

Memorandum

To: Co-Chairs Cherie LeBlanc Fisher and Wendy Pollock and Members of the Environment Board

From: Kumar Jensen, Chief Sustainability and Resilience Officer
Joshua Bynum, Sustainability Projects Intern

Subject: Balloon Release Policies from Other Cities

Date: January 7, 2020

Summary

In late 2019, Alderman Rue Simmons requested that staff, with support from the Environment Board draft a policy prohibiting the release of balloons because of the detrimental impact that can have on wildlife. This type of policy, one that reduces litter, harm to wildlife and the amount of non-biodegradable waste in the Evanston community also aligns with the Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP)'s Zero Waste by 2050 Goal.

Staff conducted research on how other communities developed similar policies and have included the most relevant examples in Table 1. After conducting this research staff compiled comments on these different approaches and have included those as well. The overall impression from research from other communities is that the policies tend to be quite straightforward. In fact, staff has already considered language that could be used in Evanston and has included that sample text below for review by the Environment Board.

Table 1.

Government	Ordinance Details
New Shoreham, RI	<p>The purpose of this ordinance is to protect the wildlife and coastal ecosystems of Block Island, the enjoyment of nature, and the health, safety, and welfare of Block Island's residents and visitors by banning the use of balloons as it has been determined that balloons pose a risk and nuisance to the environment, particularly to wildlife and marine animals, so as to constitute a public nuisance.</p> <p>It shall be unlawful for any person to sell, use or distribute any type of balloon (including, and not limited to latex, Mylar balloons, or water balloons). No person shall dispose of any balloon in any</p>

	manner, including by release into the air, other than being contained in a trash bag and transported to the Transfer Station.
Atlantic City, NJ	It shall be unlawful for any person, firm or corporation to intentionally release, organize the release or intentionally cause to be released balloons inflated with a gas that is lighter than air within the Atlantic City limits, except for: a) Balloons released by a person on behalf of a governmental agency or pursuant to a governmental contract for scientific or meteorological purposes. b) Hot air balloons that are recovered after launching. c) Balloons released indoors. Violations and Penalties. Any person found in violation of this ordinance is guilty of a non - criminal infraction punishable by a fine not to exceed the sum of \$500.
Ventnor, NJ	It shall be unlawful for any person, firm or corporation to intentionally release, organize the release, or intentionally cause to be released balloons inflated with a gas that is lighter than air within the city of Ventnor limits except for: a) Balloon released by a person on behalf of a governmental agency or pursuant to a governmental contract for scientific or meteorological purposes. b) Hot air balloons that are recovered after launching c) Balloons released indoors Violations and Penalties. Any person found in violation is guilty of a non -criminal infraction punishable by a fine not to exceed the sum of \$500.00

Staff Comments

- It is important to find an effective strategy for this policy when considering accountability. Say an animal is found to have a purple balloon in its digestive tract. Is this balloon a result of an event at Northwestern or does this come from a child's birthday party?
- All reviewed policies ban all entities whether be public or private from releasing these balloons except in the case where these balloons are used for scientific/government study.
- Most cities allow the use of latex balloons however they ban the use of filling them with gasses that makes them lighter than air i.e. helium.
- City of Evanston could publicly recommend alternatives to mass balloon releases that cause minimal or zero environmental impact. Smart alternatives to mass balloon releases include but not limited to flags, blowing bubbles, or streamers.
- Ensuring there is consistency it would be best to see when and where these large balloon gathering events take place and to directly work with the community/university to ensure this ordinance is understood and respected.

Staff Proposal

Staff is prepared to recommend to City Council that they adopt a law very similar to that of Ventnor, NJ and Atlantic City, NJ. See below for proposed language:

It shall be unlawful for any person, firm or corporation to intentionally release, organize the release, or intentionally cause to be released balloons inflated with a gas that is lighter than air within the city of Evanston limits except for:

- A. Balloon released by a person on behalf of a governmental agency or pursuant to a governmental contract for scientific or meteorological purposes.
- B. Hot air balloons that are recovered after launching
- C. Balloons released indoors

Violations and Penalties. Any person found in violation is guilty of a non -criminal infraction punishable by a fine not to exceed the sum of \$XXXX.XX.

Attachments

New Shoreham, RI

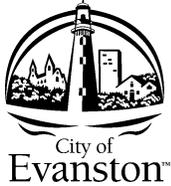
<http://www.new-shoreham.com/docs/6-60%20balloon%20180402%20ord1.pdf>

Atlantic City, NJ

<https://ecode360.com/documents/AT0848/source/LF949866.pdf>

Ventnor, New Jersey

<https://ecode360.com/documents/VE0654/source/LF947420.pdf>



Memorandum

To: Co-Chairs Cherie LeBlanc Fisher and Wendy Pollock and Members of the Environment Board

From: Kumar Jensen, Chief Sustainability and Resilience Officer

Subject: Staff Response to Request for Developed of a Landscape Contractor Licensing Requirement

Date: January 3, 2020

Summary:

At the December meeting of the Environment Board the Board developed a memo requesting that City staff pursue a contractor licensing requirement for any landscape contractor working within Evanston. Staff took this memo and explored the possibility of fulfilling this recommendation and have compiled the below information for the Board's review.

The City of Evanston, with the amended business registration program that was proposed in late 2019, has two requirements pertaining to landscape contractors. See below for requirement details:

1. [Contractor Registration Requirement](#)

Beginning January 2, 2018, all contractors performing work within City limits are required to register with the City, including but not limited to General Contractors, Electrical, Carpentry, Concrete, Excavation, Masonry, Landscaping, Fence, Roofing and Sign contractors. Contractor Registration [Application](#).

This registration applies to any landscape contractor operating in Evanston. As of December 31, 2019 there were roughly 50 different landscape contractors registered through this program. This requirement was established primarily to enforce the leaf blower ordinance.

2. [Business Registration Requirement](#)

Each place of business must have its own license. The following business types must have a license to do business within the City regardless of where the physical headquarters of the business is located: Landscaping, pesticide and/or weed spraying,

lawn fertilizing, pickup and delivery of laundry or dry cleaning at dwelling units, garbage or refuse pickup. Business Licensing [Application](#).

The Business Licensing Application applies to any business located and operating in Evanston including home based businesses, non-profit businesses, Evanston base for-profit businesses, pop-up retailers and landscape contractors not maintaining a place of business within the City.

Conclusion:

After reviewing the request from the Environment Board and comparing it to the two above requirements staff conclude that there is already an effective, two in fact, process for licensing and registering landscape businesses that operate in Evanston. In fact, in some ways it appears the Business Registration Requirement may be redundant for landscape contractors given they are required to also be licensed in order to operate within the City.

At this time staff does not believe there is significant justification to undertake a separate or additional licensing requirement for landscape contractors that operate within Evanston.