

I cannot describe how disappointed I am at this 11th hour, hail Mary pass by certain council members attempting to slide through a bill undermining the ban on gas powered leaf blowers. For two years we have been waiting for this ban to take effect. And it's been promoted and promised on the news, in publications and blared from speakers at gas stations.

Despite the overwhelming evidence that gas powered leaf blowers should be banned for environmental reasons as well as for the physical and mental health of residents and, most importantly, the workers - all which are clearly laid out in the discussion of the original bill banning these blowers, a few members of this council are attempting to backslide on a promise to its Montgomery County constituents. On the Discussion page of Agenda 4G (March 21, 2023) it states "It reduces the significant health impacts of two-stroke engine exhaust and noise on the company's workers, who operate the machines for hours each day. This in turn means happier, more productive, and more reliable workers. It also increases the workers' comfort, since they don't have to suffer the noise and high vibration of gas blowers or return home each day smelling like gasoline."

I live in a neighborhood that backs up to Watts Branch Creek Park. The gas leaf blowers are so loud and noxious, that even down in the woods - hundreds of yards away from the neighborhood - the smell and noise is often overwhelming. It is distressing and depressing that we cannot even walk in a county park that is meant for getting away and finding peace because of these awful machines.

The notion that this bill is being introduced in part because the cost may be prohibitive for some small businesses is ludicrous. Again, on the Discussion page of Agenda 4G dated March 21, 2023 it states "In either scenario, landscapers recover the initial cost of purchasing a battery-powered leaf blower in less than a year, and achieve significant savings (higher profits) every year after. The primary reason for this is the large difference between the cost of gasoline and battery power for the same resulting power output. The differential across time is large enough to dwarf the purchase cost of the battery equipment." In addition, under Financing the Transition to Battery Power (Agenda 4G, March 21, 2023) it states, "The economics of switching to battery equipment are in fact even easier than this analysis shows, for reasons beyond the conservative assumptions mentioned. This study assumes the cost of new equipment will be fully paid, out of pocket and up front, but there are many ways businesses of all sizes commonly finance new purchases and investments, enabling even the smallest of companies to acquire new equipment immediately."

And to the point of electric leaf blowers being less capable of handling large amounts of leaves, there is overwhelming evidence that electric leaf blowers are more than capable of handling leaves. I have been using an electric leaf blower for personal use that is far less powerful than commercial electric leafblowers, and I have no issues with blowing leaves from my lawn. Environmentally, companies should be leaving most of the leaves in their customers' plant beds because leaves provide vital nutrients for the soil and provide important habitat and cover for many insects including butterflies and other pollinating insects.

This is a slap in the face. I'd like to personally thank the council member who represents my area, Mr. Andrew Friedson, for not attaching his name to this disgraceful bill.

Thank you,

Linda Hope