



CITY OF ASTORIA
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M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: SEPTEMBER 28, 2015

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: BRETT ESTES, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: HERBICIDE POLICY AND PRACTICES

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The Plant and Lawn Management Task Force was appointed by the Mayor to address concerns raised about the use of herbicides and fertilizers in parks and open spaces.

The task force consisted of:

- Norma Hernandez, Northwest Food Web
- Fred White-Gardener, Concerned Citizen
- John Whisler, Head Superintendent, Astoria Golf and Country Club
- Tom Duncan-Physician, Lower Columbia Clinic
- Howard Rub, Athletic Director Astoria High School
- Jessica Schleif, Master Gardener
- Drew Herzig, City Council Liaison
- Dave McElroy, Friends of McClure Park

The task force met four times over the course of eight months:

- February 11, 2015: Meeting agenda included values, goals, and desired outcomes for the task force were established
- March 14, 2015: Meeting agenda included site tour of a variety of parks and open spaces (Alderbrook Lagoon, Fort Astoria, Niemi Field, Lindstrom Park, Shively Park)
- April 2, 2015: Meeting agenda included evaluation of progress and draft of policy recommendations
- September 9, 2015: Meeting agenda included review of policy recommendations, updates and final approval

The task force obtained feedback from a variety of stakeholders to determine the need and level of use for herbicides and fertilizers to control or eradicate noxious and invasive weeds and to provide recommendations to enhance and develop parks. The task force then developed recommendations for a final herbicide use policy that was presented to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and approved during the September 23, 2015 meeting.

POLICY/PRACTICES

Herbicide Definition: An agent used to destroy or inhibit plant growth.

In order to promote sustainable parks that are aesthetically and intrinsically pleasing, the following recommendations have been drafted for weed management:

1. Create individual park maintenance plans that are unique and site specific for desired/unwanted species. These plans should include a catalogue of existing fauna/flora within each park to document and map species to be promoted.
2. Identify feasible mechanical and natural methods to deter, out-compete, or inhibit noxious weed growth
3. Consult with horticultural professionals prior to planting new species or significantly altering existing planted areas within parks
4. Utilize donated mulch from local arbor care companies to suppress weed growth in planted beds
5. Promote adoption of parks by neighborhood groups and encourage volunteer efforts for weed eradication in lieu of using herbicides
6. For the use of herbicides, the following steps shall be adhered to:
 - A. Party interested in applying herbicides must introduce issue to the Parks Director- describe targeted species, explain reason for concern
 - B. Explain failure/infeasibility of mechanical/hand removal. Provide rationale for preference to use chemical vs alternatives e.g. time constraints, cost, accessibility, etc.
 - C. Provide background information on chemical to be used. Describe the application method, possible hazards, techniques to mitigate hazards, effectiveness of preferred product, timing of application(s), and overall safety of product at site location.

- D. Provide signage at site prior to and following application of herbicides to create awareness that area has been treated.
- E. Parks Director, after approving herbicide use, shall inform Parks Advisory Board of the background on the chemical, rationale for application and location of herbicide application

RECOMMENDATION

The Lawn and Plant Management Task Force and Parks Advisory Board have reviewed and recommended that City Council adopt the Herbicide Policy and Practices.

By: 

Angela Cosby
Director of Parks & Recreation