



MEMORANDUM

To: St. Anthony Village Parks & Environmental Commission
From: Mark Sitarz, Fire Chief
Date: March 7, 2022 Parks & Environmental Commission Worksession
Request: Discussion regarding aesthetics for St. Anthony yards (turf grass vs. pollinator friendly)

BACKGROUND

Staff brought forward to the commission a discussion on pollinator friendly vs. turf grass due to an increasing level of acceptance for non-traditional yard aesthetics to support environmental sustainability, and support pollinators. Staff has also fielded complaints regarding non-traditional yard aesthetics. General direction to staff was to continue to educate homeowners on pollinator practices.

Following the Parks and Environmental Commission meeting December 20, 2021, the consensus of the commission was to make adjustments to our city code to allow for pollinator/native species gardens while balancing traditional turf grass lawns. Staff will focus on public education as well as recommendations of the following code amendments for your consideration.

CURRENT CODE

§ 94.32 WEED CONTROL.

Any weeds or grasses, whether noxious as defined by law or not, growing outside the traveled portion of any city street or alley, or growing on private property, exceeding the height of 6 inches or which are about to go to seed must be cut or removed by the owner of the abutting property if within the city right-of-way, and by the owner of the property upon which they are growing if they are outside the right-of-way.

§ 150.094 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

(E) Yard cover. Every yard of premises on which a dwelling stands must be covered by lawns and/or ground cover of vegetation, gardens, hedges, shrubbery or related decorative materials and must be maintained. Once an area has been converted to turf grass the land owner shall not allow the turf grass to exceed the height of 6 inches or be allowed to go to seed. No land owner may permit or maintain on the land any growth of weeds, grass, brush or other rank vegetation to exceed the height of 6 inches, any accumulation of dead weeds, grass or brush, or any noxious weeds or plants as defined by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

Gardens (pollinator, vegetable, flower, rock, etc.) are permitted types of yard cover, and must be maintained and not encroach on others property or the right of way.

NEW CODE DEFINITIONS

Native Vegetation: Those non-turf grass indigenous trees, shrubs, wildflowers, grasses and other plants that have naturally adapted themselves to the climate and soils of the area but require cultivation and maintenance to remain viable.

Natural Habitat: Specially uncultivated valued and sensitive habitat whereupon native vegetation exists in a pristine state and provides habitat for a variety of species native to the area. Such vegetation shall maintain itself in a stable condition with minimal human intervention.

Noxious Weeds: An annual, biennial, or perennial plant designated by the State Commissioner of Agriculture or the Council as injurious to public health, the environment, public roads, crops, livestock, or other property.

Pollinator Garden: A specific area on the property planted and designed, with specific nectar and pollen producing plants, in a way that attracts pollinating insects known as pollinators. In order for a garden to be considered a pollinator garden, it should provide (but not limited to) the following: various nectar producing flowers, shelter or shelter providing plants for pollinators, avoid the use of pesticides, and place similar flowers close to one another.

Rank Vegetation: Uncultivated vegetation growing at a rapid rate due to unplanned, unintentional, or accidental circumstances.

Turf Grass: Cultivated vegetation consisting of a highly maintained surface of dense grass underlain by a thick root system.

Vegetable Garden: A specific area on the property for the growth and harvest of any herbaceous plant whose fruit, seeds, roots, tubers, bulbs, stems, leaves or flower parts are used as food.

Weeds: Unsuitable, unwanted, or uncultivated vegetation, often causing injury or competition to the desired vegetation type.

DISCUSSION ITEMS FOR PARKS & ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION FEEDBACK

Below are the specific items for discussion and feedback for the Parks & Environmental Commission:

- Discussion of the proposed code amendments by staff
- Any additional feedback for staff