



CITY OF LE SUEUR  
REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

TO: Mayor and City Council  
FROM: Jasper Kruggel, City Administrator  
SUBJECT: Sidewalk Snow Removal and Grass Length Abatement Process  
DATE: For the City Council Meeting of Monday March 9, 2020

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**PURPOSE**

Staff is requesting City Council evaluate the proposed policy update related to the sidewalk snow removal and grass length abatement process.

**SUMMARY**

City Staff has been discussing internally how we enforce the City Code related to sidewalk snow removal and grass length.

*Sidewalk Snow Removal Enforcement Policy*

The City Code language for sidewalk snow removal is as follows:

**§ 92.015 DUTY OF PROPERTY OWNERS TO REMOVE SNOW, ICE AND OTHER OBSTRUCTIONS; WHEN SNOW AND ICE DEEMED NUISANCE.**

(A) The owners and occupants of lots shall keep the sidewalks in front of or adjacent to their respective lots free and clear from snow, ice and other obstructions; and snow and ice shall be removed therefrom within 24 hours after the snow stops falling.

(B) All snow and ice not removed from sidewalks 24 hours after the snow or sleet has ceased to fall thereon shall be deemed to be a public nuisance affecting the public peace and safety.

(1973 Code, § 23-4) (Ord. 140, passed 12-9-1887; Ord. 204, passed 5-6-1927)

The current internal policy is to give residents who do not remove snow within 24 hours after the snow has ceased three days via a letter through the mail to remove the snow or have the City do it at their cost. Staff would propose the following changes to the current enforcement policy to take effect in September 2020:

- If staff identifies that snow has not been removed from a sidewalk within 24 hours after the snow has ceased, staff will document the situation by taking photos of the sidewalk with the house present and immediately notify the snow removal contractor identified through an annual request for proposal process to immediately clear the sidewalk
- Staff will then bill back to the property owner the contractor cost to remove the snow with \$20 administrative fee (example: \$30 removal cost + \$20 administrative fee = \$50)
- Staff will include this policy in the City's newsletter, post the policy change to the website, and market the policy change on social media; friendly reminders will be posted on social media during snowfall events

- If a resident is unable to remove snow from their sidewalk due to an emergency situation, that resident can contact the City and reasonable accommodations will be provided to allow for snow to be removed in a reasonable timeframe
- Any payments not received by September 1<sup>st</sup> annually will be certified to the tax roll of the property owner

### Grass Length Enforcement Policy

The City Code language for grass length regulation is as follows:

#### **§ 96.03 REQUIREMENTS AS TO MAINTENANCE OF PREMISES, DISPOSAL OF WASTES AND CUTTING OF GRASS, WEEDS AND UNDERGROWTH.**

(A) Wastes which originate upon or within any premises in the city shall not be suffered by the owner, occupant or person in charge of the premises to accumulate in a manner or in quantity as to constitute a fire, safety or health hazard or so as to become unsightly, putrid or otherwise give offense to persons in the neighborhood. Wastes which are subject to collection as provided in §§ [96.15](#) through [96.26](#) shall be collected and disposed of as therein provided, and it shall be the duty of the owner, occupant and person in charge of the premises to dispose of all other wastes in a lawful and sanitary manner.

(B) Owners, occupants and persons in charge of premises in the city shall keep the premises free of noxious weeds and of undergrowth which affords breeding places for insects, reptiles or rodents. Owners, occupants and persons in charge of premises not devoted to agricultural purposes shall keep the grass thereon trimmed to a height of not more than eight inches. (1973 Code, § 13-3) Penalty, see § [10.99](#)

The current internal policy related to grass length is to give residents identified to have grass longer than eight (8) inches seven days to abate the code violation via a letter through the mail. If after that seven-day period the grass has not been cut to an appropriate length, the City will mow the grass and bill that cost back to the property owner. Staff would propose the following changes to the current grass length enforcement policy to take effect in April of 2020:

- If staff identifies that a property owner's grass length does not conform to City Code, staff will document the situation by taking photos of the grass with the house present and immediately notify the mowing contractor identified through and annual request for proposal process to immediately cut the grass to a length of four (4) inches
- Staff will then bill back to the property owner the contractor cost to cut the grass to a length of four (4) inches with a \$20 administrative fee. (example: \$50 mowing cost + \$20 administrative fee = \$70)
- Staff will include this policy in the City's newsletter, post the policy change to the website, and market the policy change on social media; friendly reminders will be posted on social media throughout the growing season
- If a resident is unable to mow their grass due to an emergency situation, that resident can contact the City and reasonable accommodations will be provided to allow for the property owner to mow the grass to an acceptable length in a reasonable timeframe
- Any payments not received by September 1<sup>st</sup> annually will be certified to the tax roll of the property owner

#### **ACTION REQUESTED**

Staff is requesting feedback from City Council related to the proposed enforcement policies related to sidewalk snow removal and grass length abatement.