



PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE

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

From: [Jim Wing](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment Agenda item 06 Meeting Date 05/09/2023
Date: Friday, May 5, 2023 10:22:51 AM

Los Altos Mayor Meadows and Distinguished Council Members,

Public Comment for 05/09/2023 Agenda 06 Halsey House CEQA Funding

Please do not deny public comments on Halsey House Draft CEQA Report!

Please amend approval to include funding for “enhanced” CEQA Public Comment instructions for public to use. CEQA has a very restrictive Public Comment policy that is very different from what Los Altos residents now use. If public does not follow CEQA instructions, any comments will be voided.

I recommend “enhanced” CEQA Public Comment to include the following:

1. Thirty days before official start of 30-day public comment period, local newspapers [Town Crier, San Jose Mercury, Palo Alto Times], Los Altos web site, and Council Agenda, to announce that draft CEQA document is available and where can be found. Also, when public comment period will start and end.
2. Los Altos web site to include detailed instructions on format of Public Comment letter and how to turn it in. It must have a formal address and be on hard copy. Two copies must be hand delivered to Los Altos City Hall for date stamp and entered into official log.
3. After Staff has reviewed public comment letter, they must provide their findings to person who provided comments.

Redwood Grove is a very unique and sensitive nature preserve and I do not expect Consultants preparing CEQA Report to know all unique environmental items. Members of public know these unique items and their comments will help make CEQA report a very effective document that helps Council to make a “Data Based Decision”.

Some unique items that may help Consultants:

- California Ground Squirrel population has grown dramatically in past 6 years and they have taken over Halsey House and made foundation unstable. They also are destroying Adobe Creek banks near Halsey House that can cause flooding. Best local predators are rattle snakes and coyotes.
- Downed tree trunk from recent storms is forming a dam that in past diverted Adobe Creek flow to near Halsey House.
- Bridge for Fire Department Pump Truck access to Halsey House is showing signs of “stress dusting” in main pine support beams. Condition made worse by recent tree removals. It is not an 8-ton bridge anymore.

Thank You for your consideration. Jim Wing, Milverton Road, Los Altos, CA

From: [Myra & Carl Orta](#)
To: [City Council](#); [Public Comment](#)
Subject: public comments agenda item #6 May 9, 2023
Date: Friday, May 5, 2023 11:28:17 PM

Honorary Mayor and City Council,

May 6, 2023

The gas power leaf blower was developed and manufactured in Japan where they are banned because the machine adds to their air and noise pollution. The machine is marketed and sold to the United States where garden equipment companies sell them to landscape firms with impunity. The workers using this equipment are more likely to develop hearing and lung problems, but this is of little concern to suppliers. Residents who work from home, housewives, the elderly, and preschool children are exposed to the noise and air pollution from this tool when they are home during the day. All this information with testimonials from medical people was made public over 32 years ago. Los Altos had a special election, the result was overwhelmingly in favor of banning gas power leaf blowers. I was instrumental in leading this ban and our city council at the time agreed. We have an ordinance banning their use in Los Altos. Unfortunately, the ban is frequently ignored, and the machine is used with the excuse that it is expedient and saves the gardener clean up time and therefore the homeowner money. This is nonsense. Electric blowers which are allowed do as well and do not pollute as much. Rake and broom are the most effective and good exercise for the user and do not pollute at all.

The problem with the existing ordinance is that it is frequently not enforced. Residents must report their neighbors and most people find this undesirable. When the police do arrive after a blower user is reported, the perpetrator is either gone or has stopped using the blower. The police will not give a citation or even a warning if they have not witnessed the use of the blowers. How can they witness this when they show up 30 minutes after they were notified. Understandably this is not a priority for the police and there may be other more important issues for them to attend to. This makes our existing enforcement procedure ineffective.

Soon after the ban was enforced in 1991 we had a police chief with a good solution. She had patrol cars patrolling the neighborhoods and anyone caught using a gas blower was fined on the spot. Their license was recorded and if they were cited again, it was revoked, and they could no longer work in Los Altos. We need an enforcement procedure that could bring positive results. I suggest we fine the homeowner or person who employs the gardener. The fine should be adequate so that they will take action. Current suggested amounts are \$250, \$500, \$1,000 for first, second and third infractions. This is what Palo Alto has recently implemented and I suggest we do the same.

Respectfully submitted,
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From: [Brian Theodore](#)
To: [City Council](#); [Public Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment agenda item #6, May 9, 2023
Date: Saturday, May 6, 2023 11:33:51 AM

Hi,

I am a resident of Los Altos for the past 13 years, and wanted to share my input and feedback regarding the '**Gas-powered leaf blower ordinance enforcement**'. I both have a gardener who uses gas-powered leaf blowers as well as have neighbors who do as well.

I am voicing my general opposition to an outright ban on gas-powered leaf blowers, after considering the benefits and consequences of this action.

The benefits are surface-level obvious, and are something that I do support:

- Reduce noise pollution

However, the consequences need to be fully thought through by the Council and considered. For example:

- If property owners are the ones to be fined for gas-powered leaf blowers by gardeners, who's responsibility and cost is it for the gardener to make these capital expenditures?
- I do not control what my gardener uses or doesn't, nor what cities he operates in (my gardener in particular operates in San Jose, Mountain View, Los Altos, and Cupertino)
- Will the city subsidize the cost of this capital expense? I can't speak for all gardening services, but I do know that my gardener has low margins and has limited means for this capital expenditure
- Will the city provide a list of electric-equipment approved services providers for property owners to switch to if their current gardener can't or doesn't switch?
- My gardener did actually do a trial of a electric-powered leaf blower last year, but determined it was not feasible, given the 2+ hours it takes for the equipment to recharge after servicing a single house. Where would we expect them to recharge their equipment, and who would compensate them for the 2 hours between jobs that isn't billable?

These are just a few concrete examples of consequences I hope the council considers seriously before adopting this proposal.

As a common-sense recommendation to limit the 'noise pollution' concern, perhaps avoiding early mornings and weekends would be a compromise.

Regards,

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