

August 4, 2017

**Mayor Brian Smith  
and  
Irvington, NY Board of  
Trustees**

RE: Potential Leaf Blower Legislation

I just read an articles on the Internet where David Zweibel and the Irving Activists Coalition are lobbying for a leaf blower ban. I have a few comments concerning the leaf blower that I want to share with you.

I am a retired Vice President of Engineering for ECHO Inc., a leading manufacturer of gasoline powered lawn care products. As an expert on the subject of leaf blowers, I disseminate 'up to date' information to cities throughout the United States and Canada that are contemplating an ordinance to curb blower sound. Opposing stakeholders in this issue are highly polarized and are generally intolerant of each other's point of view. It is not always obvious what is the best approach to developing a workable leaf blower ordinance, but I can help put things in perspective for you.

You see, the one and only issue with the leaf blower is noise. Everything else you hear is contrived to convince you to support the banning of leaf blowers. Even in the case of noise, it is only anecdotal opinion that you will hear, supported by outdated and unsubstantiated quotations from websites and other supporters dedicated to eliminating the gasoline powered leaf blower.

I really like this example. One presenter in New Haven, CT said she talked to an engineer from Edmonds.com that said hydrocarbon emissions from a two stroke leaf blower running 30 minutes is the same as a Ford pickup running from Texas to Alaska or 3900 miles. Wow. This is intuitively ridiculous. In 30 minutes a leaf blower will burn less than a gallon of fuel. At 18 miles per gallon, a pickup will burn 217 gallons and that has to be for an unloaded vehicle. It is impossible to compare these two engines using the equipment available at Edmonds. Check it out at: <http://leafblownoise.com/edmonds%20test%20response2.pdf>). The most interesting part to me is that these same engineers at Edmonds will not talk to me. I have offered to fly out to their office to discuss their conclusions, but they will not respond to my overtures. This tells me that someone out there knows that their findings will not stand up to technical scrutiny.

I'll grant you that there are leaf blowers that are very noisy, some over 80 dB(A) measured at 50 feet, but there are also extremely quiet gasoline powered leaf blowers, which measure 65 dB(A) at 50 feet per the industry Standard. This represents a 75% reduction in sound over older designs. The quiet leaf blower has been on the market for

twenty years. I can guarantee that there are quiet leaf blowers in Irvington, but the problem is, if there is only one noisy blower in the neighborhood, all leaf blowers are reviled. Many cities write ordinances that outlaw only noisy blowers. This type of ordinance works well where a total ban never will. Landscape contractors will readily use quiet leaf blowers and discard their old noisy ones, but they will ignore a total ban for they cannot adequately do their job without a leaf blower. It has become an indispensable tool for landscapers.

I would like to give you some insight on the people drawn into this issue. There is an article on my website that addresses this important matter based on my own personal experience over the past several years. ([People and their leaf blower issues](#)) You will learn from this that you must find a way to satisfy both sides of the issue, should you decide to promulgate an ordinance to control leaf blowers.

For the sake of brevity, I would like to call your attention to my website <http://leafblownoise.com/>. In it you will be able to read about all the claims made by anti-leaf blower activists with links to documentation supporting my statements to the contrary.

Now please don't think that I am just trying to sell ECHO leaf blowers because we have been selling quiet leaf blowers for a long time. Your ordinance will only be requiring that they be used exclusively. Many cities have already taken this step. Initially, you will hear complaints from lawn care providers, but these complaints will pale compared to those you will hear if you ban them totally. Why? It's because they loses money if they must use a rake or broom.

One more thing! The blower is not to blame for everything in this controversy. Don't forget the operator. More than not the issue is when and where the blower is being used. Education is the solution to that problem and we have pamphlets to help you get the word out. You can use these pamphlets as a starting point for your own publication, setting down allowable hours and days of use and other requirements of your new ordinance. Your idea of requiring commercial uses to be registered would provide an opportunity to deal with training.

<http://leafblownoise.com/LeafBlowerTraining.pdf>

<http://leafblownoise.com/LEAF%20BLOWER%20%20manual%2012-13-10.pdf>

In closing, before enacting a leaf blower ordinance, be sure to talk to cities that already have bans in place. More specifically, talk directly with their enforcement agency. Leaf blower ban supporters will not tell you this, but you will find it is impossible to enforce a leaf blower ban. You should have your advisors work local landscape service providers to find out what they will support voluntarily. It is an important issue to them and it will take more time than that allowed at a typical council meeting for these stakeholders to relate all their concerns.

If you should need information that is not clearly addressed on my website or the linked documents I have provided, please contact me and I will do whatever I can to help, including further research on your behalf.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Larry Will". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L".

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