

April 3, 2018

## **BAN THE NOISE, NOT THE BLOWER**

**Mayor Georges Bourelle  
and  
City Council Members  
Beaconsfield, Quebec, CA**

RE: <http://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/west-island-gazette/beaconsfield-council-ponders-leaf-blower-dilemma>

Mayor Bourelle:

As has happened in other cities, I see that the leaf blower, rather the use of the leaf blower, is becoming a noise issue in Beaconsfield. I expect that in the end, you and the city council will have to address this issue with some sort of regulation. To some the solution is simple, just plain ban them. However, I can tell from the above article in the Montreal Gazette that you already know that it is not as simple as all that. I think I can help you sort through all the negative claims that are made, identify the problems you may be faced with and basically provide you with “the rest of the story”, if you will.

I am a former Vice President of Engineering for Echo Inc., a leading manufacturer of powered lawn care products, including leaf blowers. I have helped more than 180 communities understand the issues and, in many cases, enact reasonable and effective leaf blower regulations. More information on my qualifications can be found at the following websites. <http://leafblowernoise.com/about%20the%20author.pdf>  
<http://leafblowernoise.com>List%20of%20cities.htm>

In response to noise complaints, many years ago my engineering department developed the first “Quiet” gasoline powered leaf blower at ECHO Inc. This was done in direct response to the claims made regarding leaf blower noise. ECHO now has five designs in the product line that are “quiet”. In addition, several other manufacturers have invested millions of dollars in tooling, testing and new assembly lines to provide this important alternative to a blower ban. I say *important* because this is the solution to the leaf blower noise issue. If something must be done, ban only the noisy blowers.

The industry attaches a label to the blower that indicates sound level, which is measured according to a highly detailed ANSI Standard that controls all the measurement variables. This makes it easy to determine sound magnitude at the point of purchase and in the field by the enforcement officer. The number to look for is 65 dB(A), measured at 50 feet. This represents a 75% reduction in sound from a typical noisy leaf blower at 77 dB(A).

<http://leafblownoise.com/Sound%20label%20mounted.jpg>. I'm sure there are already many quiet gasoline-powered leaf blowers in Beaconsfield, but the problem is, if there is only one noisy leaf blower being used in the neighborhood, all leaf blowers are reviled. If you have not actually heard the difference between these two blowers (65 vs. 77 dB(A)), since this is now a major issue in Beaconsfield, you really should seek out a comparative noise demonstration.

Some people claim that gasoline-powered leaf blowers create high levels of exhaust pollution. This is way out of line with today's reality. Yes, years ago engines from leaf blowers were troublesome and some of these may still be in service, but for several years now, leaf blower engines have been well within acceptable limits according to CARB, the EPA and Environment Canada. Due to government regulations, hydrocarbon emission has been reduced by 85 to 90%, depending on engine size. <http://leafblownoise.com/emission%20graph.htm>

Don't give any credence to the health hazard assertion. The insinuation that leaf blowers can be hazardous to your health is totally unfounded. There are reputable organizations that have done research to determine if there are health hazards attached to leaf blowers. The Greenwich Department of Health indicated in a report that there is no health hazard attributable to leaf blowers.

<http://leafblownoise.com/#Greenwich Department of Health Statement>

Dr Nancy Steele, of the California Air Resources Board (CARB), came to the same conclusion in a report to the California State Legislature.

<http://leafblownoise.com/#Dr. Nancy Steele, of the California Air Resources Board>

That being said, it is true that some operators are inconsiderate of others when using blowers. The only way to address this is to create an education program. To help with that, you will find educational material at my website, which you can copy and use in any way you like. There are explanations on how to properly use the blower per the following guidelines:

*#1...Be considerate; #2...Observe noise ordinances; 3...Run at part throttle where possible; 4...Use only one blower at a time; #5...Minimize dust; #6...Never deliberately blow dust; #7...Replace your old leaf blower.*

Often those that do not like leaf blowers blame the professional user for the sound issue. Keep in mind that it is usually the noise blowers make in the evening or early in the morning, or on Sundays and holidays that irritates neighbors. You should consider that homeowners are the ones that work in their yards well into the evening or very early in the morning when many are still sleeping. They are the ones that use their blower on Sundays and holidays. Because they buy inexpensive and therefore underpowered units, they must run them longer than they should to get the job done. Most professionals limit their workday to normal business hours when they use the blower. They are interested in getting the job done as quickly as possible, usually less than ten minutes per residence.

When you solicit information from professional contractors, you will find that they do not understand all the issues, but they can tell you how a ban will impact their income

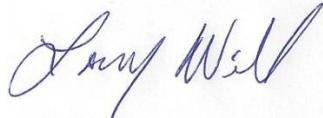
and/or how their customers will react to a cost increase. It will take them at least [eight times longer using a broom](#) or a rake than it would with a leaf blower. Time is money to the professional.

As for only limiting blower use over the summer months is concerned, thinking there is little need for them at this time, consider that there is a need to use leaf blowers all year round. Yes, the fall of the year is the worst, but leaves and twigs from trees and shrubs as well as grass clippings, hedge trimmings and seed pods require cleanup throughout the year, especially over the summer months.

Finally, keep in mind that a leaf blower ban does not work. You probably have heard that there is a [court case in Maplewood](#), NJ contesting a recent blower ban. Like an iceberg, this issue is deeper than it appears to be on the surface. Many problems can arise from a blower ban; for the city, for homeowners and for landscape contractors that depend on the leaf blower. [http://leafblownoise.com/#Will\\_a\\_ban\\_work](http://leafblownoise.com/#Will_a_ban_work) Leaf blowers are firmly entrenched as indispensable tools. The best thing to do is find a solution that everyone can support, especially the professionals. Ban the noise, not the blower.

I could go into much more detail in this document, pointing out all the inaccuracies you will be expected to believe, but for the facts, you can find more information about the leaf blower at my [website](#). Should you or your staff have questions that are not adequately answered either here or at my website, please respond to this email or call with your inquiry.

Best regards,



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