

New Waukesha ordinance requires water-efficient irrigation systems

WAUKESHA — The Common Council on Tuesday passed a first-of-its-kind ordinance requiring water-efficient irrigation systems in the city of Waukesha.

The council unanimously adopted an ordinance requiring new landscape irrigation systems to include mechanisms to shut them off if it is raining or if the soil already has enough moisture for plants.

The new ordinance — the first of its type in Wisconsin — requires anyone installing irrigation systems to use EPA WaterSense controllers to help cut down on water usage, according to Alderman Terry Thieme.

“Waukesha is proud to again provide water conservation leadership,” he said in a statement. “We believe we are the first community in the state to adopt this requirement.”

The required sensors start at around \$200, but can cost more than \$1,000. However, they can also save between 30 percent and 50 percent on summer water bills while reducing landscape runoff by as much as 71 percent.

Sprinkling is already banned by the city between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., whether with sprinklers or irrigation systems, and sprinkling at other hours is limited to two days per week.

The systems must also be installed so they cannot operate in ways that violate the city’s daytime sprinkling ban.

The city aims to save 10 percent of its water usage — about 365 million gallons — by the year 2050, according to **Waukesha Water Utility** General Manager Dan Duchniak.

“We are proud to say we are currently ahead of schedule,” he said in the statement. “However, we will continue to identify cost-effective measures we can implement to meet our goal.”

— Freeman Staff