

# Earth Matters: 'A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step'

**WATCH OUT** for the self-serving movement to destroy the gasoline-powered leaf blower in your community.

By: Larry Will



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

It is well organized and heavily funded. Moving from city to city, it is trying to eventually impact the entire country and may soon be moving into your neighborhood. With the help of local political activists, it can be successful in adopting an unwanted leaf blower ban. Opposition to a ban must be equally organized locally. Arguing against this movement using the facts about leaf blowers that you can find at my website (<http://leafblownoise.com/>), may prevent this intrusion on your freedoms. If opposition to a ban is not argued, it is inevitable that a ban will be enacted.

Pay close attention to what the unnamed columnist at THE ISLANDER NOW has pridefully accomplished in the New York area and keep an eye open for these tactics being applied in your community. It contains a “road map” for just how to invade your world. After reviewing my website, you will find that her insinuations and justifications for a leaf blower ban are all false.

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The following article is by an unnamed columnist at:

**The Island Now**

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February 15, 2019



If you have read some of my past Earth Matters columns, you are most likely aware of my passion for clean air and natural gardening practices.

So I am very excited to share some good news. The Town of North Hempstead has taken the first, but oh so important step on what we know to be a long journey.

At the board meeting on Jan. 29, the town board unanimously voted in favor of a gas leaf blower restriction for the three summer months, June 15 to Sept. 15, starting in 2020.

Yes, I know, that means one more summer of unnecessary air pollution and yes, it's only three months. But the new legislation is just that first step which

signals that our officials have started to pay more attention to air quality and public health.

And our landscaping professionals, who were closely involved in the process, are agreeing and are willing to change their practices. This is huge and wasn't easy — it never is.

So for all of you who have that one issue they would like to tackle, here's a recap of our journey that I hope can serve as road map for yours.

First. Find a group or at least a couple of like-minded individuals. You can't do it alone. No formalities are necessary; an exchange of contact info will do.

It all started in November 2015 when I met Bonnie Sager, the co-founder of Huntington CALM (Clean Alternative Landscaping Methods), at a fundraiser for Port Washington's Grassroots Environmental Education.

With Sager I found an individual who had pushed her passion for the issue already a step further by mobilizing many health and environmental organizations to write letters of endorsement to restrict gas leaf blower use, including Mt. Sinai doctors, Citizen's Campaign for the Environment, and Grassroots Environmental Education.

Second. Contact your elected officials to make them aware of the issue and ask for some time to present the issue. Tell others in your group to do the same. When you present, be professional and ready to answer all or at least most questions.

In January 2017 Town Supervisor Judi Bosworth invited Sager to present. Sager, joined by a couple of us, came well prepared with facts on the negative health impacts of gas-powered equipment, especially that of gas-powered leaf blowers as they are still powered with outdated and ineffective two-stroke engines.

She provided examples of restrictions that comparable municipalities had already put in place. The Town decided to purchase some electric landscaping equipment for town park maintenance crews to test the effectiveness and durability of this cleaner alternative before proceeding.

Third. Don't let the issue be forgotten. Have at least one passionate individual attend all Town board meetings to reiterate the issue (with brevity) during the first 30 minutes of public comments.

In our case this was Alan. He attended so many Town board meetings that I am pretty sure the board knows him now by name.

Fourth. When your issue makes it on the Town board meeting agenda, all of you need to attend and speak up.

At the Town board meeting in September 2017, the board held a public hearing to consider the adoption of a local law amending chapter 38 of the town code of the Town of North Hempstead "... to restrict the use of gas-powered leaf blowers."

The meeting generated an overflowing crowd with many representatives of the landscaping industry present. We found that very helpful as landscapers are the ones that are most affected by the negative health effects of the polluting equipment and will, therefore, profit the most from a reduction in usage.

Fifth. Ask the Town to create a committee for further discussion of the issue which might feel like the real first step as you now have the attention of your officials.

After listening to many speakers the Town board decided to establish a Landscape Advisory Committee with representatives from all sides to gather input for a revised amendment. And in March 2018, after much follow-up and persistence from multiple people, we finally had our first committee meeting,

followed a couple of months later by a demonstration of electric landscaping equipment.

And then another meeting to review the amended draft legislation, which includes provisions to regulate unlicensed landscapers and the restriction of gas-powered blowers during the summer.

It has taken over two years to get here and it will take another year for the law to go into effect.

But this is just the first step. Following our Town's example, other communities on Long Island are now looking into establishing similar restrictions due to health, environmental and quality of life issues.

We can only hope for a domino effect which will definitely have the right impact on Long Island's air quality. Maybe we can improve from the current "F" to a "D"?

Have you ever noticed how quiet it is during the winter months?