

Works Board urges city to cut back on brush pickup

Written by KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM
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Recommendation calls for paring spring, fall collecting to save money, free up crews

Brush collection in the City of Port Washington will be a little less frequent next year if a plan recommended by the Board of Public Works is adopted by the Common Council.

The board recommended that the city collect brush from the curb on alternate weeks in spring and fall, but retain its weekly collection during the summer.

That will save the city almost \$4,000 next year and free street department workers to do other tasks, officials said.

“In the summer, summer employees do the work,” Public Works Director Rob Vanden Noven said, noting these employees are typically students who make \$8 to \$9 an hour.

“When they go back to college, we have two full-time employees who do this work. We lose two very skilled employees who pick up brush when they could be doing many other things.

“We’re losing a lot of productivity.”

The alternate week pickup would occur from April 15 to May 15, and again from Sept. 1 to Nov. 1. Weekly collection would run from May 15 to Sept. 1.

Ald. Kevin Rudser suggested that the city collect brush only once a month and instead open the city yard on Sundays, allowing people to drop off brush there instead.

“I know it’s one of those things people really like,” Rudser said, but the added convenience of being able to drop off yard waste another day each week might offset any potential problems.

But Street Commissioner Dave Ewig said that isn’t practical, since there isn’t enough room at the yard to store the volume of waste.

Ewig said he is willing to give the proposed new schedule a shot, but noted that the service is one residents value.

“We certainly want to make the best use of our manpower,” he said. “My only concern is, especially in spring, people do a lot of trimming and we get a lot of brush.”

Board Chairman Craig Czarnecki reiterated the fact that residents value the pickup.

“The only time I got an earful from someone (about city services) is from a neighbor whose brush wasn’t picked up as quickly as he thought it should be,” he said.

If the system doesn’t work out, the city could revert back to weekly collection in 2016, board

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members said.