

Resolution to Support Pollinator Habitat in Ann Arbor

Whereas, The Environmental Commission recognizes that bees and other pollinators are integral to pollination of a wide diversity of native vegetation and food crops;

Whereas, Pollinator populations and water resources are threatened due to habitat loss, pathogens, parasites, and widespread use of pesticides, including neonicotinoids and other toxic chemicals;

Whereas, the City encourages Integrated Pest Management practices for both City-owned and private properties;

Whereas, Research suggests that bees and other pollinators make use of less-intensively maintained lawn spaces;

Whereas, Reduced frequency of mowing has been shown to have direct and indirect benefits to pollinator species, including: availability of more floral resources, less production of emissions from fossil fuel powered equipment, reduced noise from powered equipment, reduced compaction of soil, and associated improved stormwater infiltration;

Whereas, Research suggests that pollinators and other invertebrates rely on fallen leaves and on hollow stems of native plants for cover and insulation from the elements during winter months;

Whereas, Pollinators and floral resources have a positive relationship, in which an increase in pollinator populations can increase the amount of flora and food, and vice versa;

Whereas, The Environmental Commission finds it is in the public interest and consistent with adopted City policy for the City to demonstrate its commitment to a safe and healthy community environment through the implementation of initiatives that help increase the pollinator population and protect water resources;

RESOLVED, That the Environmental Commission recommends City Council direct the City Administrator to encourage property owners to reduce mowing frequency and to maintain lawn heights between 6 and 12 inches on their properties, particularly during the spring months;

RESOLVED, That the Environmental Commission recommends City Council direct the City Administrator to encourage property owners to reduce raking and clean-up of leaves on their properties during the fall months, while preventing leaf build-up in roadways;

RESOLVED, That the Environmental Commission recommends City Council direct the City Administrator to encourage property owners to increase diverse native plantings on their properties;

RESOLVED, That the Environmental Commission recommends City Council direct the City Administrator to encourage property owners to follow Integrated Pest Management practices as outlined on www.a2gov.org/ipm;

RESOLVED, That the Environmental Commission recommends City Council direct the City Administrator to prepare a communication plan to disseminate educational materials within the Ann Arbor community to provide information in support of pollinator habitat. These materials shall be developed by the Pollinators Working Group of the Environmental Commission, with input from City staff and from regional partners, and shall communicate best practices and guidance in supporting pollinator habitat on private property, as well as the benefits of: the reduced frequency of lawn mowing, increases in the area of floral resources available in yards, reductions in the area of mowed turf grass, and moderation in fall cleanup of leaves and other vegetation, among other pollinator-supporting strategies; and

RESOLVED, That the Environmental Commission recommends that the above clauses do not apply to violations of city ordinance that affect public safety under Ann Arbor City Code, Chapter 40, sections 3:15 and 3:16. Vegetation planted on the lawn extension and City right-of-way must not present a view hazard based on the criteria in the AASHTO (American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials) Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, 5th Edition (2005), or as subsequently amended. Vegetation planted on private property must not intrude into the right of way in such a manner as to create a hazard for pedestrians and others using the sidewalk.