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TWO SECTIONS - 75

Council seeks to restrict water use

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Bloomfield Township Council will be introducing on second reading an ordinance to limit residents' water usage while watering their lawns.

The ordinance will stipulate that Bloomfield residents should not water their lawns more than twice a week, for a half-hour each time. Additionally, residents would not be allowed to water their lawns after rainfall, and watering would only be allowed between 5 and 9 p.m.

Flower boxes and gardens, however, are exempt from the new ordinance, with no limits imposed on irrigating them. Additionally, landscaping businesses are also exempt, as are lawns that are having special treatments done that require watering.

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ing.

John Palomaki, chairman of Greener Bloomfield, which suggested the ordinance, said water conservation was one of the "preferred actions" to earn points for a Sustainable Jersey certification. A town seeking this certification requires at least two of their initiatives to be preferred actions.

Palomaki, along with Councilman Nicholas Joanow, said that water is going to be the next "scarce natural resource," and it is important for people to conserve freshwater resources, and to use them responsibly.

With ever-expanding development, Palomaki said, there's more need for freshwater, and the more that's used to water lawns when it's not needed, the less water will be available to drink.

Another issue is the cost, and reducing the amount of water used will help both residents and the town reduce the amount of money spent bringing water in from Newark.

To be properly watered, he said, a lawn doesn't need more than 30 minutes of watering twice a week. He added that 30 minutes was recommended because it gives the water time to soak into the soil, and encourages the grass roots to bury deeper, creating a stronger, healthier lawn overall.

Residents looking to conserve water can also install rainwater harvesting systems, to catch runoff from roofs, and use it to water the lawn, as you don't need to filter and purify water to irrigate grass as you do for drinking water. "There's lots of expense in processing drinking water," he said, "and we don't need that for watering our lawns."

Joanow echoed Palomaki's sentiment that water will soon become a more valued commodity, and that the ordinance will help change residents' attitudes about water usage. Now, he said, the attitude is that water will flow freely whenever the faucet is turned on, but it will become more of an issue as the population grows.

"Water has an extreme value," he said, adding that people need to remember that much of our drinking water comes from what goes

Water conservation

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down the storm drains, and they should be careful not to dump things other than water in those drains.

The ordinance is about preparing for the future, when water is seen as having greater importance, and will provide guidelines for proper usage. "We have a direction on how to best use water so we always have that comfort level, so water is always there in the faucet for us," Joanow said. There needs to be an understanding, he said, that water is a commodity, with limits and best practices associated with its use.

The ordinance will be on the agenda for a second reading on Tuesday, and residents will be given the chance to voice their opinions about the ordinance during the meeting.