CITY OF LA CROSSE

400 La Crosse Street
La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601
(608) 789-CITY
www.cityoflacrosse.org

LEGISLATION STAFF REPORT FOR COUNCIL

File ID: 25-0034

Caption: AN ORDINANCE to create Section 36-27 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of La Crosse regarding the release of balloons.

Staff/Department Responsible for Legislation

Mayor

Requestor of Legislation

Mayor

Location, if applicable

Summary/Purpose

This proposed ordinance is meant to help decrease the pollution and resulting harm caused by balloons released into the atmosphere

Background

-Released balloons end up as litter in waterways, forests, agricultural areas, and in municipalities. Latex and Mylar balloons can persist in the environment for years, contributing to plastic pollution. Animals, particularly marine life and birds, mistake balloon fragments for food. This can lead to choking, intestinal blockages, or starvation.
-Balloons, especially those made of Mylar or containing metallic components, release harmful chemicals as they break down. Balloons can be ingested by grazing animals, leading to health problems or death, impacting local farmers.
-The materials used in balloons can degrade into microplastics, contaminating soil and water and causing numerous health problems for humans. The production, transportation, and release of balloons contribute to greenhouse gas emissions.
-As of January 2025, six states and numerous communities have instituted similar bans in the United States.

Fiscal Impact

Negligible

Staff Recommendation

None, however the mayor strongly urges approval