

Ordinance No. 3839 of 2026

CITY OF MEADVILLE CRAWFORD  
COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MEADVILLE, CRAWFORD COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING SECTION 1721.30 OF ARTICLE 1721 OF THE MEADVILLE MUNICIPAL CODE, KNOWN AS THE PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE, ZONING CODE; PROVIDING FOR AN ALLOWANCE OF MANAGED NATURALIZED LANDSCAPES AS AN EXCEPTION TO THE PROHIBITION AGAINST WEEDS AND HIGH GRASS AND ASSOCIATED REGULATIONS THEREFORE; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE, SEVERABILITY AND A REPEALER.

WHEREAS, Article 1721 of the Meadville Municipal Code (the “MMC”), also known as the Property Maintenance Code, prohibits the existence of weeds and high grass on all premises and exterior properties; and

WHEREAS, the City of Meadville recognizes that since 1970, monitored wildlife populations in North America have declined by nearly 40%. Additionally, over one-third of US fish and wildlife species are at risk of extinction, including over one-fifth of pollinator species, including butterflies, bees, moths, and hummingbirds.

WHEREAS, the City of Meadville seeks to prohibit the uncontrolled growth of vegetation, while permitting the planting and maintenance of Managed Naturalized Landscapes that add diversity and richness to the City’s environment.

WHEREAS, the City of Meadville finds that the installation and maintenance of Managed Naturalized Landscapes is beneficial to the city’s environment and its residents by requiring fewer potential harmful and costly inputs, improving stormwater retention and water and air quality, increasing biodiversity, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and providing habitat for wildlife such as birds, butterflies, and other beneficial insects and species.

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Meadville has deemed it to be in the best interests of the residents of the City to protect Managed Naturalized Landscapes from being determined to be weeds or high grass, to provide for certain definitions and requirements to properly regulate and identify Managed Naturalized Landscapes.

NOW, THEREFORE, this 19<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2026 BE IT ORDAINED AND ENACTED by the City Council of the City of Meadville and it is hereby Ordained and Enacted by and within the Authority thereof as follows:

**Section 1. Definitions**

- A. **Native Plant:** A plant species that is generally recognized to have grown in the eastern United States, from the Great Lakes to the Mid-Atlantic and southern Appalachians, prior to European colonization.
- B. **Managed Natural Landscape:** A contiguous land area with an observable boundary, containing a planned, intentional, and maintained planting of species selected for their aesthetic benefits, ecological services, or production of garden goods. This intentionally excludes areas specifically and only used for urban agriculture and produce gardening.

- C. **Turfgrass:** Grass species of the *Poaceae* family that are conventionally maintained by mowing or other means at a relatively consistent height.
- D. **Noxious Weed:** A generally invasive plant that once declared noxious becomes illegal to sell, transport, plant or otherwise propagate within the Commonwealth set out in the Controlled Plants and Noxious Weeds Law, 3 Pa.C.S.A. §1502, and the regulations promulgated thereto. The list of Pennsylvania Noxious Weeds is periodically updated and is available from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

**Section 2.** That Section 1721.30 of Article 1721 of the MMC be amended in applicable part through the inclusion of underlined language, as follows:

**§ 1721.30 Weeds and high turfgrass prohibited.**

(A) **Removal of High Turfgrass Required.** All premises and exterior property shall be maintained free from turfgrass growth in excess of 10 inches high. All noxious weeds shall be prohibited.

(B) **High Turfgrass Notices.** Written notice of the violation of this section shall be given in the manner set forth in MMC 1721.14(B) and (C) except that only seven days shall be permitted to correct the violation. If the persons responsible fail to take corrective action to eliminate the violation(s), no additional notices shall be required for continuing uncorrected violations of the same provision on the same premises during the calendar year.

(C) **Remedies for Turfgrass Violations.** Whenever any person permits grass, weeds or other objectionable vegetation to remain upon premises in violation of this section and fails to have same removed within five days, after notice is given, the city is hereby authorized to cause the same to be removed by the city or a contractor hired by the city on a biweekly basis if reasonably required without further notice. The cost of such remedial action and all expenses incidental thereto together with a penalty of 10 percent of the costs may be collected from the owner or other person responsible for the premises in any manner permitted by law. In addition, a municipal lien or claim in the amount of the costs, related expenses, and penalties may be filed against the premises which were in violation. In addition, the city may pursue any and all other lawful remedies for the violation including prosecution of the offense.

(D) **Exception for Managed Naturalized Landscapes.** An owner of property is permitted to install and maintain a Managed Naturalized Landscape upon their premises. An owner of property shall comply with the following Managed Naturalized Landscape requirements in order to be exempt from Code violations:

- (1) Prior to installation, the property owner shall notify the City Code Official via the Managed Naturalized Landscape Application Form, of the intent to establish a Managed Naturalized Landscape. Such notification shall include the name and address of the applicant and the proposed location of the Managed Naturalized Landscape. The Code Official may request additional information reasonably necessary to determine compliance with this section;
- (2) For Managed Naturalized Landscapes existing prior to the effective date of this Ordinance, property owners shall submit the required materials identified in D(1) within a reasonable period, not to exceed ninety (90) days from enactment or notice by the City.
- (3) Property owners are encouraged to obtain a Pollinator Friendly Habitat Certification<sup>1</sup> or similar designation; however, such certification shall not be required for compliance with this section;

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<sup>1</sup> Link to Penn State Pollinator Habitat Certification: [Pollinator Habitat Certification - The Center for Pollinator Research \(psu.edu\)](http://www.pollinator.org/PollinatorHabitatCertification)

- (4) A Managed Naturalized Landscape shall include clearly defined edging or boundary treatment. Such edging may consist of durable materials or maintained natural boundaries sufficient to distinguish the managed naturalized landscape from unmanaged vegetation
- (5) Managed Naturalized Landscape areas must be managed to:
  - a. Exclude plants included in section 6 below.
  - b. Minimize bare earth and stormwater runoff.
  - c. Establish and maintain identifiably cultivated areas.
  - d. Eliminate conditions that retain stagnant surface water.
  - e. Managed Naturalized Landscapes shall not include turfgrass left unattended or unmowed.
- (6) Plantings within a Managed Naturalized Landscape area may include native and non-native varieties, but must not include:
  - a. Any plant listed as a Class A, B, or C Noxious Weed by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.
  - b. Plants identified as invasive by the Pennsylvania Governor's Invasive Species Council.
  - c. Any plant otherwise identified by an agency of the Commonwealth as an ecological or health threat.
  - d. Any plant which, by virtue of its location, characteristics, or growth habit, presents a hazard or nuisance to the public or might otherwise cause harm to members of the public (e.g., poison ivy, poison oak).
  - e. Species specifically prohibited by other law.
- (7) Within one (1) year of notification, the City may inspect the Managed Naturalized Landscape to confirm compliance with this section. Failure to maintain the managed naturalized landscape in accordance with this section may result in enforcement under this Chapter.
- (8) Managed Naturalized Landscapes and surrounding areas shall be maintained in accordance with §1721.30(A) and shall not consist of unmanaged or unattended vegetation. The managed naturalized landscape shall be maintained so as to demonstrate an intentional and cultivated appearance and shall not create a nuisance or safety hazard.
- (9) Managed Naturalized Landscapes may be located on any portion of the property; however, the City may require reasonable modifications where necessary to address safety concerns, visibility issues, or impacts to adjacent properties or public rights-of-way;
- (10) Managed naturalized landscapes shall be maintained so as not to encroach upon adjacent properties or public right-of-way. It is highly recommended that Managed Naturalized Landscapes be setback five feet (5ft) or more from a property or lot line;
- (11) There will be no specific size limitation; however, the managed naturalized landscape must remain consistent with the maintenance, safety, and nuisance provisions of this section.;
- (12) Nothing in this section shall limit the City's authority to enforce nuisance conditions, public health and safety violations, or any other applicable provisions of this Code;
- (13) Signage identifying managed naturalized landscapes, or "pollinator gardens", is not required but highly encouraged. However, the City Code Official may require signage identifying the managed naturalized landscape where necessary to distinguish it from a violation.

### **Section 3. Effective Date.**

The provisions of this Ordinance shall become effective at 12:01 a.m., prevailing time, on the 21<sup>st</sup> day following the date of passage and enactment.

### **Section 4. Severability.**

Should any section, part or provision of this Ordinance be declared by appropriate authority to be unlawful or unconstitutional, all other terms, conditions, provisions and parts hereof, and of any Code of which this Ordinance may be or may be considered to be part, shall continue in full force and effect as if

the provision declared to be unlawful or unconstitutional had been omitted as of the date of final enactment hereof.

**Section 5. Repealer.**

All ordinances and part of ordinances inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed and superseded by the above.

Introduced This 5<sup>th</sup> day of May, A.D., 2026

Second Reading This 5<sup>th</sup> day of May, A.D., 2026

Finally Passed and Enacted This 19<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2026

**CITY OF MEADVILLE**

Attest:

  
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Jaime Kinder, Mayor

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Maryann Menanno, City Clerk

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