



## **Conservation Committee**

### **Agenda**

**Thursday, September 1, 2022**

**7:00 P.M.**

**Village Center Lower-level Meeting Room**

1. Call to order
2. Consider Approval of July 7, 2022 Meeting Minutes
3. Discuss Citizen Concerns
4. Staff Liaison Updates
5. No Mow May memorandum
6. Inflation Reduction Act opportunities for renewable energy and EVs
7. Subcommittee Reports
8. Upcoming Events, Member Topics & Suggestions
9. Adjournment

DATED at Shorewood, Wisconsin this 26<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2022.

VILLAGE OF SHOREWOOD

Toya Harrell

Village Clerk

Should you have any questions or comments regarding any items on this agenda, please contact the Manager's Office at 847-2701. It is possible that members of and possibly a quorum of members of other governmental bodies of the municipality may be in attendance at the above stated meeting to gather information; no action will be taken by any governmental body at the above stated meeting other than the governmental body specifically referred to above in this notice. Upon reasonable notice, efforts will be made to accommodate the needs of all individuals.



# Conservation Committee

## Minutes

### July 7, 2022 7:00 PM

#### 1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM

Members present: Joshua Liberatore, Henry Tomaszewicz, Joey Sprague, Charles Hagner, Erin Povak, Diego Murphy, Meenal Atre, Caroline Kuebler, Maggie Pipek, Elisabeth Witt, Linda Frank.

Others present: Trustee Kathy Stokebrand, Janet Jesmok, Assistant Village Manager Chris Anderson.

Not present: Matt McGovern, Adelais Burkholder. Joe Shaffer (membership approved by Village Board on 7/5 and original invite had already been sent to committee).

#### 2. Consider Approval of June 2, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Comments regarding potential cancellation of the August meeting and introduction of Diego Murphy, a new student member joining the committee. Ms. Frank had friendly amendment (Item 7 Caroline name spelling and present) seconded by. Motion by Mr. Tomaszewicz, seconded by Mr. Hagner motion to approve carried 10-0.

#### 3. Discuss Citizen Concerns

Trustee Stokebrand and Janet Jesmok shared concerns on gas powered leaf blowers and to if this was a common concern among the community. Ms. Janet Jesmok shared her experience with how invasive the noise is for hired landscapers blow grass continuously. The issue starts with noise but also includes issues related to health of the community. Mr. Liberatore asked about the interest of the committee forming a small group to research options to include discussion with DPW re: getting the leaves/grass on the street could be increased particles/solids in the storm runoff. Discussion transitioned to potential violation of a noise ordinance, and Mr. Liberatore mentioned beginning the discussion with DPW. An additional point was made regarding possible OSHA violations if the machinery is harmful to workers.

#### 4. Staff Liaison Updates

No formal update to report, but Mr. Liberatore revisited a previous discussion on the Police Department's fleet replacement. AVM Anderson to follow up with PD.

#### 5. Discuss the interest in staffing a committee table at a Farmer's Market date this summer or fall and solicit volunteers

Mr. Liberatore shared a list of potential dates for the committee to staff the Farmer's Market table. Ms. Witt asked if there were any Conservation Committee events scheduled in the fall to promote a couple weeks before (e.g. before River Clean Up Oct. 2 and before leaf blowing starts in the fall). Ideas would be to promote No Mow May, possible leaf blower conversations. Promoting Shorewood Hometown Habitats page. Mr. Liberatore will consolidate dates to be shared by AVM Anderson.

**6. Provide an update on No Mow May and other new initiatives**

Mr. Tomaszewicz began conversation regarding the No Mow May project list to begin:

1. Identify contact list (Bart, Rebecca, Ann) for project initiation
2. Polish memo/board for staff presentation
3. Draft ordinance change (use applicable examples from other communities)
4. Time for staff study/attorney review?
5. Village board committees affected?
6. Get on board schedule for ordinance change

**7. Provide feedback on recent committee events and initiatives**

Mr. Hagner and Ms. Pipek discussed the latest with the Commercial Zoning Update and a one-page summary re: “what we’ve heard” was presented from the consultant to the Plan Commission. Ms. Frank/Ms. Sprague discussed ribbon cutting at Dominion Building and the solar cells (only 3 vertical arrays in the state and we have one of them). Ms. Frank has a new initiative related to native gardens to promote for this year. She also asked the committee to consider getting involved in a Bumblebee Brigade that could be done at Estabrook Park. Ms. Frank will research more about what is required to get involved. Ms. Sprague brought up ordinance that may be discouraging people from planting native gardens (Ch. 220 landscape management plan). The committee agrees that there would be enough support to change this ordinance. Ms. Frank also had a thought on Shorewood Earth Friendly yard of the year to be a compilation of No Mow May, native gardens, chemical applications, etc. and the prize would be a yard sign. Folks can nominate and narrow down to semifinalists to be featured in Shorewood Today. The final vote could be held at the next pollinator palooza where the winner could be announced. Announce in the Spring that the votes will be taken starting Summer 2023. Ms. Povak asked for yard survey data for the participants that have walked. Mr. Tomaszewicz reminded the committee of the July 23 River clean up.

**8. Subcommittee Reports**

None.

**9. Upcoming Events, Member Topics & Suggestions**

Mr. Liberatore asked if the committee would be in favor of cancelling the August meeting and the committee was in favor to come back the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of September.

**10. Adjournment**

Mr. Tomaszewicz moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Hagner and passed with an 11-0 vote. The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Chris Anderson  
Assistant Village Manager

## Shorewood Conservation Committee “No Mow May” Campaign

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### Committee Action Items

1. Identify contact list (Bart, Rebecca, Ann) for project initiation
2. Polish memo/board for staff presentation
3. Draft ordinance change (use applicable examples from other communities)
4. Time for staff study/attorney review?
5. Village board committees affected?
6. Get on board schedule for ordinance change

Goal: Pursue ordinance modification for spring of 2023 that suspends 6” lawn height enforcement for the month of May.

Rationale: Shorewood joins several other Wisconsin municipalities observing this practice and a growing movement in the region and country to promote healthy landscapes, pollinator health, and sustainability goals.

Summary: “[No Mow May](#)” lets property owners delay lawn care during May as a way to promote the maturation of flowering plants that provide food for bees and other pollinators early in the growing season. Participation in the program is voluntary.

### Background:

- [No Mow May](#) is an international movement encouraging homeowners and municipalities not to cut the grass until end of May, in order to help bees and other pollinators.
- Appleton was the first city in the U.S. to adopt No Mow May. It was joined in 2021 by De Pere, Fort Atkinson, Fox Crossing, Hortonville, Kaukauna, Oshkosh, Stevens Point and Wausau.
- In 2020, a sampling of No Mow May lawns in Appleton found a fivefold increase in bee abundance and a threefold increase in bee diversity compared to nearby parkland that was mowed regularly.
- No Mow May in Shorewood may require postponing some landscaping rules in the village, as the current ordinance requires the grass cannot be taller than 6".
- Some communities in Wisconsin have provided lawn signs for homeowners, to explain that homeowners are not being sloppy or neglectful, and they're not out of town, but are just helping the pollinators.

### Shorewood Context:

Enforcement of existing ordinance usually begins the last week of May. Lawns typically do not get very high in May anyway. Some resident education will be needed. Minor complaints and pushback can be expected (see Appleton's experience below).

Mr. Shaffer talked to Kate at DPW about the potential for a large amount of grass clippings to be put out for curb-side collection in early June. She said not to worry; DPW deals with lots of bags on the curb at different times of the year. But she would appreciate a heads-up if the No Mow May goes forward.

#### North Shore Context:

**Fox Point** recently approved (passing 6-1) an ordinance change to accommodate No Mow May at the Regular Village Board Meeting April 12, 2022. Meeting minutes are posted on-line on the [Village of Fox Point website](#). See p. 7.

The **White Fish Bay** public works committee recommended similar for full board approval in June, proposing the change in the current ordinance to allow for NMM in 2023.

#### Village and School District Leadership

As a follow-on to the decade-long commitment to avoid pesticide use on park space and public landscaping, the observance of No Mow May on all public turf areas (River Park, Hubbard Park, Atwater, Triangle Park, Village Hall and Village Center, etc.) would be a great show of leadership to all residents and property owners. We would ask the Village and School District to follow this practice in May and avoid mowing any school or Village owned lawn spaces.

#### Testimony from Appleton:

Alderman Alex Schultz from Appleton was asked what potential complaints might be expected from the community regarding No Mow May. This will be Appleton's third year with the program. Mr. Shaffer called him because he noticed this quotation from the Appleton Post-Crescent in a story in May 28, 2020:

"Alderman Alex Schultz, a proponent of No Mow May, estimated that 20% of the homes in the city either actively or passively participated in the program, even if they didn't last the entire month. "There were just a ton of people who were participating, but by last weekend, they said, 'Ah, it's getting too long. I just got to cut it,'" Schultz said.

Schultz said he received only one complaint from a resident who thought No Mow May made Appleton look trashy. "I expected a lot more complaints," Schultz said. "Maybe there will be a few more before this is done."

Here are some of his comments as to what we might expect to hear in Shorewood, based on Appleton's two years with the program.

- Homeowners' associations complained that shaggy grass devalues the property.
- There will be more ticks. (This turned out not to be true. It might be true if the program went late into the summer).
- There will be more pests, rodents, mice, moles, etc. (This turned out to not be true; and if it were to happen, the raptors took care of it.)
- A lot of grass clippings are created at one time and have to be disposed of. This is a bigger issue for homeowners in Appleton because there is no curbside pickup, and you pay \$4 per bag to drop it off.
- Shaggy lawns and spreading weeds may cause tensions to rise between neighbors. He said he didn't know of any particular instances but it does seem possible.
- Delinquent property owners may take advantage of the May holiday from mowing. So it's important that the Village begin enforcing the Tall Grass Ordinance promptly in June.
- On the positive side, Schultz said the visibility of the No Mow May program was a "conversation starter" in the community about helping pollinators, and also helping people to think in new ways about the environmental impact of their lawn care routines.
- Schultz estimated that about 400 lawn signs went up in the first year of the program.

#### Media Coverage:

New York Times profile on regional movement that begin in Appleton:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/28/travel/no-mow-may-wisconsin.html>

Appleton makes No Mow May a permanent part of its culture to promote bee habitat:

<https://www.postcrescent.com/story/news/local/2022/03/17/no-mow-may-becomes-permanent-part-appleton-promote-bee-habitat/9452798002/>

Bee experts agree:

<https://www.cbs58.com/news/bee-experts-share-how-residents-can-participate-on-no-mow-may>

Complaints/lawn aesthetics:

<https://www.postcrescent.com/story/news/local/2020/05/28/lawns-grow-so-do-complaints-appletons-no-mow-may-initiative/5262701002/>

<https://www.daytondailynews.com/what-to-know/gardening-no-no-on-no-mow-may/IUI4SMI7HJCHTOE5LAVIEUXQAY/>

Take a break on yard work:

[https://shepherdexpress.com/culture/happening-now/help-the-bees-and-take-a-break-from-yard-work\\_1/](https://shepherdexpress.com/culture/happening-now/help-the-bees-and-take-a-break-from-yard-work_1/)

Further Resources:

Dr. Israel Del Toro at Lawrence University is the person who got NMM going in Wisconsin. Several people told me that he has often traveled locally to speak to people and groups that are interested in starting up a program. If that would be helpful, at some point we could invite him to speak to the Board or the Committee.

Great article in Journal Sentinel: How to help Wisconsin's disappearing native bees in your yard

<https://www.jsonline.com/story/life/home-garden/2022/04/13/how-help-wisconsins-disappearing-native-bees-your-yard-rusty-patched-endangered-bumble-honey/9502576002/>

Milwaukee Zoological Society with printable signs:

<https://www.zoosociety.org/conservation/local-regional-initiatives/no-mow-may/>

Ongoing Outreach:

For regular grass, it appears the perfect cycle of lawn mowing is every 2 weeks. When the lawns are allowed to grow longer than that, the grasses become longer than the blooms that support pollinators. <https://www.xerces.org/blog/bee-friendlier-with-your-lawncare>

Taking it further:

[https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/montclair-n-j-moves-to-have-native-plants-only-on-town-property/?utm\\_campaign=true\\_anthem&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=facebook&fbclid=IwAR3stdG-Wm6SKtYHM6qfu968kDE5LxfeU14YH1FmsDAzJTNzybjl\\_Aq1AyQ](https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/montclair-n-j-moves-to-have-native-plants-only-on-town-property/?utm_campaign=true_anthem&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook&fbclid=IwAR3stdG-Wm6SKtYHM6qfu968kDE5LxfeU14YH1FmsDAzJTNzybjl_Aq1AyQ)

Resident Education Plan:

The Conservation Committee will engage residents through Village communication channels (Manager's Memo, Facebook, Shorewood Today) in explaining the ordinance change, environmental rationale, and field any questions/concerns that arise as a result.

Proposed Change:

**Shorewood Grass and weed ordinance** (current text with proposed change in red markup):

§ 220-3

Landscaping, plantings and other decorative surface treatments; lawns; natural lawn plans.

[Amended 7-28-1987 by Ord. No. 1507; 2-25-2008 by Ord. No. 1935; 10-20-2008 by Ord. No. 1945; 9-19-2011 by Ord. No. 1992]

A.

Landscaping, plantings and other decorative surface treatments, including common species of grass, shall be installed, if necessary, and maintained to present an attractive appearance on every lot, place or parcel of land in the Village and in accordance with the provisions of § 220-1 of this chapter. Except with prior application to and approval of a natural lawn land management

plan from the Village's Planning and Development Department, lawns shall be maintained to a height not to exceed six inches in length. Plantings shall be maintained so as not to present hazards or nuisances to adjoining properties or to persons or vehicles traveling on public ways and shall be maintained so as to enhance the appearance and value of the property on which located and thereby the appearance and value of the neighborhood and the Village.

[\(1\)](#)

Lawns. Defined as an area of aesthetic and recreational land planted with grasses or other durable plants, which usually are maintained at a low and consistent height, not to exceed six inches.

[B.](#)

Application for a natural lawn land management plan. Any owner, occupant, agent or person in charge of any lot, place or parcel of land within the Village may apply to the Planning and Development Department for approval of a land management plan for a natural lawn, one where the grasses or other plantings exceed six inches in height.

[\(1\)](#)

"Land management plan" means a written plan relating to management of a lawn which contains a legal description of the area to be considered upon which the grass or planting will exceed six inches in height, a statement of intent and purpose of the lawn, general description of the vegetation types, plants and plant succession involved, and the specific management and maintenance techniques to be employed.

[\(2\)](#)

All lawn and grass areas not exempted hereunder nor maintained consistent with an approved natural lawn land management plan shall be cut between ~~May 15~~ **June 1** and November 15 when the Director of Public Works, Planning and Development Department Director, or designee, in his/her discretion, so orders in accordance with authority granted under § [220-2](#) hereof.