

Brush & Leaf Committee – Action Plan

Vision: The Fair Haven Brush & Leaf Committee's (BLC) goal is to identify solutions to improve the brush and leaf removal process in a convenient, safe, and budget neutral manner, while attempting to standardize a process. This includes addressing the following issues:

1. Safety & Stormwater
2. Enforcement
3. Education & Refined Communication

Factors: The BLC recognized multiple factors that required consideration when developing a proposed action plan.

1. Increased Services
2. Safety
3. Clean Streets
4. Alignment w/ Other Municipal Services
5. Stormwater Management
6. Street Sweeping
7. Staff Efficiencies
8. Resident Efficiencies

Action Plan: The BLC identified three levers, that when implemented concurrently, would mitigate the three issues identified and address collectively the variety of factors impacting brush and leaf. This proposed action plan is based on coordination with Code Enforcement, Communications, and Director of Engineering & DPW employees. In addition, research on other Town's best practices.

Lever 1 – Schedule: Primary feedback on data collected to date stressed the quantity of leaves on Fair Haven streets, quantity of brush picked up, delay in leaves falling due to global warming, and lack of flexibility with leaf pick-up. Making certain assumptions, the BLC is proposing specific changes to the current Fair Haven brush & leaf schedule.

- **Assumptions:**
 - Leaves require more attention in the Fall.
 - Brush requires more attention in the Spring.
 - "Acts of nature" are not addressed in this schedule. When this type of event occurs, Engineering & DPW will assess the extent of brush and determine if an ad-hoc pick-up is required.
 - If pick-ups were more frequent, the volume would be less and this end-state would align with the vision.
- **Modifications to the 2023 Brush & Leaf Pick-Up Calendar:** Please see appendix B for the full proposed schedule based on the following proposed additions/removals:
 - Shift completely away from Zones A, B, C and align to Zones 1, 2, 3, & 4.
 - Implement Clean-Out bookends in March and October.
 - March – Spring Clean-Out
 - October – Fall Clean-Out
 - Between the Spring and Fall clean-out, implement twice a month brush pick-up using a "green" can.

- Recognizing that not all residences will participate, homeowners purchase the can(s) on their own (estimated \$25).
- Set an ordinance to identify the size and colors accepted for the can.
- Proposed to work with Fair Haven Hardware to potentially incentivize purchase of the can(s).
- Ensure Bamboo, as an invasive, is not picked-up.
- After Fall Clean-Out, begin a rolling schedule of leaf pickup until end of December 2023. The intent is to pick-up the town at least 4 times.

Lever 2 – Communication: Increased lines of communication, with a focus on education, reach, and resonance, will support the overall action plan. Both vegetative and yard waste topics require attention provided the lack of awareness regarding disposal. The BLC identified the below solution (in totality), noting some of these components are already in progress.

- **Solutions:**
 - Shift away from Zone ABC and fully align to Zones 1234.
 - Communication should occur the Wednesday prior to the affected zone and activity.
 - Instead of solely using (to the current extent) calendars and email alerts, add additional digital and physical touch points.
 - Direct lines of communication with landscapers, and updated laminated flyers based on the BLC action plan outcomes.
 - Work with a local realtor to receive a weekly report of houses sold in Fair Haven to ensure these new neighbors can receive Welcome Home packages, to include BLC details. Currently, it takes months (based on tax records updated) to know when new residents come into town.
 - Offer “Adopt a Storm Inlet” program, where residents can be supporting clearing debris from inlets with impending storms.
- **Themes:** The following themes should be accompanied with photographs, where appropriate.
 - Define, discern, and articulate how to dispose of vegetative waste, yard waste, brush, and leaves.
 - Address invasives, to include knotweed being thrown out in the garbage.
 - Address grass clippings.
 - The role of the street sweeper (with photographs), to include preventing vegetative/yard waste from blocking inlets or washing into stormwater infrastructure and inlets.
 - Discern county vs local street sweeping.
 - Stormwater management best practices specific to clearing debris.
 - Discuss alternative to disposal, to include composting. In addition, consideration to blowing leaves into garden beds to provide natural mulch.
 - Provide alternate methods/recommendation to landscapers if a resident misses a pick-up, such as a list of local businesses.
 - Educate residents and businesses about Fair Haven’s ordinances.
 - Disseminate details about the updated schedule and enforcement, to include discernment between a violation and citation.
 - Safety around ensuring the bike lanes are cleared.

Lever 3 – 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.

- **Proposed Solution:**

- When Code enforcement identifies a resident who does not consistently abide by the applicable rules and ordinances, they will follow a 3-strike policy. This policy resets at the beginning of every year.
 - Strike 1 – \$125 Summons, Court Appearance Required
 - Strike 2 – \$250 Summons, Court Appearance Required
 - Strike 3 – \$500 Summons, Court Appearance Required
- Update the current ordinance (Appendix A) to reflect the outcome of the BLC action plan.
- Provide a period of 5 days after a violation or citation is issued for the resident to mitigate accordingly.
- Work with DPW to ensure materials are not prematurely picked-up without first issuing a violation and/or citation. If materials are required to be removed due to an immediate safety risk, DPW to take a photograph and provide to Code Enforcement for issuance of a violation and/or citation.

Appendix A: Current Ordinance – § 16-5. COLLECTION OF BRUSH AND LEAVES.

§ 16-5.1. Regular Pickup of Brush and Leaves; Grass Clippings; Rakings and Plantings Placement Prohibited. [Ord. No. 2010-27; Ord. No. 2011-08; Ord. No. 2015-11; amended 12-19-2022 by Ord. No. 2022-18]

a. Placement of Brush and Leaves. Residents shall place brush and leaves at the outside edge of pavement or delineated travel lanes for collection only during the days and times as may be designated by the Borough Council and/or published in the Leaf and Brush Collection Schedule. Brush and leaves shall be placed separately in the street adjacent to the curb and abutting the party's property. Brush and leaves shall not be placed in plastic bags or other types of containers, except for properties on River Road. Piles of brush or leaves shall not obstruct pedestrian, bicycle or vehicular travel lanes.

b. Grass Clippings, Rakings and Plantings; Placement Prohibited. Grass clippings, rakings and plantings shall not be placed, raked, blown or otherwise caused to be disposed upon the Borough streets or curbs. They shall not be picked up by the Borough.

c. Brush and Leaf Violations: (Fines restated at 2-56.1, Fee Schedule.) First offense: Warning Second offense: \$100 Third or more offenses: Court appearance required

Appendix B: Proposed 2024 Brush & Leaf Schedule

Month	Details	
January	No Pick-Up - Christmas Tree Only	
February	No Pick-Up	
March	No Pick – Up	
April	Spring Clean Up – Vegetative Waste in Cans or To Curb	
	Green Can	Brush Only – In Cans to Curb - Each Zone, Twice a Month, Aligned w/ Trash & Recycle
May		
June		
July		
August		
September		
October	Fall Clean Up – Brush in Cans or To Curb	
November - December	Leaf Only – To Curb – All Zones – Rolling Pickup Zones 1, 2, 3, 4	