

# *Naperville Area Homeowners Confederation*

*P.O. Box 5245*

*Naperville, IL, 60567-5245*

[www.napervillehomeowners.org](http://www.napervillehomeowners.org)

July 11, 2016

Ms. Allison Laff, AICP  
Deputy Director of TED  
City of Naperville  
400 S. Eagle Street  
Naperville, IL. 60540

Subject: NAHC input on permissible weekend hours for commercial lawn services

Dear Allison,

In response to discussions you and I had following the early June City Council request for Homeowners Confederation input on appropriate weekend operating hours for commercial lawn services working at residential properties, the Confederation Board discussed this issue via email, highlighted it within our July newsletter, and polled the community (via the Confederation website) to determine their sentiments. As noted during our conversations, since the request came during our summer meeting "break," the opportunity for face-to-face discussion was limited so we relied on electronic means to garner sentiment.

Based on this input, we have several observations and comments for consideration.

1. There seems to be less community interest in this topic than on similar poll questions (i.e. storage of garbage and recycling bins) as evidenced by the significantly fewer responses to our web poll.
2. While there was a clear response favoring a later weekend start time (8 AM), curtailing Sunday operation hours, while seemingly desirable, received less clear-cut support
3. While there is typically a recognizable difference (in ambient noise level) between resident provided lawn care and mowing provided by commercial services, this is not always the case. Basing restrictions on the type of provider versus regulating the actual problem (noise created) may, in the end, not result in noticeable community-wide improvement.
4. As we become a more diverse community, distinctions between weekday and weekend activities may blur based on economic, cultural, ethnic, or religious backgrounds. While, for many, Sundays remain a traditional "day of rest," for others it is just another business day.
5. Beyond a few specific complaints, we were unable to determine whether (particularly as it relates to Sunday hours) this is truly a community-wide problem, the actions of a few egregious outliers, or periodic work specifically driven by weather-related conditions (i.e. scheduling impacted by significant rain earlier in the week).

Specific information the Confederation collected included an unscientific web poll which ran on our website from early June through July 5. We publicized the existence of this poll on our Facebook Page as well as on at least two community bulletin board pages and through mentions in several newspaper articles. Interest and comments received from these postings were significantly fewer than the recent "trash can" poll, (1,800 versus the earlier 8,000 views on our Facebook posts), and only around 100 votes cast on each poll question, compared to the

more than 1,400 votes cast on the earlier website poll. Below are specific details on each web poll question:




---

## Opinion Poll Results

---







### Public Poll:

Currently commercial landscape contractors can begin their work (mowing, etc) at 7 AM. City Council is considering changes that would delay the start time on weekends (Saturday and Sunday Only) to 8 AM to provide neighbors with another hour of uninterrupted rest on weekends

| Options  | Votes         |  |        |
|--|---------------|--|--------|
| I support an 8 AM weekend start time for mowers and blowers                | 74.00         |  | 66.67% |
| I believe the current 7 AM start time should be continued                  | 30.00         |   | 27.03% |
| I don't care (is this really an issue we need to concern ourselves about?) | 8.00          |   | 7.21%  |
| I don't know   | 0.00          |  | 0.00%  |
| <b>Total Responders</b>  | <b>111.00</b> |  |        |

### Public Poll:

Currently commercial landscape contractors must conclude their work (mowing, etc) by 7 PM. City Council is considering changes that would decrease available hours on Sunday Only to end at 6 PM to provide neighbors with additional quiet time on Sundays

| Options  | Votes        |   |        |
|--|--------------|---|--------|
| I have no issues with the current 7 PM end time                            | 36.00        |  | 36.36% |
| I do not believe commercial contractors should be mowing lawns on Sundays  | 28.00        |  | 28.28% |
| I support a 5 PM or earlier Sunday stop time                               | 14.00        |  | 14.14% |
| I support a 6 PM stop time on Sundays                                      | 14.00        |  | 14.14% |
| I don't care (is this really an issue we need to concern ourselves about?) | 8.00         |  | 8.08%  |
| I don't know   | 1.00         |  | 1.01%  |
| <b>Total Responders</b>  | <b>99.00</b> |   |        |

(Votes may not add up to the total responders because people can vote for more than one option in this poll.)

One thing we did notice, based on comments received, was that there seemed to be a level of confusion between whether lawn mowing hours in general were being restricted or if lawn services were the sole target of the proposed limitations. Given that very few neighbors would risk becoming a neighborhood pariah by regularly firing up their mowers at 7 AM, whether a weekend or weekday, we feel comfortable in extrapolating that two thirds of the community feels 7 AM weekend start times are a problem. We do not, however, have this same level of comfort with extrapolating the sentiments on the Sunday evening restrictions.

Were I to summarize feelings from both the voting public and the NAHC Board, I would say that changing weekend start times to 8 AM is something the community finds desirable and should be considered.

Further limiting Sunday operations hours, while possibly desirable, is not something which enjoys a clear consensus of opinion as to either necessity or scope of limitation. While this may be something to consider in the future, a better understanding of the specifics of the perceived “problem,” beyond anecdotal evidence and complaints from a few residents, and including quantifiable evidence of both frequency and extent, would be both appreciated and necessary prior to recommending codifying further limitations. This caution is further justified as, given the “out of hours” nature of the complaint, enforcement would potentially default to the Police Department and not Code Enforcement. We feel that the use of a sworn officer’s time is better allocated to matters of more community importance than regulating the annoying noise of mowers and blowers, and so we should be certain of the urgency and prevalence of the situation before recommending relief.

The Confederation greatly appreciates the trust and faith expressed in our opinions and community representation by requesting that we take a role in collecting community comment. Please feel free to share these findings with the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council as you deem appropriate.

Please let me know if you have any questions on this submission. I would be happy to discuss this at greater length if it was felt that this would be helpful.

Sincerely,

Bob

Robert Fischer  
President – Naperville Area Homeowners Confederation