

City Council – Action Request Form

Date: November 8, 2021

To: Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Members of the City Council

From: Patrice Toney, Assistant City Manager
William L. Mayo, Fire Chief

Council Action Requested:
Ordinance Amending Chapter 22 of the Code of the City of Winston-Salem Entitled “Fire Prevention and Protection” to Create a Prohibition of the Use of Combustible Landscaping Materials

Strategic Focus Area: Safe and Secure Community
Strategic Objective: Yes
Strategic Plan Action Item: No
Key Work Item: No



Summary of Information:

The attached ordinance amendment is to limit the occurrence of unwanted fires involving landscaping materials at multi-family dwellings. The intention is also to limit the spread of unwanted fires in the landscaping, thus reducing fire spread to the exterior walls of the buildings. Pine straw is the most widely used combustible landscaping material. The careless disposal of smoking materials is the leading cause of fires in combustible landscaping. However, other accidental causes such as electrical fires, dumpster fires, and nearby vehicle fires can also easily ignite combustible landscaping. Many multi-family dwellings have vinyl siding, which is easily ignitable and will spread very quickly in a vertical manner.

Winston-Salem Fire Department personnel along with Forsyth County Fire and Kernersville Fire personnel have engaged the apartment management community regarding this proposed ordinance. The apartment management community has assisted with the development of this proposal and are in favor of it. This ordinance would not affect single family homes.

Committee Action:

Committee	Public Safety 11/8/2021	Action	Approval
For	Unanimous	Against	
Remarks:			

A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) will be posted on the Winston-Salem Fire Department webpage to assist the public.

Other municipalities in North Carolina have combustible landscaping ordinances already in place. Raleigh is the most notable example as it was passed on 2010 in response to a major fire.

There is a one-year grace period to allow the apartment management community to make plans, budget, and implement the requirements of this proposed ordinance.