Israel Del Toro Author • Lawrence City Park

Please watch the presentation in municipal services meeting. Lots of data, Chad just plainly lies

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Jessica Anderson • E South River

Israel Del Toro in your presentation you referenced a followup study you conducted in 2021. Could you please provide a link to that study because it does not appear to have been posted on PeerJ and I have not been able to find it elsewhere.

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Israel Del Toro Author • Lawrence City Park

Jessica Anderson That paper is currently being prepared for peer-review. I will let you know when it becomes accessible as a pre-print.

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Jessica Anderson • E South River

Israel Del Toro I don't understand how you can use an unpublished paper that has not yet even been peer-reviewed much less been replicated by other researchers as evidence that No Mow May definitively results in greater bee richness, much less that Alderperson Doran in some way lied by introducing this resolution or doubting that letting grass grow beyond 8 inches promotes bee flourishing.

Could you please explain how Alderperson Doran is lying?

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Israel Del Toro Author • Lawrence City Park

Jessica Anderson Im sorry you dont understand. Please review the video of the municipal services meeting to get all of my comments on the matter. And yes Doran continues to lie.

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Jessica Anderson • E South River

Israel Del Toro I have reviewed the video, and I did not understand

Jessica Anderson • E South River

Israel Del Toro I have reviewed the video, and I did not understand what Alderperson Doran supposedly lied about. The evidence still seems to be out on the benefits of growing grass over 8 inches. I also didn't understand your accusation that the resolution was in some way defamatory. What was defamatory about the resolution?

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Relena Ribbons • Lawrence City Park

Jessica Anderson Hi, I can clarify that a study going through peer-review is undergoing the scientific process, which is a routine part of publishing scientific research of sending potential papers out to independent scientists to evaluate. Alder Doran was quoting a blog post (which is not peer-reviewed) by an individual who has never been to these lawns or looked at the plants or bees in question (an expert on bees, but as they state in their blog post not an expert on plants). Peer-review as a process takes time (months to years), and it is common for scientists to share pending study results (as Alder Del Toro did during the meeting). Alder Doran wrote into the resolution that No Mow May should be removed since there is "no evidence", which is inconsistent with numerous studies on developing and researching on bee lawns (see Marla Spivak at the University of Minnesota, for example). These studies are not affiliated with Alder Del Toro's work but provide additional data validating/supporting the general trends of the PeerJ paper. Happy to talk more about it if you have questions. One of the many aspects of No Mow Mow was to increase discussion about pollinator conservation, and one of the benefits of engaging with alternative lawn practices like no mow or low mow lawns it that physically leaving undisturbed lawns can provide habitat for wildflowers to grow, which are especially important early on in the growing season for a range of pollinators. I hope that helps, but feel free to reach out.

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Jessica Anderson • E South River

Relena Del Toro Ribbons Hi Ms. Ribbons. The slides that were shared with the committee have not been shared with the public. I have asked

Jessica Anderson • E South River

Relena Del Toro Ribbons Hi Ms. Ribbons. The slides that were shared with the committee have not been shared with the public. I have asked Alderperson Del Toro to provide a copy of the slide deck and he has declined to do so. So I have no way of even seeing the information that was presented to the committee or what kind of scientific evidence you provided regarding other evidence demonstrating the benefit of growing grass long in May. Could you please provide a copy of the slides that were presented during the meeting and make them readily available to the public so that we can see this evidence.

Right now, accusing Alderperson Doran of "lying" comes across as very overwrought and possibly just a matter of differing opinions.

I also still don't understand why it matters that Zach Portman's Medium article was not peer reviewed. He reached out to PeerJ multiple times prior to writing on Medium. When he did finally write his article, he wrote in a very accessible and understandable manner that any layperson could understand, and I have not seen you present evidence that the concerns he raised were not valid. Could you please explain where Mr. Portman's criticisms were wrong? And if they were wrong, why was the article retracted 1 month after he published his article?

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Relena Ribbons • Lawrence City Park

Jessica Anderson Thank you for raising your concerns. Could you tell me a bit more about if your concerns are about grass height specifically

Relena Ribbons • Lawrence City Park

Jessica Anderson Thank you for raising your concerns. Could you tell me a bit more about if your concerns are about grass height specifically or the physical act of disturbing the soil/lawn environment? Not mowing can be beneficial for a whole range of reasons including not physically disturbing the space where plants germinate, grow, and flower. In another comment I directed folks to the Xerces Society, Bee City USA, and the Spivak Lab at the University of Minnesota, which are all independent sources of scientifically validated information. Peer-review as a process aims to help ensure academic or scientific integrity in how the study was carried out and how data was interpreted. I cannot comment on Mr. Portman's intent or process but in science folks could write a response paper to point out potential concerns or criticisms, which is a called a "reply" and an important a way for scientists to engage in peer-reviewed discourse and conversation. Mr. Portman chose a different route to express his views, which is his personal commentary not scientifically reviewed or assessed. A blog post should not be treated with equal weight to a scientific study conducted by another scientist, but Alder Doran asserted that Mr. Portman's blog post invalidates the scientific study. It does not.

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In case your concerns are similar to those raised in the FAQ from the City of Sun Prairie, here's their impact report from 2022. I am not associated with any of the details or information in that report, but it talks about some lawn-owners concerns about dandelions for example...
https://cityofsunprairie.com/DocumentCenter/View/12917/No-Mow-May-Impact-Report-FINAL

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Jessica Anderson • E South River

Relena Ribbons I don't actually have any concerns about No Mow May itself. People can grow their grass 2 feet if they feel like it for all I care.

Jessica Anderson • E South River

Relena Ribbons I don't actually have any concerns about No Mow May itself. People can grow their grass 2 feet if they feel like it for all I care. But the lack of transparency surrounding the information presented at the committee meeting does concern me.

The new study that was mentioned at the meeting has not been made public, and the slideshow that was presented to the committee is being withheld from the public. None of this makes sense to me. I don't understand why the study is being withheld when you are concurrently using it as proof that No Mow May helps bees. I also don't understand why the slide show is being withheld when, again, it was the presentation that was given to show why the resolution should not be approved.

Additionally, the accusations of lying really don't make any sense to me. The retracted study was strongly used as a reason to permanently embed No Mow May into city code. The retracted study was retracted. It doesn't seem like a big deal for an alderperson to put forth a resolution to remove No Mow May from city code when the study that was the main support for it was retracted. That doesn't seem defamatory to me.

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Relena Ribbons • Lawrence City Park

Jessica Anderson Hi we are not withholding anything, we are undertaking due diligence during peer review. Unlike blog posts, we

Relena Ribbons • Lawrence City Park

Jessica Anderson Hi we are not withholding anything, we are undertaking due diligence during peer review. Unlike blog posts, we want to follow the scientific process, so it's important important we wait to hear from other experts through that process before making the data public.

The lying is that alder Doran made claims about "falsified data" in the request to remove the ordinance that allows No Mow May. We did not falsify data, that is a lie.

There is an entire body of peer reviewed science that talks about the benefits of reduced mowing (nobody is required to do it, this is all opt in), I've added a few links below in case you'd like to peruse those educational resources.

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Jessica Anderson • E South River

Relena Ribbons thank you for that clarification. If I'm understanding correctly, your position is that Alderperson Doran lied by referencing PeerJ's retraction policy in the resolution. Is that correct?

I will also reiterate that Alderperson Del Toro is indeed withholding information from the public. He presented data and slides at the committee meeting as evidence that Alderperson Doran was lying and that No Mow May was beneficial, but he is now refusing to make that information available to the public for them to review. If the information presented was good enough to show to the committee prior to undergoing peer review, then there is no reason that it should be withheld from the public because it hasn't undergone peer review.

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Relena Ribbons • Lawrence City Park

Jessica Anderson I appreciate your dedication to understanding the issue, but there are some elements of this process that require patience.

Relena Ribbons • Lawrence City Park

Jessica Anderson I appreciate your dedication to understanding the issue, but there are some elements of this process that require patience. As soon as the data is available in a pre-print it will be made publicly available.

PeerJ has a general retraction policy, yes. Alder Doran quoting it as the reason for the No Mow May paper retraction is mid-representing the facts. That is misleading, and not a true representation of the issue.

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