

When the Majority of City Council Voted to Ban Leaf Blowers in Sebastopol

They forgot to ask the citizens what they think...so let them know!!!!

Please:

1. Call or email our council members and let them know your thoughts.
 2. Also included is the link for the Press Democrat – we encourage you to send an editorial follow-up to their story on the “Surprise” topic voted on by the council and,
 3. Show up to the next council meeting where the final ordinance will be publically presented and reviewed
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Council Members that Voted for the Ban:

1. **Sarah Gurney** 707-824-1871
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2. **Michael Kyes** 707-483-2595
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3. **Guy Wilson** 707-525-1277
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Council Members that voted against the Ban:

1. Kathleen Shaffer
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2. Patrick Slayter
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Press Democrat contacts:

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Letters to the Editor:

letters@pressdemocrat.com

Leaf Blower BAN - Why This is Not Appropriate:

1. **No Clear Public Notice** - This decision was made with no clear notice of a ban to the public, therefore no opportunity for discussion and no option for compromise – it was all or nothing – no option for limited hours of use, etc. In a democracy the people have a right to debate regulation and, the leadership has a responsibility to seek input and represent the majority.
2. **Deceptive Agenda** - Mayor Guy Wilson one of the strongest proponents of the BAN suggests that the word “ban” was removed from an early draft of the council agenda because, as he stated, “it is covered under the heading of regulation”. When queried, he insisted it wasn’t meant to be misleading just semantics. He thought if they said BAN it would “excite people and bring more people to the hearing” – interesting point since that is what the meetings are for – open discussion.
3. **Effect on Home Owners** - Most of us in Sebastopol not only have a yard but are surrounded by trees – trees that continuously drop leaves. Simple raking is often not sufficient or efficient to remove leaves from landscaping. With the BAN on leaf blowers property owners will have to spend more time to accomplish less or resorting to water and hoses to clear paths and walkways.
4. **Effect on Home Maintenance** - Many types of roofing are not made to be walked on therefore making raking or sweeping of the roof to clear debris impossible. Ladders and leaf blowers are the only way to clear them. The BAN will prevent safe and efficient removal of roof debris.
5. **Effect on Small Business** - The BAN will specifically affect small yard maintenance companies – companies that provide jobs and taxes to the city. Banning leaf blowers will require these companies to raise their rates due to the addition of manual laborers and the additional time it will take to clear yards. In a tight economy the raising of rates may be the point at which home-owners decide to take on their own yard maintenance – lose / lose for both parties and a monetary loss for the city.
6. **Effect on Other Business** - Larger businesses, churches, schools, etc. will also be affected by the BAN. Although businesses with big parking areas typically use mobile sweeping devices, all of the landscaping surrounding these buildings is traditionally cleared by leaf blowers. For these businesses also, the BAN will increase maintenance costs that will then be passed on to consumers in a tight economy.
7. **Cost to the City?** - The ordinance will include an exception to the BAN for city public works employees who can’t utilize another tool to complete a certain task, such as cleaning out storm drains in an emergency. Will clearing the parks, city landscaping and the town square be considered emergencies? Doesn’t seem appropriate if that is the case. If not, what is the additional cost to the city if raking only is applied to city properties? How will this be paid for – through “raking taxes”?

Please consider these points & contact city council members as well as the Press Democrat.

Sebastopolcitizens.org