

## APRIL 25, 2022 GREEN DRINKS GLENVIEW INTRODUCTION

**Tonight we begin a community-wide education initiative on the Regulation of Leaf Blowers.** This topic is worthy of a half-day workshop, or at a minimum, a one-hour library program. But this evening will be an introduction with two objectives:

- to briefly identify the issues associated with leaf blowers--particularly gas-powered leaf blowers
- to learn about the work of the recently created municipal Leaf Blower Regional Working Group

Education about and regulation of Gas Powered Leaf Blowers is an issue that GG co-founder Mary Munday has been working on since 2019. Unfortunately, she has laryngitis so I'm going to "set the stage" for our guest speaker tonight. Joe Kenney, Glenview's Deputy Director of Public Works, is Glenview's delegate to the 11 municipal members of the Leaf Blower Regional Working Group. This is Joe's second appearance at Green Drinks. Though he's here tonight to talk about leaf blowers, he's happy to answer other questions you might have.

So let me set the stage...

--Many of our neighboring communities have enacted ordinances restricting use of leaf blowers.

--Nationwide, 400 have done so, some as long as 20 years ago.

--With adults working from home and students attending school at home during COVID, awareness of noise from leaf blowers, as well as other lawn maintenance equipment, skyrocketed. This may be what has accelerated community discussions about addressing leaf blower use.

--There are both **health and environmental impacts** with leaf blower use, esp. gas-powered leaf blowers. There are **3 main health issues** that may impact equipment operators, homeowners & their neighbors.

--Gas powered leaf blowers generate gases, and particulate matter that can have a significant impact on the lungs, particularly from **fine inhalable particles**. Other organs are also affected. Even short-term exposure to particle pollution and ozone-forming chemicals has been proven to cause or contribute to health concerns such as asthma, COPD, heart attacks & other cardiovascular disease, and early death (e.g. psittacosis)

--The force of the wind can spread materials like mold, dirt, yard chemicals and animal waste into the air which can trigger asthma attacks, worsen allergies or COPD symptoms.

--Last but not least...Noise pollution with dB levels high enough (90dB) can cause permanent hearing loss

**Environmental** impacts relate to

--the greenhouse gas and volatile organic compound emissions from two-stroke gas engines. Unlike vehicles, there are no pollution control requirements for this equipment

--soil health, including blowing away topsoil

--the impact of high winds (145-200 mph) on beneficial insects and ground-nesting birds

--noise interferes with bird communication

--non-recyclable waste generation (oil & gas containers, degreaser cans, lube cans, air filters, belts, spark plugs)

--fuel spillage/contamination

--mosquito control efforts in storm drains due to clogging by leaves (This is an issue for NSMAD.)

SO, with that dizzying list of impacts from leaf-blower use, Joe will now talk about the efforts of the Regional Working Group.

Particulate matter, i.e. particle pollution a **complex mixture of extremely small particles and liquid droplets**. Some particles, such as dust, dirt, soot, or smoke, are large or dark enough to be seen with the naked eye. Others are so small they can only be detected using an electron microscope. Includes:

- **PM<sub>10</sub>**: inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 10 micrometers and smaller; and
- **PM<sub>2.5</sub>**: fine inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 2.5 micrometers and smaller.
  - How small is 2.5 micrometers? Think about a single hair from your head. The average human hair is about 70 micrometers in diameter – making it 30 times larger than the largest fine particle.