

Memorandum

City of Lawrence

Planning & Development Services

TO: David L. Corliss, City Manager

FROM: Brian Jimenez, Code Enforcement Manager

CC: Scott McCullough, Director Planning & Development Services
Kurt Schroeder, Assistant Director Development Services

Date: December 12, 2013

RE: Grass/Weed Abatement Summary for the 2013 season

Each spring, the Code Enforcement Division re-commences the annual enforcement of the City's Weed Code (18-301). The enforcement of this seasonal violation typically begins in early April and continues through late October/early November. This memo provides a summary of our enforcement efforts from 2006 to 2013.

Two staff members are assigned to the enforcement of the code which consists of citizen complaint inspections and staff initiated inspections. Below is a chart providing an eight year history of the total number of cases opened, number of citizen complaints, complaints received via internet complaint system and the number of staff initiated cases.

Summary of Weed/Grass Cases

Year	# of Cases	Citizen Complaints		Staff Initiated
		Phone, Mail, etc.	Internet Complaint	
2006	873	438	8	427
2007	841	409	19	413
2008	1,043	608	35	400
2009	1,000	509	21	470
2010	949	411	123	415
2011	818	322	108	388
2012	934	311	112	511
2013	¹ 645	357	150	138
Total	7,103 (887 avg.)	3,365 (47%)	576(8%)	3,162 (45%)

¹ Lowest total of cases correlates with staff's implementation of the Innoprise software – training, additional time to document case, etc., which produced a lower number of staff-initiated cases. Note, however, that the number of total citizen complaints (507) is the fourth highest total in the years tracked.

It is important to note that each case investigated can have several different outcomes.

- If there is no violation found during the initial inspection, staff will close the case resulting in only one inspection being conducted.
- If there is a violation, staff sends the required written violation notice which requires a 2nd inspection after ten days.
- Staff will close the case if the violation is corrected after the second inspection.
- If a violation still exists upon the second inspection, staff will notify our City mowing contractor to mow the property. A third inspection will then occur to verify the property has been mowed and is code compliant.
- Staff will then bill the owner for the amount owed. If owner does not pay, staff places a tax assessment (lien) against the property. This occurs during the month of August.
- For properties cited after August, staff monitors for outstanding bills each spring and places a certificate of assessment against properties that have not paid the bill. A lien would then be placed against the property in August if the bill remains outstanding.

Staff's other significant responsibility in enforcing the Weed Code is the administration processes that are required which includes the following:

- The mailing of all violation notices and the tracking of all case information.
- Establishing purchase orders for the contract mower and the managing of payments to the mowing contractor for each property mowed.
- Monitoring open accounts throughout the year and processing outstanding weed bills for assessment to the property taxes at year's end.

The Weed Code allows for the abatement of the violation; therefore, the Code Enforcement Division budgets for these abatement costs every year, which is then recaptured through billing and/or assessing the property. Below is a chart identifying the budget for each of the last eight years, annual total expenditures, and the remaining budget balance for each year.

Abatement Costs per Year

Budgeted Amount	Expenditures	Budget Balance	% of Budget Remaining
2006 – 25,000	21,454.70	3,545.30	14
2007 – 25,770	25,296.69	474.31	2
2008 – 25,000	22,588.90	3,211.10	12
2009 – 25,700	23,978.20	1,721.80	7
2010 – 23,025	21,853.10	1,171.90	5
2011 – 23,500	17,443.45	6,056.55	26
2012 – 23,500	15,467.25	8,032.75	34
2013 – 23,500	16,727.25	6,772.75	29