



PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE

The following is public correspondence received by the City Clerk's Office after the posting of the original agenda. Individual contact information has been redacted for privacy. This may *not* be a comprehensive collection of the public correspondence, but staff makes its best effort to include all correspondence received to date.

To send correspondence to the City Council, on matters listed on the agenda please email PublicComment@losaltosca.gov

From: rebeccasherwood@earthlink.net
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: Gas leaf blowers
Date: Tuesday, March 14, 2023 12:39:37 AM

Dear Los Altos city council members

Last Friday morning I was awakened at 7:15 AM by not one but two very loud gas leaf blowers right outside my bedroom window. Recently this lawn service has started having two of their men using a gas blower at the same time!

Every Friday for the past years and years, the same garden service has done my next-door neighbor and the neighbor directly across the street.

In addition to the very disturbing noise level, when I step out on my side yard I can smell the gas fumes.

Some years ago I did call in to the city twice and complained about this particular garden service and even though the nonemergency police came out and spoke with them on each occasion it didn't do any good — and years later they are still at it every Friday morning like clockwork.

In addition to these two neighbors who share the same service, all of the homes up and down the street (except for just one neighbor whose gardener uses an electric blower) as well throughout my neighborhood have gardeners who use gas blowers. There's not a day during the week without gas blowers being used nearby.

During our usual milder weather there are times when you can't sit out and have lunch in your own yard without the noise and smell of gas blowers nearby.

I started a daily walking program in the neighborhood about a year ago and I found that I needed to adjust my route as I go through the neighborhood while attempting to avoid gas blowers.

I've tried talking to neighbors with whom I have very friendly relationships but they are not inclined to do anything about it.

I truly hope that city council will come up with some ways to actually enforce the ban on gas blowers. After many years of experiencing this problem I've come to believe that the remedy needs to involve citing the homeowners who are hiring these services.

Thank you very much for your efforts and I look forward to hearing that an effective method will be on the horizon!

Rebecca Sherwood
Austin Ave.
Grant Park Neighborhood

From: [Barbara Zieroth-Hoffman](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT AGENDA #9 MARCH 14,2023
Date: Tuesday, March 14, 2023 8:44:19 AM

Please vote to strengthen the current gas-powered leaf blower ordinance enforcement. An effective way would be to target the owners of properties where violations occur with significant fines after only one written warning. It is also apparent that phone calls or emails are not working as a means of complaint since the response is after the fact, and many people will not "inform" on their neighbors. There has to be a code enforcement officer who patrols the streets on a regular basis to actually observe the usage of a gas-powered leaf blower. This is a critical time to make changes to the ordinance to ensure our community is part of the solution to help eliminate the staggering pollution from gas-powered equipment that are soon totally banned in California. Thank you for your consideration.

From: [Tim Twerdahl](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: Gas Leaf Blowers
Date: Tuesday, March 14, 2023 9:00:06 AM

Please enforce the ordinance and stop these terribly polluting devices in Los Altos.

Tim Twerdahl
Los Altos

From: [Ellen Barker](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT AGENDA ITEM #9-MARCH 14, 2023
Date: Tuesday, March 14, 2023 9:32:35 AM

We really need a better way to enforce this. The police are good about responding to complaints, but having neighbors rat out neighbors doesn't make for good relations, and it's very piecemeal.

A really serious public information campaign might help: Mailings to every property, describing the ordinance and telling homeowners and tenants what to tell their contractors. Maybe include a card (in multiple languages) to give or send to their gardeners explaining the consequences if they get caught. Suggest approaches such as buying your own equipment for the gardener to use at your property only (or share with a neighbor if the gardener works for several homes on your block). I suspect that it's easy for people who are not home during the day when their own gardener is working to NOT know what their own contractor is doing. If the homeowner gets fined in addition to the contractor, that might make an impact.

From: [Alexander MacInnis](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT AGENDA ITEM #9-MARCH 14, 2023
Date: Tuesday, March 14, 2023 10:28:54 AM

Dear Los Altos City Council,

I strongly support Los Altos's ban on the use of gas powered leaf blowers. But I am very disappointed at the severe lack of enforcement. Loud, highly annoying gas leaf blowers are in frequent use throughout Los Altos. The noise is likely damaging the hearing of the employees having to use them. Not only is the noise a very real problem, those machines are highly polluting. Los Altos could solve all of those problems by enforcing its existing ban on gas powered leaf blowers. Rechargeable electric leaf blowers are a better alternative all the way around.

Here are some suggestions on how to effectively enforce the ban, without imposing undue hardship on anyone.

(1) Whenever any phones in a complaint, have an officer or other city employee visit the homeowner to make sure they understand the ban and ask them to require their gardeners to use only electric leaf blowers, or no leaf blowers. Officers should do this even if they do not personally observe a violation.

(2) Officers should pay attention to the noise of gas leaf blowers when on normal patrols, and take action when they do not have a higher priority task.

(3) Fines should be levied on the owner of the gardening company, not the employee using the gas leaf blower. Employees typically have to follow the direction of the owner.

(4) Please consider a mechanism for ensuring that homeowners who hire gardening companies are insisting that gardeners do not use gas leaf blowers.

In my experience as a homeowner, it is very simple to ask your gardener to use only electric leaf blowers, and they comply. They typically use rechargeable blowers and charge an extra battery while working on each yard. There are no problems with that practice.

Thank you.

--Alexander MacInnis
Los Altos

From: [Eric Muller](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT AGENDA ITEM #9 - March 14, 2023 - Gas Powered Leaf Blower Enforcement
Date: Tuesday, March 14, 2023 5:51:36 PM

Dear Council,

Gasoline leaf blowers are clearly a nuisance, both for noise and pollution. Indeed, AB1346, signed into law, directs the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to ban the sale of new gasoline leaf blowers (and other lawn equipment) by Jan. 1, 2024.

I want to believe that Los Altos residents are supportive of electrification, or at least would be if properly informed; and that they will gladly help. I also recognize that this can be a financial burden for many of the gardeners who work in our city. In that spirit, I urge you to:

- significantly lower or even entirely waive the fee for Landscape & Gardening business licenses, at least for the next year or two, so that professional landscapers can easily benefit from the California CORE program, which covers 70% of the cost of new electric gardening equipment (see [californiacore dot org](#)).
- involve residents: when a violation is reported, send a letter to the resident with educational material on the benefits of gasoline lawn equipment, the CORE program (for professionals), and the SV Clean Energy rebate (for residents); at least in English and Spanish. I suggest to do that for the first two violations.
- on a third report, issue a fine to the resident (who could reassign it to their landlord, if appropriate). I would also support some mechanism to drop the fine if there is some evidence that the situation is addressed.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank the Council for switching the enforcement from the Police department to Development Services.

Thank you,
Eric Muller
752 Parma Way
Los Altos, CA 94024