



# ORDINANCE COMMITTEE

## COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Tuesday, November 28, 2023

3:00 PM

Sullivan Chamber  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139

### I. Call to Order

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Burhan Azeem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Dennis J. Carlone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Alanna Mallon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marc C. McGovern	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Patricia Nolan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
E. Denise Simmons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Paul F. Toner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3:20 PM
Quinton Zondervan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sumbul Siddiqui	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

The Ordinance Committee will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, November 28, 2023, from 3:00p.m.-5:00p.m. to discuss proposed Ordinance language that would lead to a phased-out ban of the use of gas-powered leaf blowers in Cambridge (Ordinance 2023-10)

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council's Ordinance Committee was held on Tuesday, November 28, 2023. The meeting was Called to Order at 3:00 p.m. by the Chair, Councillor Zondervan. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023 adopted by Massachusetts General Court and approved by the Governor, the City is authorized to use remote participation. This public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via Zoom.

**At the request of the Chair, Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Councillor Carlone – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Vice Mayor Mallon – Absent

Councillor McGovern – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Simmons – Absent

Councillor Toner – Absent\*

Councillor Zondervan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Mayor Siddiqui – Present/Remote

**Present – 5, Absent – 4. Quorum established.**

**\*Councillor Toner was marked present and remote at 3:20 p.m.**

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Nov 28, 2023 3:00 PM (Committee Reports)

The Chair, Councillor Zondervan offered opening remarks and noted that the Call of the meeting was to discuss proposed Ordinance language that would lead to a phased-out ban of the use of gas-powered leaf blowers in Cambridge (Ordinance 2023-10). Present at the meeting was Commissioner of Public Works, Kathy Watkins, Deputy Commissioner, John Nardone, and Acting City Solicitor Megan Bayer.

The Chair, Councillor Zondervan recognized Councillor Nolan who gave a presentation titled “Gas-Powered Leaf Blowers in Cambridge”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. The presentation offered an overview of the timeline of currently proposed changes, what the next steps are, the state of the industry of leaf blowers, Mass Save incentives, why the City should ban gas-powered leaf blowers, information on other municipalities in Massachusetts who have a ban on gas-powered leaf blowers, and a review of the proposed amendments to the Ordinance. In addition to her presentation, Councillor Nolan provided further reasoning as to why she was proposing changing the timeline on the use of commercial leaf blower operators and multi-parcel owners as well as City employees or City contractors from 2027 to 2026.

The Chair, Councillor Zondervan recognized Kathy Watkins who shared that Councillor Nolan has done a great job summarizing what has been a collaborative process to reach the goal of having a phased-out ban on gas-powered leaf blowers in Cambridge. Commissioner Watkins shared that there has been outreach done within the community and a meeting was held last night to give landscapers a platform to provide feedback on the proposed ban. Commissioner Watkins shared that the City would prefer a 2027 timeline but does not foresee many challenges if 2026 were to pass.

**The Chair, Councillor Zondervan opened Public Comment.**

Collin Bergstrom, 95 Dunster Street, Cambridge, MA, asked the Committee if they were considering the financial burden that contractors and residents will face on a ban and offered suggestions on how to help that burden.

George Alvarez, 95 Dunster Street, Cambridge, MA, shared concerns on the ban of gas-powered leaf blowers and how it may affect the elderly community.

Andrew DeGennaro, 95 Dunster Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments relative to the financial burden some may face with a proposed ban.

Lowry Hemphill, 9 Marie Avenue, Cambridge, MA, Mother’s Out Front, offered comments that were in support of the proposed amendments from Councillor Nolan and a ban on gas-powered leaf blowers.

Sarah Gallop, 77 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA, MIT, shared they were in favor of Councillor Nolan’s amendments and noted that MIT plans to phase out gas-powered leaf blowers before 2026.

Cynthia Hibbard, 23 Ellsworth Avenue, Cambridge, MA, shared that they support comments made by Councillor Nolan and are in favor of a phased-out ban.

**The Chair, Councillor Zondervan recognized Councillor Nolan who made a motion to amend the language relative to proposed Ordinance 2023 #10, Chapter 8.16.081, Leaf Blowers that was passed to a second reading on November 6, 2023 by changing the transition date from March 15, 2027 to March 15, 2026. Redlined copy showing changes is attached.**

**Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Councillor Carlone – Yes

Vice Mayor Mallon – Absent

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Absent

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

**Yes – 6, No – 0, Absent – 3. Motion passed.**

The Chair, Councillor Zondervan recognized Councillor Nolan who offered additional comments on the use of gas-powered leaf blowers on municipal properties.

The Chair, Councillor Zondervan shared that he was in full support of a phased-out ban on gas-powered leaf blowers, noting the importance it will have on the environment.

**The Chair, Councillor Zondervan made a motion to forward the proposed ordinance language as amended in Committee to the City Council with a favorable recommendation that the language passed to a second reading on November 6, 2023, be further amended to reflect the change in transition date from March 15, 2027 to March 15, 2026.**

**Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Councillor Carlone – Yes

Vice Mayor Mallon – Absent

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Absent

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

**Yes – 6, No – 0, Absent – 3. Motion passed.**

**The Chair, Councillor Zondervan recognized Councillor Nolan who made a motion to adjourn.**

**Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Councillor Carlone – Yes  
 Vice Mayor Mallon – Absent  
 Councillor McGovern – Yes  
 Councillor Nolan – Yes  
 Councillor Simmons – Absent  
 Councillor Toner – Yes  
 Councillor Zondervan – Yes  
 Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

**Yes – 6, No – 0, Absent – 3. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:35p.m.**

**Attachments:**

Attachment A – Ordinance 2023 #10 (passed to a second reading on November 6, 2023) showing Councillor Nolan’s amendments changing the date from March 15, 2027 to March 15, 2026.  
 Attachment B – The City Clerk’s Office received eight written communications.

**Clerk’s Note:** The City of Cambridge/22 City View records every City Council meeting and every City Council Committee meeting. This is a permanent record. The video for this meeting can be viewed at:

[https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/624?view\\_id=1&redirect=true&h=54ac214ab406ba31e7da91b20dfd0a08](https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/624?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=54ac214ab406ba31e7da91b20dfd0a08)

**An Ordinance 2023 #10 has been received from City Clerk, relative to the Municipal Code of the City of Cambridge be amended in Chapter 8.16.081, Leaf Blowers. PASSED TO A SECOND READING IN COUNCIL NOVEMBER 6, 2023. ELIGIBLE TO BE ORDAINED ON OR AFTER NOVEMBER 28, 2023.**

**A communication was received from Councillor Nolan, transmitting proposed amendments to Ordinance 2023 #10.**

**A communication was received from Councillor Nolan, transmitting a presentation regarding gas-powered leaf blowers in Cambridge.**

**A communication was received from the Chair of the Cambridge License Commission, Nicole Murati Ferrer, transmitting public comments submitted to the License Commission relative to leaf blowers.**



**Proposed Ordinance 2023 #10, Chapter 8.16.081, Leaf Blowers that was passed to a second reading on November 6, 2023, showing RED LINE amendments approved in Committee, changing the date from 2027 to 2026.**

Chapter 8.16.081 Leaf Blowers

**8.16.081.1 - Statement of purpose.**

The Cambridge City Council hereby finds that the reduction of noise pollution; air pollution; harm to wildlife, soil, and plants; and general negative public health outcomes from the combustion of petroleum-based fuels provide the basis for the public purposes of this Leaf Blowers Chapter. Whereas the use of gas-powered leaf blowers contributes to the aforementioned pollutions, harms, and negative public health outcomes, it is declared to be the policy of the City of Cambridge ("City") to prohibit unnecessary, excessive, and damaging noise, airborne dust, and harmful fumes caused by the use of gas-powered leaf blowers to protect human health and reduce emissions, pursuant to the City's stated goals and objectives to protect health and reduce emissions pollution. Further it is expected that the City shall send out information notifying the public and commercial landscapers about the health and safety effects of gas-powered leaf blowers and inform them about this chapter.

**8.16.81.2 - Definitions.**

1. **Definition of "leaf blower."** A leaf blower is defined as a portable handheld or backpack style power tool that is powered by petroleum-based fuel or electricity and used in any landscape maintenance, construction, property repair, or property maintenance for the purpose of blowing, moving, removing, dispersing, or redistributing leaves, dust, dirt, grass clippings, cuttings, and trimmings from trees and shrubs or any other type of litter or debris. Excluded from this definition are wheeled walk-behind four-stroke leaf blowers, as defined at subsection 8.16.81.2(3), and any leaf blowing devices attached to a tractor and/or mower
2. **Definition of "gas-powered leaf blower."** Any portable handheld or backpack style power leaf blower that is powered by a petroleum-based engine and used in any landscape maintenance, construction, property repair, or property maintenance for the purpose of blowing, moving, removing, dispersing, or redistributing leaves, dust, dirt, grass clippings, cuttings, and trimmings from trees and shrubs, or any other type of litter or debris. Excluded from this definition are wheeled walk-behind four-stroke leaf blowers, as defined at subsection 8.16.81.2(3), and any leaf blowing devices attached to a tractor and/or mower.
3. **Definition of "wheeled walk-behind four-stroke leaf blower."** Any walk-behind wheeled leaf blower that is powered by a petroleum-based four-stroke engine and used in any landscape maintenance, construction, property repair, or property maintenance for the purpose of blowing, moving, removing, dispersing, or redistributing leaves, dust, dirt, grass clippings, cuttings, and trimmings from trees and shrubs, or any other type of litter or debris. Excluded from this definition are any leaf blowing devices attached to a tractor and/or mower.

4. **Definition of “commercial leaf blower operator.”** Any entity, organization, or multi-parcel owner, as defined in this Chapter, that employs two (2) or more persons that receive income, remuneration, or compensation of any kind, whether as a fee, a charge, a salary, wages, or otherwise, for operating a leaf blower. Municipal operators and municipal contractors are excluded from this definition.
5. **Definition of “owners.”** Persons or entities possessing one or more adjoining parcels of land in common ownership that together comprise a total of less than two (2) acres.
6. **Definition of “multi-parcel owners.”** Persons or entities possessing one or more adjoining parcels of land in common ownership that together comprise a total of two (2) acres or more.

#### **8.16.081.3 - Use Regulations.**

The use of leaf blowers shall be regulated as follows:

1. The use of leaf blowers is at all times prohibited except between March 15 and June 15 and between September 15 and December 31 of each calendar year.
2. The use of leaf blowers is further prohibited on Sundays and legal holidays except, as described further below, Indigenous Peoples' Day and Veterans' Day.
3. For the purposes of this Chapter, “legal holidays” shall mean the actual day on which the holiday occurs and not the day it may be observed in each calendar year.
4. On days leaf blowers may be used such use by all users is limited to: (a) Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., (b) on Saturdays, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and (c) consistent with the provisions of G.L. c. 136, §13, as it may be amended, on Indigenous Peoples' Day leaf blowers may be operated between the hours of 12:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m., and on Veterans' Day leaf blowers may be operated between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.,. Leaf blowers cannot be operated on Sundays or any legal holiday other than Indigenous Peoples' Day and Veterans' Day.
5. The provisions of subsections 8.16.081.3(1) through 8.16.081.3(3) do not apply to the use of leaf blowers by City employees and City contractors performing leaf blower operations in Cambridge Municipal Cemetery, Mayor Thomas W. Danehy Park, Fresh Pond Reservation, Thomas P. O'Neil, Jr. Municipal Golf Course at Fresh Pond, or performing emergency operations and clean-up associated with storms, hurricanes and/or other natural disasters, or by operators performing leaf blower operations on behalf of multi-parcel owners, so long as the multi-parcel owners of such land comply with the provisions of subsection 8.16.081.3(5).
6. Commercial leaf blower operators must obtain an annual permit to operate leaf blowers (“Permit”). The Licensing Commission shall be responsible for the issuance and revocation of any Permit.
7. Multi-parcel owners seeking to operate leaf blowers shall not be permitted to operate leaf blowers unless they submit an operations plan to the City Manager or his or her



designee, for review and approval ("Operations Plan"). At a minimum, the operations plan shall:

- i. Address the multi-parcel owner's efforts to mitigate the impacts of noise and emissions upon owners, occupants, and/or users of nearby property,
- ii. Include an inventory of all leaf blowers owned and to be used in any operations program, which program shall comply with the noise and emission restrictions set forth in this ordinance, and regulations promulgated hereunder, and
- iii. Include the multi-parcel owner's plan for educating users of its equipment on the proper use of equipment as well as the need to mitigate impacts upon others.

The operations plan shall be reviewed by the City Manager, or his or her designee, who shall ensure that it complies with the applicable provisions of this Chapter, and regulations promulgated hereunder, and shall impose any conditions that may be required in order for the multi-parcel owner to comply with the provisions of this Chapter, and regulations promulgated hereunder. No operations plan submitted by a multi-parcel owner shall be approved by the City Manager unless there has been a showing of significant hardship.

8. Leaf blower operations shall not cause leaves, dirt, dust, debris, grass clippings, cuttings, or trimmings from trees or shrubs or any other type of litter or debris to be blown or deposited on any other parcel of land, lot, or public right-of-way other than the parcel, land, or lot upon which the leaf blower is being operated. Leaves, dirt, dust, debris, grass clippings, cuttings, or trimmings from trees or shrubs or any other type of litter or debris shall not be blown, swept, or raked onto or into an adjacent street or gutter, except by municipal employees or municipal contractors or leaf blower operators placing leaves, dust, dirt, grass clippings, cuttings, and trimmings from trees and shrubs on a municipal street or sidewalk for collection and pick-up, during municipal street and sidewalk sweeping and cleaning operations. In no event shall leaves, dirt, dust, debris, grass clippings, cuttings, or trimmings from trees or shrubs or any other type of litter or debris be blown, swept, or raked onto or into catch basins or onto vehicles, persons, or pets. Deposits of leaves, dirt, dust, debris, grass clippings, cuttings, or trimmings from trees or shrubs or any other type of litter or debris shall be removed and disposed of in a sanitary manner which will prevent dispersal by wind, vandalism, or similar means.
9. All leaf blowers shall satisfy the emissions standards of the United States Environmental Protection Agency. All leaf blowers shall be rated by the manufacturer to produce an A-weighted sound pressure level no greater than 65 decibels at a distance of fifty feet as rated by the manufacturer using the American National Standards Institute testing criteria.
10. On parcels of 10,000 square feet or less, only one leaf blower may be used. On parcels larger than 10,000 square feet, simultaneous use of leaf blowers is allowed so long as the leaf blowers are being operated at least 100 feet apart.
11. Private citizens/individuals, including but not limited to Owners and Multi-parcel owners, and commercial leaf blower operators are prohibited from deliberately blowing debris onto adjacent property, the street, catch basins, gutters, vehicles, people, or animals. City employees or City contractors may blow leaves, dust, dirt, grass clippings, cuttings, and trimming from trees and shrubs onto a municipal street or sidewalk for collection and pick-up, during municipal street and sidewalk sweeping and cleaning operations.

**8.16.081.4 - Transition.**

The prohibition of the use of gas-powered leaf blower equipment shall be subject to the following timeline:

1. Owner Use Transition Period. The use by owners, other than multi-parcel owners with an operations plan, on their own property will be allowed until March 15, 2025.
2. Commercial Leaf Blower Operators and Multi-parcel Owners Use Transition Period: The use by commercial leaf blower operators and multi-parcel owners will be allowed until March 15, ~~2027~~2026.
3. Municipal Use Transition Period: The use by City employees or City contractors will be allowed until March 15, ~~2027~~2026.
4. The City shall phase out the use of wheeled walk-behind four-stroke leaf blowers as soon as it deems it technologically and financially feasible to do so.
5. The provisions of this subsection 8.16.081.4 do not apply to the use of gas-powered leaf blowers, including but not limited to any tractor and/or mower attachments, accessories, and/or implements and wheeled walk-behind four-stroke leaf blowers, by City employees and City contractors in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter, and regulations promulgated hereunder, when used for the purposes of: (a) residential street cleaning, if the City continues to not tow vehicles for street cleaning purposes, (b) on parcels equal to one acre or larger, and (c) in the event of emergency conditions.
6. The provisions of this subsection 8.16.081.4 do not apply to the use of electric powered leaf blowers.

**8.16.081.5 – Regulations and Enforcement.**

1. Regulations. The License Commission and the Commissioner of Public Works shall have the authority to promulgate regulations to implement the provisions of this ordinance.
2. Enforcement. In addition to the Police Commissioner, the Commissioner of Inspectional Services Department ("ISD"), and the Chairperson of the License Commission, as provided in section 8.16.040 of this Chapter, the Commissioner of Public Works and his or her designee shall be authorized enforcement personnel charged with the enforcement of this section pursuant to the provisions of section 8.16.040 of this Chapter.

**8.16.081.6 - Miscellaneous.**

1. Severability. The provisions of this Chapter are severable. If any section, provision, or portion of this Chapter is determined to be invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining provisions of this Chapter shall continue to be valid.
2. Effective Date. The provisions of this Chapter shall be effective upon ordination, except as to City contracts now in effect. The provisions of this Chapter shall be incorporated



into any current City contracts that are renewed and/or amended after this Chapter is ordained.

Erwin, Nicole

Attachment B

**From:** Jill R Crittenden <jrc@mit.edu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 29, 2023 9:44 AM  
**To:** City Manager; City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** In support of Nolan's amendment to phase out gas-powered leaf blowers

Dear City Manager and City council,

I am writing to give my strongest support to phasing out gas-powered lawn equipment as soon as possible.

Best, Jill Crittenden (resident and employed in Cambridge)

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Nov 28, 2023 3:00 PM (Committee Reports)

**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Pamela Blau <pamelablau1@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 28, 2023 9:43 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Manager; City Clerk  
**Subject:** Phase out gas powered leaf blowers by 2025

Dear All,

I am writing to support the many voices calling for phasing out gas powered leaf blowers in the city of Cambridge by 2025. It is long overdue that our city adopt practices that are in line with our stated goals of protecting our environment and working towards best practices that do not harm our environment. There are so many better alternatives that this should not take years to make happen. Please phase out gas powered leaf blowers by 2025.

Thank you.

Pamela Blau  
15 Sherman St.

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Nov 28, 2023 3:00 PM (Committee Reports)



**Erwin, Nicole**

**From:** Amy Waltz <amyswaltz@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 28, 2023 2:58 PM  
**To:** Noise; City Council; City Manager; City Clerk; amyswaltz@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Regarding CMA 2023 #268 Support for earlier ban of gas powered leaf blowers by March 2026 or ASAP; Remove exceptions for municipal use; Education w/ Regulation

Regarding CMA 2023 #268

- Support for earlier ban of gas powered leaf blowers by March 2026 or ASAP;
- Remove exceptions for municipal use;
- Ecological education w/ Regulation

Dear Cambridge City Councilors, & City Manager,  
 Thankyou for addressing gas leaf blower use in Cambridge!

In matters of public health, environmental protection, and reducing climate impact residents usually expect Cambridge to help lead the way. While we do not have to lead in all matters, we are somewhat obligated to follow the good examples of abutting cities when they chose to lead; otherwise we are guilty of doing harm. Cambridge could help propel the area forward by educating on a host of ecological yard/property care practices - simply replacing battery powered leaf blowers for gas powered leaf blowers is far from ideal.

It has come to my attention that along with the extremely slow implementation of a gas powered leaf blower ban proposed in the Cambridge ordinance (March 2027), there are also multiple exemptions for our municipality, which do not appear to be necessary (therefore prolonging harm).

It seems that a community that prioritizes the environment, worker safety, public health, and addressing climate impact would phase out Gas Powered Leaf Blowers immediately with a ban no later than March 15, 2025. Any exceptions should be for a well documented need, and prescribed in a way that has least impact on the environment or public health.

I support Councilor Nolan's Amendment for a ban by 2026. However, an immediate phase-out with a ban by 2025 is both warranted and necessary. I trust that everyone is aware of the extremely negative health and environmental impact of these tools. Additionally, any exemptions for continued use by our municipality should be justified in a way that addresses health and environmental impact, or preferably, eliminated.

Let's consider abutting city policies on Gas Powered Leaf Blowers: Belmont has a Jan 2026 ban for all users with No Exceptions. [https://www.belmont-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf6831/f/uploads/proposed\\_leaf\\_blower\\_bylaw\\_annotated\\_version.pdf](https://www.belmont-ma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf6831/f/uploads/proposed_leaf_blower_bylaw_annotated_version.pdf) Arlington Bans Commercial and Municipal gas powered leaf blower use by March 2025; with a Residential ban in March 2026. There is an exception for clearing the Minuteman trail & municipal properties using four stroke engine wheeled blowers.

<https://arlington.novusagenda.com/Agendapublic/CoverSheet.aspx?ItemID=13569&MeetingID=1564>

Cambridge Proposed Regulations Ban residential use by March 2025; & Commercial & Municipal use is not banned until March 2027!

Additionally, there are many exceptions to the Cambridge ban including disruptive use during street cleaning, and in our parks and Mount Auburn cemetery (which is often used for quiet appreciation). I truly think we can do better.

The multiple exceptions for municipal use below are of concern. We expect city practices to help set a positive example.

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Nov 28, 2023 3:00 PM (Committee Reports)

#### 8.16.081.3 - Use Regulations.

5. The provisions of subsections 8.16.081.3(1) through 8.16.081.3(3) do not apply to the use of leaf blowers by City employees and City contractors performing leaf blower operations in Cambridge Municipal Cemetery, Mayor Thomas W. Danehy Park, Fresh Pond Reservation, Thomas P. O'Neil, Jr. Municipal Golf Course at Fresh Pond, or performing emergency operations and cleanup associated with storms, hurricanes, and/or other natural disasters, or by operators performing leaf blower operations on behalf of multi-parcel owners, so long as the multi-parcel owners of such land comply with the provisions of subsection 8.16.081.3(7)

#### 8.16.081.4 - Transition.

5. The provisions of this subsection 8.16.081.4 do not apply to the use of gas-powered leaf blowers, including but not limited to leaf blowing devices attached to a tractor and/or mower and wheeled walk-behind four-stroke leaf blowers, by City employees and City contractors in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter, and regulations promulgated hereunder, when used for the purposes of: (a) residential street cleaning, if the City continues to not tow vehicles for street cleaning purposes, (b) on parcels equal to one acre or larger, and (c) in the event of emergency conditions.

Thank you for addressing environmental and public health concerns regarding Gas Leaf Blower use in Cambridge!

Sincerely,

Amy Waltz

12 Blakeslee Street, Cambridge, MA



**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Sarah Eusden Gallop <seg@mit.edu>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 28, 2023 11:56 AM  
**To:** City Council; Council Aide; City Clerk  
**Subject:** MIT Testimony Regarding Leaf Blower Phase Out

Dear Members of the City Council and Madame City Clerk,

On behalf of MIT, I would like to convey the Institute's support for the proposed amendment to municipal code chapter 8.16.081 (Leaf Blower Ordinance) that would implement the phasing out of gas-powered leaf blowers by March 2026. Please include this letter in the record of today's 3 PM Ordinance Committee hearing.

We appreciated the opportunity to share our progress and experiences at the community meeting held on November 27, 2023, and would welcome collaboration with the City and other operators as we continue to research and test rapidly-evolving battery and electric technologies.

So far, we have found that ride-on electric mowers with bagging systems are very effective for our operations. Our first electric leaf blowers with battery backpacks were found to be too heavy for daily campus use, so we have been experimenting with other suppliers. We are fully committed to discovering and evaluating emerging technologies and solutions before the effective date — in fact, we anticipate replacing all of our gas-powered leaf blowers prior to March 2026, assuming availability.

We support this amendment as part of the City's and MIT's mutual objectives to protect our shared community and the planet. Thank you for your commitment to a more sustainable future.

Sarah

Sarah Eusden Gallop  
 She/her/hers  
 Director, MIT Government and Community Relations  
 Phone: 617-877-1580  
 E-mail: seg@mit.edu  
<http://www.linkedin.com/in/sarahgallop>

*Learn about why we love our work!*

[MIT in Cambridge: Impact Report](#)

[Town Gown Report](#)

[Website](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#)

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Nov 28, 2023 3:00 PM (Committee Reports)





**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Kelly <kellyroberts318@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 27, 2023 11:12 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Regarding CMA 2023 #268

Regarding CMA 2023 #268

Please adopt Councilor Nolan's Amendment for March 2026 Gas Powered Leaf Blower Ban; or an as soon as possible ban by March 2025. And promote ecological alternatives for better outcomes.

Dear Cambridge City Councilors,

Please phase out Gas Powered Leaf Blowers as soon as possible! We have an environmental and public health responsibility to immediately phase out gas powered leaf blower use. I support Councilor Patty Nolan's amendment to move a complete phase-out date to March 2026 - but that is not soon enough to protect our workers or the environment.

Exhaust from leaf blowers surrounds workers who often do not wear masks or protection from deafening noise. Many of these workers likely have language barriers to fully understanding the health risks they face and often rely on their jobs to support dependents. - The negative environmental effects of gas powered leaf blowers are astounding! - Pollution collects and is trapped in nearby buildings. - The effects of noise pollution from these devices is also unusually disturbing over a wide area.

<https://pirg.org/massachusetts/edfund/resources/lawn-care-goes-electric/> We need to immediately use non-polluting alternatives. A ban on gas leaf blowers should be accompanied by a public education campaign promoting ecological yard care practices - rather than simply substituting battery powered leaf blowers which are not ideal.

I support Patty Nolan's amendment to the gas powered leaf blower ban which requires transitioning by March 2026, and is more in line with surrounding towns. However, this does not go far enough in our responsibilities to workers, the environment, and the community - we need to transition now. A ban by March of 2025 should give ample time for all users to decide on an alternative for this problematic gas tool.

Thank you for your tremendous work on behalf of our community!

Kelly Roberts  
 27 Crescent St  
 Cambridge

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Nov 28, 2023 3:00 PM (Committee Reports)

**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Lois Markham <loisamarkham@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 27, 2023 10:24 PM  
**To:** City Council; Noise  
**Cc:** City Manager; City Clerk  
**Subject:** Support for an Amendment to CMA 2023 #268

Dear City Councillors,

Mothers Out Front Cambridge strongly supports measures to ban gas-powered leaf blowers in Cambridge, including Councillor Nolan's amendment to CMA 2023 #268. The amendment would move a complete phase-out of gas-powered leaf blowers to March 2026. That is still more than two years away. In our opinion, even that is not soon enough to address the environmental and public health dangers posed by gas-powered landscaping equipment.

Gas-powered leaf blowers contribute to both air pollution and noise pollution. The air pollution from exhaust collects and is trapped in nearby buildings. The noise pollution disturbs over a wide area.

Even more concerning are the environmental justice issues raised by the use of this equipment. Exhaust from gas-powered blowers surrounds workers, who may or may not be wearing masks. A large percentage of these workers may have language barriers to fully understanding the health risks they are facing. In addition, they often rely on their jobs to support dependents. Seeking more healthful working conditions is often not an option.

For these reasons we urge you to pass CMA 2023 #268 after including Councillor Nolan's amendment to change the enforcement date to March 2026. We also urge the city of Cambridge to immediately institute a public education campaign promoting ecological yard-care practices, rather than simply substituting battery-powered leaf blowers, which are far from ideal.

Thank you for your attention to this important public health and environmental justice issue.

Sincerely,

Lois Markham, Elena Fagotto, Margery Davies, Lowry Hemphill  
 for the Cambridge Mothers Out Front Leadership Team

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Nov 28, 2023 3:00 PM (Committee Reports)



**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Linda Kaboolian <lindakaboolian@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 27, 2023 8:58 AM  
**To:** Noise; City Council; City Manager; City Clerk  
**Subject:** CMA 2023 #268

Support for Phase-Out of Gas Powered Leaf Blowers by 2026 or as soon as possible!

Dear City Councilors,

The negative environmental and health impacts of gas powered leaf blowers for workers and residents are well documented. I support a phase out and ban of these polluting tools as soon as possible. I am sympathetic to small business owners who need to phase out their existing equipment and purchase battery operated replacements so I hope that the the time line works with the current tax code on equipment amortization.

Please endorse Councilor Nolan's March 2026 ban; or a ban as soon as possible with a March 2025 or sooner end date, adjusted for concerns about cost and tax implications.

Thank you for your attention to this matter,

Linda Kaboolian

23 Highland St.

Cambridge 02138

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Nov 28, 2023 3:00 PM (Committee Reports)

**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Amy Waltz <amyswaltz@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 26, 2023 2:26 PM  
**To:** Noise; City Council; City Clerk  
**Subject:** In Support of gas leaf blower Ban by March 15, 2026 or as soon as possible

Regarding CMA 2023 #268

Please adopt Councilor Nolan's Amendment for March 2026 Gas Powered Leaf Blower Ban; or an as soon as possible ban by March 2025. And promote ecological alternatives for better outcomes.

Dear Cambridge City Councilors, Please phase out Gas Powered Leaf Blowers as soon as possible! We have an environmental and public health responsibility to immediately phase out gas powered leaf blower use. I support Councilor Patty Nolan's amendment to move a complete phase-out date to March 2026 - but that is not soon enough to protect our workers or the environment. Exhaust from leaf blowers surrounds workers who often do not wear masks or protection from deafening noise. Many of these workers likely have language barriers to fully understanding the health risks they face and often rely on their jobs to support dependents. - The negative environmental effects of gas powered leaf blowers are astounding! - Pollution collects and is trapped in nearby buildings. - The effects of noise pollution from these devices is also unusually disturbing over a wide area. <https://pirg.org/massachusetts/edfund/resources/lawn-care-goes-electric/> We need to immediately use safer non-polluting alternatives which are available today. A ban on gas leaf blowers should be accompanied by a public education campaign promoting ecological yard care practices - rather than simply substituting battery powered leaf blowers which are not ideal. Alternatives to Gas Powered Leaf Blowers in order of Ecological Preference: 1. Leave the leaves to decay naturally & nourish the soil 2. Mulch / mow leaves on grass 3. Rake 4. Use a corded leaf blower (\$100 range). Most properties have outdoor power outlets. If no outlet is available: use with a portable backup solar battery LiFePo4 generator; or in conjunction with an E-vehicle with bi-directional power. 5. Use a battery powered leaf blower Municipalities & commercial businesses need to be increasingly powered by renewable energy sources. Rooftop solar can help reduce strain on the electrical grid. I support Councilor Nolan's amendment to the gas powered leaf blower ban which requires transitioning by March 2026, and is more in line with surrounding towns. However, this does not go far enough in our responsibilities to workers, the environment, and the community - we need to transition now. A ban by March of 2025 should give ample time for all users to decide on an alternative for this problematic gas tool. Thank you for your tremendous work on behalf of our community!

Sincerely,  
 Amy Waltz  
 12 Blakeslee Street  
 Cambridge, MA

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Nov 28, 2023 3:00 PM (Committee Reports)