

Memo

To: Village Board

Fr: Trevor Fuller, Director of Planning and Community Development

Re: ACTION RE: No Mow May

Date: 13 October 2022

“No Mow May” is a conservation initiative growing in popularity. “The goal of No Mow May is to allow grass to grow unmown for the month of May, creating habitat and forage for early season pollinators. This is particularly important in urban areas where floral resources are often limited.” (<https://beecityusa.org/no-mow-may/>)

Staff has received a mix of input from residents as this conservation initiative has grown in popularity. The Village of Allouez has an ordinance, which requires grass and weeds to be no taller than seven inches in length. The intent of this ordinance is to limit the abundance of rodents and other pests. This ordinance conflicts with the spirit of the No Mow May initiative. Supporters of the current ordinance also cite the aesthetic benefits of having a manicured lawn. While this may be a reason to support the ordinance, it is not the purpose of the ordinance from the municipal perspective.

Staff has researched this topic, looked to what other municipalities are doing, and even had a test plot in May of 2022 to observe the grass heights each week. By the middle of May, staff found that other perennial flowers were in bloom and the grass height measured eight inches. Once temperatures warmed, grass doubled in length in one week in some areas of our test plot. Some municipalities have resisted adopting policies, while others have fully embraced the campaign or have created registration policies.

Staff would like to balance the mix of resident concerns and the different ecological effects of each policy (current ordinance versus no mow). Staff also does not wish to create a registration policy at this time, due to logistical concerns. Therefore, staff is not recommending not adopting a “No Mow May” policy. During most years, grass does not reach above seven inches until the middle of the month. By this time in May, the early lawn flowers are done blooming and other plants in the landscape have grown enough to provide the habitat bees need. Instead, staff would educate the public through means such as social media, email, website, and the All About Allouez guide on the current initiatives the village does to promote pollinator habitat and other conservation initiatives residents can do with the same end in focus. **Information for the All About Allouez guide is needed by the end of October.**

Current village initiatives include:

- Native prairie ponds;
- Permitting bee keeping; and
- Planting low maintenance turf grass.

Other things residents can consider to help pollinators include:

- Do not use herbicides or pesticides in the yard;
- Plant a native garden bed or a more natural ground cover;
- Delay or forgo raking in the spring to protect pollinators from the frost; and
- Mow at a higher level.

The Village Board is asked to review the staff recommendation on No Mow May and provide a recommendation on a policy for 2023.