



City Commission Special Meeting Minutes

February 1, 2024 at 9:00 AM

City Hall Commission Chambers
401 S. Park Avenue

Present

Mayor Phil Anderson, Commissioners Marty Sullivan, Sheila DeCiccio, Kris Cruzada and Todd Weaver; City Manager Randy Knight; Assistant City Manager Michelle del Valle and City Clerk Rene Cranis.

1. Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m.

2. Action Items

- a. Extension of the time frame for implementation of the leaf blower program by six months.

Mayor Anderson said the purpose of this meeting is to discuss the ordinance prohibiting gas-powered leaf blowers (adopted in 2021 with enforcement to begin in July 2024). He and Randy Knight met with several landscaping companies who demonstrated new technology and requested additional time to convert to electric or battery-operated leaf blowers. He spoke about the conversion and the impact on landscapers and residents. He explained that changing the effective date of the ordinance requires adoption of a new ordinance after two public hearings. Because time is of the essence, he called this special meeting to discuss extending the time for compliance and enforcement

Motion made by Mayor Anderson to extend the compliance date by six months with the requirement to meet with the landscape contractors within two months, seconded by Commissioner Weaver for discussion. (Withdrawn after commission discussion)

Commissioner Sullivan suggested issuing notices of non-compliance for six months from the July implementation date and then begin issuing citations in January 2025 rather than amending the ordinance, which will give an additional six months to comply.

Commissioner DeCiccio said the commission has received many e-mails from residents opposing the delay. She supported Commissioner Sullivan's suggestion.

Commissioner Cruzada addressed city code regulating noise violations and feels it is more about regulating the decibel level, which is not in the city code except for the Central Business District. He feels neighbors need to be sensitive about noise and he would like to apply a decibel level in the ordinance.

Commissioner Weaver believes this is a matter of exceptional quality of life. He spoke about loud noise and long-term health issues caused by gas-powered blowers. He

opposed the motion and extension and feels it is unfair to the landscapers that have already made the transition. He provided information about batteries and chargers and the benefits of moving away from gas-powered equipment.

Attorney Ardaman advised that direction could be given to staff on enforcement as a policy matter rather than amending the ordinance. Mayor Anderson withdrew his previous motion. **Motion made by Mayor Anderson to direct staff to commence enforcement on January 1st, subject to meeting with the landscaping community, sometime in April, and reserving the right to begin enforcement earlier.**

Upon recommendation by Commissioner Sullivan, **Mayor Anderson amended his motion to clarify that penalties will not be assessed until January 1st, seconded by Commissioner Sullivan.**

Consensus was to have a work session in April with members of the landscape community.

The following spoke in opposition to the ordinance and prohibition of gas-powered leaf blowers citing the financial impact to landscaping contractors and the residents; decision should be made by homeowners, not the city (government overreach); technology and science should drive the decision; other things are more important; the increased costs will put smaller landscaping companies out of business; inefficiency of equipment for larger jobs; and weight of backpacks.;

Mark Gillespie, 1618 Hibiscus Avenue
Paul Heidrich, 1776 Via Palermo
Hattie Bryant, 1240 S. Pennsylvania
Tyler Pontes, Landscape Improvement, Inc.
Chad Carter, Carter Landscape,
Roi Levin, Environmental Pest and Lawn Services
Eric Kobb, Rolling Green Landscape Solutions
David Walsh, 370 Twelve Oaks Drive
Gigi Papa, 1440 Hibiscus Avenue
Denise Gillespie, 1618 Hibiscus Avenue
Terry Walsh, Seminole County resident

Bill Walker, 1847 Jessica Court, said he feels the loud noise from equipment is offensive and the city should stay on its present course but with leeway to enforcement.

Mayor Anderson recapped the motion as a moratorium on fines until January 1st with the expectation of a work session in March or April after people have the opportunity to look at and try equipment.

Commissioner Weaver spoke about the Sustainability Action Plan and goals to reduce fossil fuels and this is a small part of the transition and goal of the SAP.

Commissioner Cruzada reiterated his concerns about decibel level and recommended adding a decibel level to the city code. Mr. Knight explained decibel level restrictions and discussion followed. (To be discussed in a future meeting.)

Motion carried with a 3-2 vote Commissioner Sullivan, DeCiccio, Anderson voted yes. Commissioners Cruzada and Weaver voted no.

3. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:21 a.m.

Mayor Phillip M. Anderson

ATTEST:

City Clerk Rene Cranis