

Jennifer For next Select Board Meeting
(Please see/print attachment. Thank you.)

There was an interesting and relevant article in the fall Sierra Club magazine titled “The sound of silence”, or lack of it, if you live in suburbia which is what West Tisbury has become. Leaf blowers blare at 100 decibels. The two stroke engines mix gas and oil and operating just one of these machines for one hour emits smog-forming pollution comparable to driving a new passenger car for 1,100 miles. I have read comparable statistics in, I believe, The Union of Concerned Scientists publication (probably for older cars) stating equivalent of 200 miles. In 2018 in Washington D.C. it became illegal to operate a gas powered leaf blower. California will halt the sale of most leaf blowers, lawn mowers, and other small off road engines in 2024. These engines emit more air pollution than California’s 14 million cars. The damage, says one psychotherapist, goes beyond the physical. The experience of these mechanical sounds becomes an assault. Not mentioned is the water use and the pollution by fertilizers and pesticides used by these suburbanites to make their lawns grow as plush and fast as possible so that they can cut them more. Apparently, the West Tisbury Police Department thinks they have more going on in WT than Washington, D.C. and the City of White Plains, New York who have also banned these blowers starting May 15th. The WT Drumphites who portray themselves as enlightened liberals consider this government overreaching. One-hundred decibels of noise coming into a neighbor’s home, somehow is not. When Former President Drumph entered office, one of the first things he did by Executive Order was to reinstate long-banned pesticides so that his lawns would grow better. The Select Board has applied upsidedown WT logic stating the police would be used as a means to avenge neighbor disputes. Could it be possible that these disputes occur because of this lawn obsession? In the 1950’s mowers were 1.5 hp. Blowers didn’t exist, ride-on mowers were almost non-existent and were nowhere near what they are now. More than 100 cities and towns have banned or restricted leaf blowers as of last fall. I am puzzled in the WT police notion of “working people’s ability to improve their property”. This, I see as an excuse to do nothing. Also, most of this use of lawn equipment is done by others when the owners are not present and largely for hire by individuals who are likely to pay little or no taxes like the hero Drumph. Also puzzling is the Finance Committee’s opposition. They should know better than any, the amount of money we have spent to educate our children about concern for the environment, science and consideration for others. All these town boards and those present at the town meetings have shown an extremely poor example on this Earth Day as I write this article.

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