommends it is in the best interest of the residents, property owners, and visitors to the City to establish a phased approach to reducing the environmental and health hazards posed by the continued usage of gasoline-powered leaf blowers.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA:

SECTION 1. The City commits to eliminating all gasoline-powered leaf blowers currently used by the City. City Departments are directed to prioritize this transition in their budgets so that by July 1, 2023, the City will no longer be using gasoline-powered leaf blowers, but a more energy efficient and quieter alternative.

SECTION 2. The City will provide businesses and residents education about alternatives to gasoline-powered leaf blowers. During this time, the City will also continue to research, and when feasible, implement resource sharing opportunities and buy-back programs to help facilitate residents and businesses in upgrading their equipment. The City will create a new webpage to host all this information.

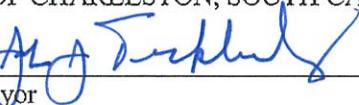
SECTION 3. The City encourages and challenges all businesses and residents who use gasoline-powered leaf blowers to explore and consider the alternative options available.

SECTION 4. City staff is further instructed to monitor the City's transition away from gasoline-powered leaf blowers, as well as how private businesses and residents transition, such as through surveys, education or incentive programs to the best of staff's abilities. Staff, one year from the signing of this Resolution, shall then provide an update along with any additional recommendations to the Resiliency and Sustainability Advisory Committee.

SECTION 5. The City reminds all operators of leaf blowers to not allow any leaves, dirt or other debris blown to enter the storm drain system. All leaves, dirt or any other debris blown on the public right-of-way must be cleaned up and removed properly per City Code Section 27-42.

DONE IN MEETING DULY ASSEMBLED, on October 26, 2021.

CITY OF CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

By: 
Mayor

Attest:

Jennifer Cook
Clerk of Council