

# City Council Agenda Memo

**From:** Gabrielle Bolwerk

**Council Meeting:** February 14, 2023 / February 28, 2023

**Subject:** No Mow May

**Presenter:** Gabrielle Bolwerk, Robin Buterbaugh, Kiley Rath  
Sustainability Council Members

## **Summary:**

No Mow May is a national campaign to protect food and habitat resources for pollinators in urban areas. The Sustainability Council proposes Ordinance 23-004 to allow for No Mow May practices in Brookings.

## **Background:**

No Mow May (NMM) is a national campaign advocated by Bee City USA to raise awareness for pollinators in urban landscapes by encouraging temporarily ceasing mowing lawns during the month of May. Spring is a crucial time of year for pollinators as they emerge from the soil and look for habitat and food. By not mowing in the month of May, people can protect and provide these beneficial resources for emerging pollinators.

Other cities in the Midwest have run successful NMM campaigns, such as Stevens Point, WI (25,692 residents), Appleton, WI (74,854 residents), and Edina, MN (53,494 residents).

The Sustainability Council desires to pilot a NMM campaign for the City of Brookings. The NMM working group has met with Mayor Mike Wiza of Stevens Point, WI, Brookings Community Development Director Mike Struck, Interim Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Director Jacob Meshke and Superintendent Allen Kruse. City Attorney Steve Britzman has been engaged with drafting the proposed ordinance.

## **Item Details:**

The Brookings Sustainability Council is proposing Ordinance 23-004 to allow for exceptions in vegetation management practices during the month of May. This would allow for residents to participate in No Mow May with no violation notices being given to residents with lawns over a height of 15 inches. Residents would have until June 7 to get their lawns back into compliance.

Ordinance 23-004 would allow all in the City of Brookings to participate in NMM. Yard signs for participants would be available for pick up at the Brookings City/County

Government Center, Suite 230, free of charge. The yard signs serve as a notice to residents and visitors that the residence is participating in NMM.

The introduction of Ordinance 23-004 serves as the first step in the NMM public information campaign. If Ordinance 23-004 is adopted, additional marketing and education efforts would include a press release, website updates to include a dedicated NMM webpage, social media, the yard signs, and potentially print and radio media.

Additionally, the NMM working group is in contact with the Sustainability Coordinator at South Dakota State University to explore options for collaboration.

**Legal Consideration:**

City Attorney Steve Britzman drafted Ordinance 23-004.

**Strategic Plan Consideration:**

Sustainability – Participating in NMM allows for emerging pollinators to access food and habitat resources at a critical stage in their life, making Brookings a more pollinator-friendly community.

**Financial Consideration:**

Funding for this project would come from the Brookings Sustainability Council's budget.

**Options and Recommendation:**

The City Council has the following options:

1. Approve as presented
2. Amend
3. Deny
4. Move the item to a Study Session
5. Discuss / take no action / table

Sustainability Council and staff recommend approval of the ordinance as presented.

**Supporting Documentation:**

Ordinance – clean

Ordinance – marked

Yard Sign

Presentation