

Brush & Leaf

EDUCATIONAL OPEN HOUSE

24 FEBRUARY 2024

Agenda

Benefit Bottom Line up Front

Background

Framing the Problem

Brush & Leaf Advisory Committee Review Process

Three Primary Change Categories

What does this mean for me?

Benefit Bottom Line up Front

Q&A

Benefit Bottom Line up Front

- Allow more time (5 more days, total of 10 days) for residences and businesses to place their brush and leaf to the street (applicable to Spring and Fall)
- Increase services in the Fall via rolling leaf pick-up between November and December; and position DPW to monitor targeted volume areas as well as bike and travel lanes
- Increase DPW staff efficiencies by over 50% via optimizing brush pick-up via approved, resident/business purchased can from May to September (reduces DPW staff requirements by 8 days, so they can support other town priorities)
- Reduce the quantity of debris entering stormwater infrastructure by using a can (purchased by the resident or business) and not allowing brush or leaf debris on the streets for 5 additional months out of the year (currently January, February, and March there are no brush or leaf pick-up)
- Increase communication to residents to inform and educate using a variety of digital and physical touch points
- Ensure landscapers are held accountable, in addition to the resident or business, if the ordinance is not abided by (paired with enforcement)
- Provide a 10-day grace period to reconcile initial violation with no financial burden nor court appearance
- Updated ordinance seeks to ensure the brush & leaf program is not fragmented, rather centralized
- Less cans on the streets and a proactive posture as we look to go-out-to-bid for a new trash and recycling contract
- More than double the opportunities for brush pick-up using a resident/business purchased can, as well as expanding to August

Background

During Fall 2022, with over 85% residents engaged, the top concerns in Fair Haven were the inefficiencies and infrequency of brush and leaf pickups

Responding, Mayor Halpern formed a committee (AKA Brush & Leaf Committee/BLC) that included 12 volunteers from the Community, which was led by Councilman LaBarbera

The BLC met for 10 months internally as a committee, as well as with Director of Communications, Director of Public Works & Engineering, & Code Enforcement

- Updates were provided frequently at GB meetings of the progress

The Borough's Brush Site Permit is clear regarding what can be placed at the brush grinding site (and its overall use); there are also residential factors to take into consideration when using this site

Framing the Problem

Brush and leaf materials are consistently on Fair Haven's streets

There is an increase in locations where brush and leaves are placed conflicting with bike paths and parking spaces

With the frequency of debris on the street, more debris and sediment are making their way into the stormwater infrastructure

Whole tree removal is not considered brush removal

The enforcement guidelines are not effective in deterring non-compliant behavior

Brush and leaf pick up can be more efficient, especially leaves in the Fall, from both an operational and staff perspective

Only 22% of property taxes go to the municipal budget, providing certain budgetary constraints

BLC Review Process

Brush and leaf policies and procedures of over 10 different towns

Town wide surveys providing additional perspective of the brush and leaf process

Master data logs that demonstrated consistently April was the month where the most brush was picked up

Discussing practical considerations

- Ratio of property owners who use landscapers versus do not
- Inconsistent falling of leaves
- Varying lot size that can impact volume

Practical considerations of DPW, to include responsibilities throughout the year (field maintenance and lining, snow removal, etc...)

Overall assessment the brush can, although a cost to homeowner, is a key solution and strikes a balance with residences & businesses that use and do not use a landscaper as well as impact with taxes

Applying certain assumptions:

- Leaves require more attention in the Fall
- Brush requires more attention in the Spring
- “Acts of nature” potentially require ad-hoc pick-ups (based on DPW assessment of storm impact)
- If pick-ups were more frequent, the volume would be less

There were three primary perspectives the current process was evaluated from:

- Schedule
- Communications
- Enforcement

The BLC recognized that two other significant factors to take into consideration were safety & stormwater, as well as education to residence

The BLC recognized the need to adopt the Zone 1, 2, 3, 4 approach for alignment versus Zone A, B, C

Three Primary Change Categories

The BLC recommended changes in the schedule, communication, and enforcement taking the following factors into consideration

- Increase Services
- Safety (Bike Lane, Parking)
- Clean Streets
 - In Fall 2023, over 110K pounds of debris was removed from Stormwater infrastructure
- Alignment w/ Other Municipal Services
 - In June 2024, the trash and recycling contract requires a renewal
- Stormwater Management
- Street Sweeping
- Staff Efficiencies
- Resident Efficiency
- Budget Neutrality

What does this mean for me?

Communication

- Increased lines of communication, with a focus on education, reach, and resonance, will support the overall action plan
- Both vegetative/yard waste topics require attention provided the lack of awareness regarding disposal

Enforcement

- Enforcement is a critical component to ensure compliance and adherence that requires a balanced approach in an effort not to alienate Fair Haven residents and provide grace in those appropriate moments
- However, enforcement must be relied upon when residents take advantage of said grace or blatantly disregard the ordinances

Schedule

- January: Christmas Tree Pick-Up

- April: Spring Clean-Up (street, no can)
- May – September: Twice/Month Zone Pick-Up* (more than doubles current service, with caveat)
- October: Fall Clean-Up (street, no can)
- November – December: Rolling Leaf Pick-Up (more than doubles current service; street, no can)
- Materials placed to street allowed to start two Saturdays before pick-up time

Can

- *Requires resident to purchase approved can (no limits on the number of cans to purchase)
- Working with Fair Haven Hardware for procurement and logistic process, as well as identifying other purchasing opportunities
- Store accordingly aligned with current ordinance

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