

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

20 MUNICIPAL WAY • WELLESLEY, MA 02481

DAVE COHEN
DIRECTORTELEPHONE (781) 235-7600
EMAIL DCOHEN@WELLESLEYMA.GOV**Wellesley DPW Adds Electric Landscaping Equipment to Fleet**

September 14, 2021 (Wellesley, MA) – The Wellesley Department of Public Works (DPW) is helping cut carbon emissions with a significant investment in electric landscaping equipment. Starting today, residents will see this new equipment in use in parks and open spaces and the entire Town will reap the benefits of these positive climate actions.

The department recently expanded its rechargeable battery-powered fleet, using funds from its Fiscal Year 2022 budget to purchase a large EGO riding mower and EGO brand cordless outdoor equipment including: two electric push lawn mowers, a pole hedge kit, six carbon fiber trimmers, and 4 leaf blowers. These new tools are in addition to other small rechargeable equipment like trimmers and leaf blowers that DPW bought in 2020. All are the same make and batteries for the equipment are interchangeable.

The purchases were spurred by panel discussions a year ago sponsored by the Town of Wellesley, Lexington DPW, Wellesley Natural Resources Commission, and Sustainable Wellesley in partnership with two nonprofits, American Green Zone Alliance and Quiet Communities, Inc.

Look for DPW crews using the new equipment at four established green spaces: Central Park near the Wellesley Square post office, Church Park in front of the Village Church, the Wellesley Police Department grounds, and the Tolles Parsons Center on Washington Street. These high-traffic parklands showcase pesticide-free landscaping and low-maintenance native plantings to foster birds, bees and other useful insects.

Because they run on rechargeable batteries, this equipment eliminates fumes and vibrations that are harmful to operators and passersby, and have lower decibel levels to reduce use noise. To keep equipment charged when away from power sources, DPW Director Dave Cohen is mounting charging stations on a trailer. "We are eager to see how this set up works and if the equipment can give crew members the sustained service that is required during long work days," said Cohen.

According to Paul DePhillips, Assistant Superintendent of the DPW Park & Tree division, the team is also considering adding a solar panel to the roof of the trailer to provide some additional charging capability and reduce or even eliminate plug-in charging time. DePhillips's crew has also added four electric chainsaws.

The most expensive piece is the rider electric mower, which retails for about \$4,999 and can cut up to two acres on a single battery charge. The motor emits a sound that resembles a 'faint whine,' instead of a louder mowing noise.

In the coming months, DPW will be collecting data to quantify the benefits of shifting to electric equipment and will present this information to the Town to help inform future decisions about expanding the electric landscaping program.

Climate Action in Wellesley

The electric landscaping equipment program is helping support the Town's climate action goals to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 50% below 2007 levels by 2030 and reach net-zero by 2050. Wellesley is currently developing a Climate Action Plan that will serve as a roadmap for reaching these goals. To learn more visit <https://www.wellesleyma.gov/1584/Climate-Action-Plan>

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