

*submitted by
Robert Ray IV*

Establishing a BID, a special tax district, is not consistent with Council's stated reason for doing it, that of encouraging an equitable recovery for all residents and businesses.

In its last incarnation, the method to determine who would govern the BID Board was one vote for each \$1mil of commercial property owned. If it's the same this time around, the alignment of a few large investment groups are sufficient to control the proposed BID board.

Those investment groups rent their property to small businesses and sole proprietors. Their leases include a passthrough clause, in which increases in taxes, including the BID Tax, become increases in rent required of the commercial tenants. Since many of the tenants' additional rent will go through the City's tax collection and back into the hands of those same landlords who control the BID Board, the BID Tax will be a de facto government mandated increase in those rents above and beyond what had been contracted. This is not helpful to the recovery of small businesses.

Under the scheme of the creation of the BID, those renters who will be paying the taxes will have no say in its creation or how it spends the money. In order to approach making it a fair deal for all, Council would either have to mandate that each renter be given a vote as to whether they would like their rents raised to fund the scheme or that the BID tax should be paid by the landlords and investors who will control its expenditure and that the tax not be allowed to pass through to tenants. However, these last proposals are not in the current guidelines.

The BID's funds will also come from increases in Real Estate taxes on small mom and pop businesses who own their commercial property. If those small businesses were made aware of the BID voting scheme, they would understand that the small business will have a miniscule influence in the Board's actions and they would rationally choose to not raise their own property taxes for this purpose. But the BID scheme does not require the assent of the mom and pop store owners, since 40% of the commercial properties in the BID may be incorporated and obligated to pay without their consent.

Lastly, for all the residents living in the area encompassed by a proposed BID, they would face a strange new local hierarchical political environment in which the character of their streetscape and the city services is defined and regulated by a government entity made up of sometimes remote investors whose offices can be literally bought and sold.

Council is currently directing ARPA recovery funds for the promotion of the scheme and is proposing to direct the city's coercive power to collect taxes to be used at the behest of the most wealthy, and at the expense of the small businesses, all while not adding a single penny to the City's coffers to pay for the general well being of its citizens. Council is funding and endorsing an entity that would count votes by wealth and take money by fiat from renters and businesses to put in the controlling hands of the most wealthy investment groups in the City. This seems like quite a departure from their presumed liberal democratic values of: one person / one vote, historic concern for tenants and a wariness that disparity of wealth may have undue influence on government policy.

Creating a BID does not encourage an equitable recovery for all of Alexandria's residents and businesses. I argue that the establishment of a BID will instead financially harm the recovery of small businesses and codify inequity in the midst of its residents.

Quiet Alexandria

Published by Samantha Ahdoot on 21st Jun 2022

Residents in Alexandria are exposed to a significant, recurring noise violation from gas-powered leaf blowers. These machines exceed the permitted noise limits throughout the City of Alexandria regularly, significantly harming health and quality of life.

Sec. 11-5-4.1 (c) of the 2022 noise ordinance states:

Between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m., Monday through Sunday, no sound generation shall result in sound having a volume of 75 dB(A) or more, at a distance greater than 10 feet from the place at which the sound is being generated or produced, for an aggregate duration of time greater than 60 seconds in any one hour period or be plainly audible above the background noise level to a person of normal hearing acuity at a distance greater than 50 feet from the place at which the sound is being generated or produced.

Gas-powered leaf blowers, according to manufacturer specifications, frequently generate over 100 dB of noise (1) at close range. They require users to use ear protection to prevent hearing loss. At 10 ft, they regularly emit well over 75 dB, and are virtually always audible above the background noise at 50 ft away. This noise is significantly more when multiple machines are used. An increase of 10 dB is perceived by the human ear as a doubling of the sound (2), so a blower emitting 85 dB sounds twice as loud as a blower operating at 75 dB. Noise from these machines is a low frequency that travels long distances (3) and enters homes through windows easily, thus affecting a wide area of the urban community.

In Alexandria, these machines are used throughout the spring, summer and fall, primarily for moving yard debris. Homes in Alexandria frequently have numerous neighbors within 50 feet. One home may therefore be subject to hours of excessive leaf blower noise from multiple neighboring properties in a single day. This significantly reduces quality of life in the City and impedes learning and productivity. In addition, noise pollution is a rising public health problem, harming hearing, the cardiovascular system, child development and mental health. (4-6)

In response to the significant community disruption caused by these machines, 170 municipalities in the United States had enacted regulations that specifically limit or ban their use as of 2018, (3) with many more enacted since that time. On January 1, 2022, Washington DC enacted the Leaf Blower Regulation Amendment Act of 2018, banning their use in the District of Columbia. (7)

1. <https://opereviews.com/landscaping/leaf-blowers/best-backpack-blower-shootout/>
2. <https://jlaudio.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/217201737-Doubling-Power-vs-Doubling-Output>
3. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57e80a57414fb52bddd431f1/t/5b633e088a922dd389d31838/1533230601550/2018.07.16_DC+COW+Bill+22-234+Report_Final+Jamie+Banks.pdf
4. https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/hearing_loss/docs/CDCPresentationNeitzel-508.pdf
5. <https://www.massmed.org/Advocacy/State-Advocacy/State-Testimony/Testimony-in-Support-of-H-868,-An-Act-to-Establish-a-Grant-Program-for-Low-Noise,-Low-Emissions-Landscape-Maintenance-Equipment/>
6. Munzel T, Schmidt FP, Steven S, et al. Environmental Noise and the Cardiovascular System. J Amer Coll Cardiol 2018;71: 88-697. doi: 10.1016/j.jacc.2017.12.015.
7. <https://dcra.dc.gov/leafblower>

Given these concerns, we, the undersigned, request that the City of Alexandria:

- 1) Phase out use of gas-powered leaf blowers in its operations, as recently approved for Fairfax County.
- 2) Enforce the 2022 noise ordinance and/or enact other policy to address their wider use in the City.

#	First name	Last name	Address	City	Postcode
1	Samantha	Ahdoot	104 W WALNUT ST	ALEXANDRIA	22301
2	vineeta	anand	11 E Spring St	Alexandria	22301-2133
As an ecologically sensitive city, it behooves Alexandria to eliminate noisy gas-powered blowers.					
3	Bonnie	Cohen	607 N View Ter Alex. VA 22301	Alexandria	22301
4	Barbara	Douglass	7102 Colgate Dr	Alexandria	22307
5	Jennifer	Mattson	2410 King Street	Alexandria	22301
6	Jerome	Paulson	1113 N Howard St	Alexandria	22304
7	arthur	impastato	239 medlock lane	alexandria	22304
8	Robert	Mattson	2410 King St.	Alexandria City	22301
9	Steve	Banashek	16 W Spring St	Alexandria	22301
10	Marsha	Wallace	607 Wayne Street	Alexandria	22301
I find the noise and fumes very disturbing and have finally asked my lawn service not to use them, even if it means leaves stay put and grass clippings may end up on sidewalk.					
11	Renee	Adams	221 E Windsor Ave	Alexandria	22301
12	Paul	Kaplowitz	3800 Fairfax Dr, APT 806	Arlington	22203
13	Sandra	Levy	206 W Walnut St	Alexandria	22301
14	Jenny	Considine	507 Jefferson Court	Alexandria	22314
15	Lori	Quill	9 W Walnut St	Alexandria	22301
16	Robert	Besse	21' west walnut street	Alexandria	22301
17	Diane	de Guzman	1304 Roundhouse Ln	Alexandria	22314
18	Michael	Olex	4806 Peacock Ave	Alexandria	22304
19	Susan	Davis	305 S. Payne St, 501	Alexandria	22314
This is how we make our city even more wonderful.					
20	Manorama	Rakhmanov	801 N Pitt St, Apt608	Alexandria	22314
21	Sherry	Grossman	441 Argyle Drive	Alexandria	22305
22	Carol	Kalinoski	2505 Hayes Street	Alexandria	22302
23	jason	scofi	2428 Davis Ave	Alexandria	22302
24	Gail	Gordon	1314 Bayliss Dr, Alexandria	ALEXANDRIA	22302
25	Kelley	O'Dell	3603 Norwood Place	Alexandria	22305
26	Eric	Wagner	3408 HALCYON DR	ALEXANDRIA	22305
27	Anne	Carroll	22305 Russell Rd	Alexandria	22305
28	Susan	Hepler	2602 VALLEY DRIVE	ALEXANDRIA	22302
Would this include non-muffled generators as well? They sound like refrigerated trucks waiting to unload					
29	Marcy	Crisler	202 Birch St	Alexandria	22305
30	Elizabeth	Sinclair	3901 Cameron Mills Road	Alexandria	22305
I am an avid walker with some hearing loss. It's a rare walk that I don't hear some type of noise pollution: leaf blowers, lawn mowers, saws, snow blowers, etc. so I carry earplugs with me. Please act on this.					
31	Elizabeth	Crockett	201 W. Alexandria Ave.	Alexandria	22302
I would also like the city to consider banning the blowing of grass and leaves into city streets. I see this often and am sure it contributes to pesticides in the stormwater that contaminates the Potomac and other tributaries.					
32	Marine	Niewald	2924 Richmond lane	Alexandria	22305
33	John	Pennington	S. Overlook Drive	Alexandria	22305
34	Wendy	Sparrow	2416 Davis Ave	Alexandria	22302
35	Maureen	Leary	403 Russell Road	Alexandria	22301
36	Peter	French	207 W. Myrtle St.	Alexandria	22301

#	First name	Last name	Address	City	Postcode
37	Elizabeth	Scheland	18 West Myrtle Street, Alexandria, VA, USA	Alexandria	22301
38	Charles	Christopher	521 Hilltop Terrace	Alexandria	22301
39	Wayne	Hulehan	3617 Greenway Place, Alexandria, VA 22302, Alexandria, VA 22302	Alexandria	22302
	Silence these, please.				
40	Richard	Foley	801 Russell Road 801 Russell Road	Alexandria	22301
	Don't use any blowers, rake, sweep and bag or in the fall put leaves at the curb for the city vacuum truck.				
41	Thomas	Goslin	802 Grand View Drive	Alexandria	22305
42	Elizabeth	Goslin	802 Grand View Dr	Alexandria	22305
	My quality of life has most definitely been negatively impacted by the cacophony of gas powered lawn equipment. So much so that I had to buy noise cancelling headphones to wear inside my own home.				
43	Sarah	Duncan	705 Little Street	Alexandria	22301
44	Judy	Fox	210 Uhler Terrace	Alexandria	22301
45	Rachel	Marks	Ramsey St	Alexandria	22301
46	cynthia	westlund	503 FONTAINE ST	ALEXANDRIA	22302-3704
	Please				
47	christopher	may	503 Fontaine Street	Alexandria	22302
48	Andres	Klores	11 W. Masonic View Ave	Alexandria	22301
49	Mary Jo	Smet	904 Russell Rd.	Alexandria	22301
50	Nicole	Zehfuss	10 W Glendale Ave	Alexandria	22301
51	Greg	Bischak	904 Russell Road	Alexandria	22301
	I support this petition				
52	Mary lou	Leary	21 West Walnut St	Alexandria	22301
53	John	Yuda	905 N Kemper St	Alexandria	22304
	Please enforce our noise code!				
54	Thomas	Walker	406 Rucker Place	Alexandria	22301
	Beyond concerns about the noise emitted by the blowers, the machines also create air quality problems and exacerbate lung issues like asthma. Also, many blower operators are not sensitive to people passing nearby. Worse, is the long-term damage being done to the lungs of the people operating the blowers as very few are wearing a protective mask.				
55	Kathy	Conrad	107 W. Maple St.	Alexandria	22301
56	Jamie	Conrad	107 W Maple St	Alexandria	22301
57	Heather	Ashburn	6 W Myrtle St	Alexandria	22301
	I work 100% from my home office. Every week, four of my neighbors lawn services (each within 50 ft of my house, and one within 6 ft) use a leaf blower on... nothing. It's a perfunctory task that removes a few blades of grass that is not necessary to the service of lawn care. I am open to leaf blowers being used a few times a year for heavy lift tasks such as, their intended purpose, fall leaves.				
58	Marcia	Evans	410 Virginia Avenue	Alexandria	22302
59	Robert	Fowler	4 W Rosemont Ave	Alexandria	22301
60	E	Yancey	Davis Ave.	Alexandria	22302
61	Robert	Hueckstaedt	1119 Bayliss DR	Alexandria	22302
62	Frances	Henderson	203 Vassar Place	Alexandria	22314
63	Jo	Echard	704 Braxton Place	Alexandria	22301
64	Sunny	Yoder	FARM RD	ALEXANDRIA	22302-3210
	In addition to noise pollution, gas-powered leaf blowers pollute the air and contribute to climate change--all the more reason to regulate them and phase them out entirely.				
65	Alek	Becker	1201 Braddock Place Apt 1008	Alexandria	22314
66	Jane	Marcus	207 West Walnut Street	Alexandria	22301
67	Lisa	Guernsey	212 E. Spring Street	Alexandria	22301
68	Alexandra	Laney	Brighton Ct	Alexandria	22305

#	First name	Last name	Address	City	Postcode
	I am uncomfortable writing my house number on this public petition, but can provide another way if needed. I do really hate leafblowers.				
69	Kathleen	Smith	24 E Walnut	Alexandria	22391
70	David	Bergquist	711 Grand View Dr	Alexandria	22305
71	David	Kaplan	418 queen street	Alexandria	22314
72	Owen	Curtis	5465 Fillmore Ave.	Alexandria	22311
	Thank you for taking the lead on this matter.				
73	Marykay	Walk	24 W. Chapman Street	Alexandria	22301
	It's not just the noise, I have a lung condition (bronchiectasis) that causes me to get infections easily. While walking my dog, people using leaf blower's don't even stop them for you to get by. This creates a risk for me of getting another lung infection that can take months to get rid of.				
74	Megan	Talley	7 Herbert St	Alexandria	22305
75	Susan	Emmet	545 , E Braddock Rd Apt 606	Alexandria	22314-2171
76	Mark	Scheland	18 W. Myrtle St.	Alexandria	22301-2423
77	Danielle	Wolf	994 Harrison Circle	Alexandria	22304
78	Nancy	Brown	8A East Oak Street	Alexandria	22301
79	Charles	Beeghly	994 Harrison Circle	Alexandria	223204
	These noise portable nose pollution devices disrupt the lives of those forced to endure them. There are better ways to do this job.				
80	Karen	Harris	3 West Oak Street	Alexandria	22301
	Not only is the noise deafening, but from an environmental standpoint, the use of gas-powered leaf blowers contributes to greenhouse gas emissions and planetary warming. Gasoline and oil spilled while operating these machines can also seep into the ground and potentially pollute water sources.				
81	Tami	Riggs	203 W Myrtle St	Alexandria	22301
82	JR	Lineberry	4800 Fillmore Ave	Alexandria	22311
83	Marc	Bendick Jr	319 Prince Street	Alexandria	22314
84	Monique	de Quay-Jones	5 W Rosemont Ave	Alexandria	22301
85	Kevin	McDermott	2206 Scroggins Road	Alexandria	22302
86	Kimberly	McDermott	2206 Scroggins Rd	Alexandria	22302
	I have fibromyalgia. This level of noise is physically painful and exacerbates my pain. My neighbors use a commercial landscaper who will stay for hours on end in the cul de sac. I can hear them inside my bathroom with the door closed and all windows closed. They often arrive on the weekend early in the morning.				
87	Jacqueline	Boltz	416 N Payne St	Alexandria	22314
	The enjoyment of my backyard space is interrupted on a weekly basis by the noise of a gas-powered leaf blower used on an adjoining property. The level of noise is harmful, unpleasant, and unnecessary. Please ban this equipment for the health of all Alexandrians.				
88	Wayne	Patterson	112 E Maple St	Alexandria	22301
	Concur with the petition				
89	Kathryn	Kellam	7 Cedar Street	Alexandria	22301
90	Kunegunda	Belle	1119 Bayliss Dr.	Alexandria	22302
91	RAWLES	JONES	17 W ROSEMONT AVE	ALEXANDRIA	22301-2623
92	Maryann	Jones	17 West Rosemont Avenue	Alexandria	22301
93	Marilee	Sanders	105 west maple st	Alexandria	22301
94	Louise	Nowakowski	703 Hilltop Terrace	Alexandria	22301
95	Jennifer	McLish	25 E Myrtle Street	Alexandria	22301
96	Jane	Cohen	46 E. Rosemont Ave.	Alexandria	22301
	On all Alexandria survey I've pleaded for a total ban on these blowers as the current ordinance is ignored.				
97	Catherine	Petrini	406 West Timber Branch Parkway	Alexandria	22302
98	Anita	Cukr	14 West Walnut Street	Alexandria	22301
99	Cindy	Mathys	715 S Washington St Apt A-14	Alexandria	22314

#	First name	Last name	Address	City	Postcode
100	Demian	Brady	12 E. Cliff Street	Alexandria	22301
	Leaf blowers are obnoxious in terms of noise, fumes, and all the dust and dirt kicked up in the air. But the noise is worst of all, they can be heard for blocks around practically all hours of the day and disturb the peace.				
101	John	Fielding	216 Virginia Avenue	Alexandria	22302
102	Thomas	Reinhart	1111 Oronoco St No 130	Alexandria	22314
	These devices assault our hearing.				
103	Elizabeth	Gamble	1111 Key drive	Alexandria	22302
104	Matthew	Herron	22 E Myrtle St	Alexandria	22301
105	Babette	Cooper	705 Braxton Place	Alexandria	22301
106	James	Gordon	507 Fontaine Street	Alexandria	22302
107	Lacye	Tennille	3405 Cameron Mills Rd	Alexandria	22305
	3 Landed blowers running at 9am on Saturday morning in yard next door, driving my entire family indoors. Ridiculous.				
108	Derek	Meyer	3103 Circle Hill Road	Alexandria	22305
109	Natalie	Kean	1105 N Pitt St #1A	Alexandria	22314
110	Susan	Boyd	406 W Glebe Rd	Alexandria	22305
	Gas-powered leaf-blowers can create terrible noise pollution in an urban environment; one cannot escape the noise even indoors.				
111	Mark	Williams	100 Cameron Station Blvd	Alexandria	22304
	This is a significant quality of life issue. Alexandria residents will be watching the individual actions of Council members on this matter.				
112	Ann	Ridenhour	4008 Sharp Place	Alexandria	22304
	Bravo! Not only do these blowers create noise pollution, but their noxious exhaust stinks up entire neighborhoods with air pollution.				
113	anett	schulze	3520 Gunston road	Alexandria	22302
114	Heidi	Fielding	216 Virginia Avenue	Alexandria	22302
	In addition to reducing leaf blower noise, perhaps one or two days could be designated as "mowing days," to concentrate the noise from lawn mowers so that residents could plan to avoid opening windows or dining outside? Just a thought.				
115	Caroline	Fox	210 W Uhler Terrace	Alexandria	22301
116	Julia	Simon	30 West Myrtle St	Alexandria	22391
117	Jane	Meyer	3103 Circle Hill Rd	Alexandria	22305
118	Geoffrey	Chester	2417 TAYLOR AVE	ALEXANDRIA	22302
119	Scott	Fox	210 Uhler Terrace	Alexandria	22301
120	Frank	Shafroth	410 Virginia Avenue	Alexandria	22302
121	Linda	Wood	7 East Myrtle Street	Alexandria	22301
122	MaryJean	Kane	606 North Overlook Dr.	Alexandria	22305
	The noise is intrusive. Not sure what the alternative is				
123	Charlie	Flynt	3324 Coryell Lane	Alexandria	22302
124	Anna	Martin	512 W WINDSOR AVE	Alexandria	22302
	As a new mom who walks her infant in the neighborhood daily, I respectfully request you to take action to eliminate gas powered leaf blowers. These machines are bad for the environment and my baby's ears, and eliminating their use would have zero negative impact. Electric leaf blowers and brooms are completely sufficient, as recognized by many other metropolitan and residential areas. Thank you.				
125	Anne	Bailey	705 N Overlook Drive	Alexandria	22305
	Two of our neighbors employ a landscaping company whose leaf blowers are so loud I feel physical pain. When they are about I shut my windows and doors and worry about the effects of this loud, abrasive noise on my ears. I can't block it out!				
126	Margot	Anderson	1704 Oakcrest Dr	Alexandria	22302
127	Amy	Krafft	1102 W Braddock Rd	Alexandria	22302
128	Nicholas	Leiby	404 E Del Ray Ave	Alexandria	22301
129	Susan	McLaughlin	Alexandria	609 Little Street	22301

#	First name	Last name	Address	City	Postcode
130	Eva	Giercuskiewicz	22 W Cedar Street	Alexandria	22301
	Electric & Battery powered equipment exists along with traditional tools like rakes and brooms that are safer for users and neighbors. The lawn workers wear ear protection, but even INSIDE MY HOUSE, I am exposed to unbearable noise. If I am outside, I have to go indoors.				
131	Heather	Jelks	207 North View Terr	Alexandria	22301
132	Susan	Hahn	3800 Washington Woods Dr	Alexandria	22309
	Thank you.				
133	Ann	McMurray	412 Tyler Place	Alexandria	22302
134	Miriam	OLINGER	100 PRINCE ST	ALEXANDRIA	22314 3312
135	Chris	McMurray	412 Tyler Place	Alexandria	22302
136	Charles	Davis	305 S. Payne St, 501	Alexandria	22314
137	Gail	Rothrock	209 Duke Street	Alexandria	22314
138	Susan	Horne	311 South Lee Street	Alexandria	22314
139	Donald	Santarelli	504 Duke St	Alexandria	22314
140	Boyd	Walker	1307 King St	Alexandria	22314
	Leaf blowers are a true nuisance in urban areas, especially gas powered leaf blowers. If the operators have to wear ear protection anyone near them probably should wear ear protection too, and they are so loud they can prevent any nearby conversation, or business from operating.				
141	Catherine	Cotell	607 So. Fairfax Street	Alexandria	22314
142	Nancy	Morgan	1410 roundhouse lane	Alexandria	22314
143	Emily	Hartman	1314 Chetworth Court	Alexandria	22314
144	Alexander	Clark	511 Wolfe Street	Alexandria	22314
	This is a high-leverage action the City can take to improve the quality of life for residents, including the health of workers operating the machines.				
145	Charles	Mallory	3224 ravenworth pl	Alexandria	22302
146	Haylee	Alverson	3224 ravenworth pl	Alexandria	22302
147	Claudia	Rocabado Bond	1411 Van Valkenburgh Ln	Alexandria	22301
148	Edith	Cecchini	25 Fendall Ave.	Alexandria	22304
149	DVid	Peabody	3417 Halcyon Drive	Alexandria	22205
150	Cathyg	Vandermaarel	2512 King Street	Alexandria	22301
	Most yards in the city limits aren't large enough to warrant the 2-3 gas leaf blowers running simultaneously as often happens.				
151	Rachel	Newhouse	810 South Overlook Drive	Alexandria	22305
	I cannot work at home due to the noise from the blowers. It can last for over 2 hours.				
152	Stephen	Hayes	802 Duke Street	Alexandria	22314
153	David	OBrien	314 Park Road	Alexandria	22301