



City of Oskaloosa  
City Council Study Session  
Council Chambers  
City Hall, 220 S. Market Street  
Oskaloosa, IA 52577  
Agenda  
March 20, 2017  
5:00 PM

**1. Discussion Regarding A Possible Amendment To Oskaloosa  
Municipal Code Chapter 8.20 Weeds**

Documents:

[WEED STUDY SESSION COMMUNICATION REVISED.DOCX](#)  
[20170320\\_STUDY SESSION WEEDS.PDF](#)

**2. Adjourn**

If you require special accommodations, please contact the City Manager's Office at least 24 hours prior to the meeting at (641) 673-9431.



## City Council Communication Study Session

Meeting Date: March 20, 2017

Requested By: Fire Department

**Item Title:**

Discussion regarding a possible amendment to Oskaloosa Municipal Code Chapter 8.20 Weeds.

**Explanation:**

This item has been requested to present and discuss the current weed and tall grass ordinances for the city of Oskaloosa. Staff is interested in receiving feedback on possible changes to the current code, Chapter 8.20 – Weeds.

**Budget Consideration:**

None

**Attachments:**

Study Session presentation

**City Council Study Session  
March 20, 2017**

**Oskaloosa Municipal Code  
Chapter 8.20 WEEDS**

**Why the request for an amendment?**

- Current 12" height requirement is excessive; presents mowing and community pride issues.
- Proposed changes clearly define city's mowing expectation (more than once a month).
- Adding year-round enforcement address seasonality issues
- Change PW Director to City Manager or designee provides administrative flexibility.
- Reaffirm and discuss notification requirements, expectations and/or other desired modifications.

## Current Ordinance 8.20.030

### Compliance Required

No person shall violate any of the provisions of this chapter, either by an act of omission or commission or by failing to cut the weeds or tall grass required by this chapter to be cut, after notice being given in a newspaper of general circulation in Oskaloosa notifying residents of the requirements of this chapter.

## Current Ordinance 8.20.040

### Responsibility to cut-City Action

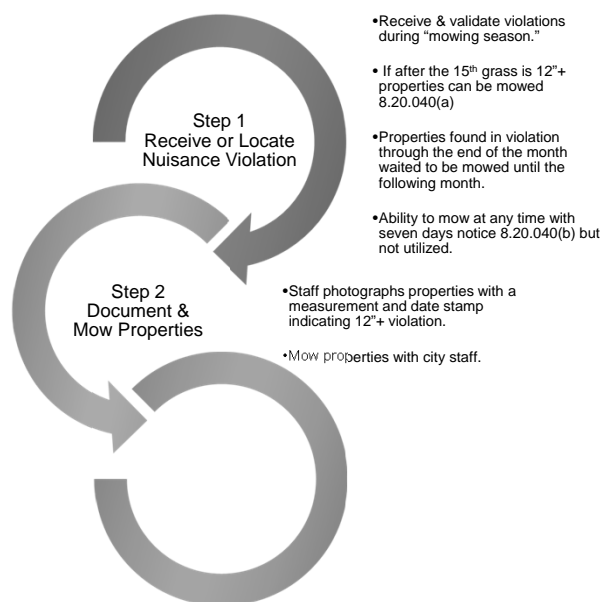
- A. The owners, agents or occupants of all lots or parcels of ground within the city shall cut, or cause to be cut, all weeds or tall grass on their respective premises as aforesaid not later than April 15, May 15, June 15, July 15, August 15 and September 15 respectively, each year. Notwithstanding the previous statement, owners, agents or occupants of all lots or parcels of ground within the city shall cut, cause to be cut, all weeds or grass on their respective premises to a height not to exceed twelve inches. If any lot or parcel of ground within the city has not been cut, or has weeds or grass twelve inches or higher on April 15, May 15, June 15, July 15, August 15 and September 15 respectively, each year, the public works director may cause such weeds or grass to be cut.
- B. Notwithstanding subsection A of this section, the city may cut or cause to be cut all weeds or grass on a lot or parcel of ground within the city that exceeds twelve inches in height after providing seven calendar days' written notice to the owners, agents or occupants of the property. Notice shall be given by posting the property. Notice starts on the day the notice is posted.

## Current Ordinance 8.20.050

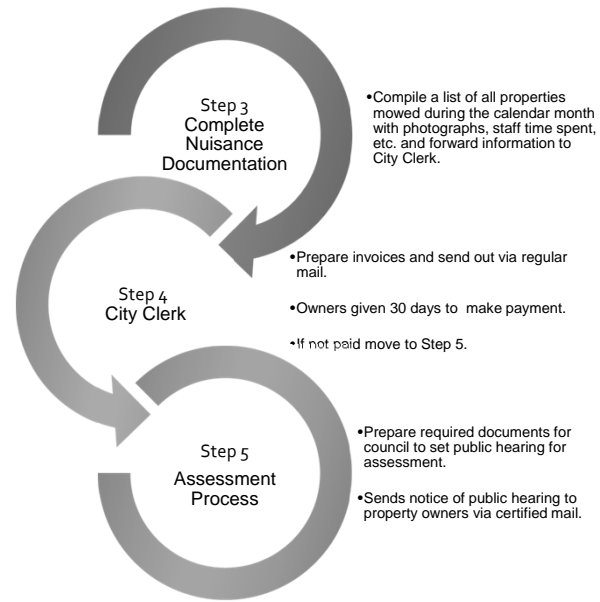
### Streets and Alleys-responsibility of abutting owners-City Action

The owners, agents or occupants of all lands abutting any of the streets and alleys within the city shall keep such streets and alleys free from brush, weeds and rubbish. Such brush, weeds and rubbish shall be removed not later than April 15, May 15, June 15, July 15, August 15 and September 15, respectively, each year. In case this section is not complied with within three days after the dates above-fixed, the public works director may cause the removal of such brush, weeds and rubbish.

## OMC 8.20.040 (past practice)



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## Oskaloosa Mowing History

YEAR	TOTAL PROPERTIES MOWED	ASSESSMENTS
2012	27	20
2013	58	37
2014	18	15
2015	32	24
2016	39	20
<b>Average</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>23</b>

## Other Cities

### **City of Pella**

Grass or weed height: 8 inches

Corrective action timeframe: 7 days

*(Eight inches is used as the nuisance height, with the corrective timeframe and the scheduling of the mowing, in most cases 7 days of additional growth has occurred. (14 days elapsed time from posting)*

Means of Notification: Certified Mail

## Other Cities

### **City of Knoxville**

Grass or weed height: 8 inches

Corrective action timeframe: 4-5 days

*(Eight inches is used as the nuisance height, with the corrective timeframe and the scheduling of the mowing, in most cases 6-7 days of additional growth has occurred (10-12 days elapsed time from posting).*

Means of Notification: Posting of property and letter sent regular mail.

## Other Cities

### City of Newton

Grass or weed height: 8 inches

Corrective action timeframe: 5 days

*(Eight inches is used as the nuisance height, with the corrective timeframe and the scheduling of the mowing, in most cases 7 days of additional growth has occurred. 12 days elapsed time from posting).*

Means of Notification: Posting of property (occupied) or letter sent regular mail (vacant).

## Proposed Ordinance 8.20.040

### Responsibility to cut-City action

- A. The owners, agents or occupants of all lots or parcels of ground within the city shall cut, or have to be cut, all weeds or tall grass on their respective premises as aforesaid not later than the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> respectively of each month. Notwithstanding the previous statement, the owners, agents or occupants of all lots or parcels of ground within the city shall cut, or have to be cut, all weeds or tall grass on their respective premises to a height not to exceed eight inches. If any lot or parcel of ground within the city has not been cut, or has weeds or grass eight inches or higher during the timeframe listed above the City Manager or designee may cause such weeds or grass to be cut.
- B. Notwithstanding subsection A of this section, the city may cut or cause to be cut all weeds or grass on a lot or parcel of ground within the city that exceeds eight inches in height after providing seven calendar days written notice to the owners, agents or occupants of the property. Notice shall be given by posting the property. Notice starts on the day the notice is posted.

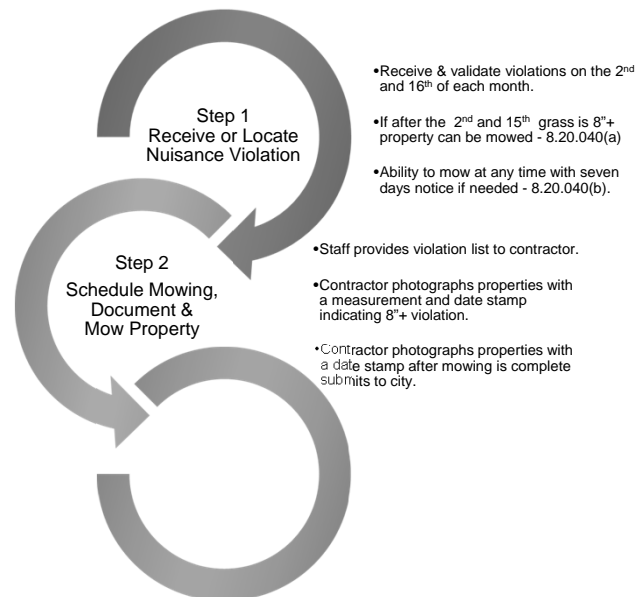


## Proposed Ordinance 8.20.050

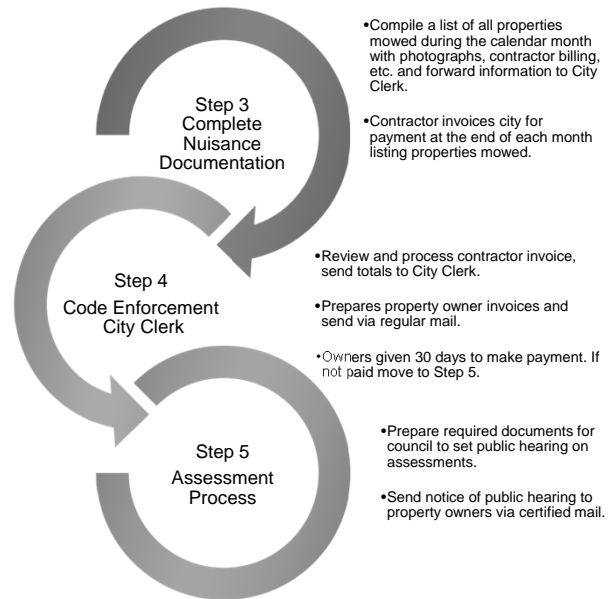
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## OMC 8.20.040 (proposed)



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## Questions for City Council

- Is the current notification requirement in 8.20.030 acceptable?
- Height change from 12" to 8" acceptable?
- Should the city set a date or dates for mowing as a minimum city standard?
  - If yes, should we use one day or two?
  - If no, could require more administrative oversight for program on an "as needed basis"
- Adding year-round enforcement acceptable?
- Other items?