

Anthony Suber

From: David Axelrod MD [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, January 13, 2022 10:48 AM
To: Anthony Suber; George Rodericks
Subject: Gas Powered garden equipment poll
Attachments: Axelrod_N1_Nov16_MP.pdf; PastedGraphic-2.tiff

[The e-mail below is from an external source. Please do not open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.]

Hello,

I saw your online poll and prompt to contact you with additional comments. I am a Menlo Park resident — I live on Atherton border (at 955 Valparaiso Ave), and your town’s actions will affect my home and family.

Menlo Park recently heard public input about this topic, and I offered the enclosed statement (which I also read at the November city council meeting).

I do not support the proposed changes because they still allow gas-powered devices to be used during regular business hours. It is my medical opinion — and my opinion as a concerned citizen — that our communities need to think creatively to create an equitable and healthy alternative to gas powered devices. These devices should be banned immediately.

Please find the enclosed document and do not hesitate to contact me with any questions. Thank you for your attention.

David Axelrod MD

David M. Axelrod, M.D.
He/him



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Anthony Suber

From: David Jones <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, January 28, 2022 7:23 PM
To: Anthony Suber
Cc: Walker, Ann Yvonne
Subject: Gas Powered Garden Equipment

[The e-mail below is from an external source. Please do not open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.]

Hi Anthony,

I'm in favor of almost all the proposed restrictions. I am concerned, though, that there may well be instances where there isn't a good electric option, or at least I can picture a situation where the electric option might not be up to the task at hand, like with rototillers. I don't know if an electric would have to "grunt" to get through my adobe soil. I'm retired now so weekday/weekend isn't an issue for me, but the last time I used a rototiller was on a weekend, back when I was working, so I see a potential problem.

Also, it's unclear in the online description of the proposed restrictions whether commercial use of electric blowers would be allowed on the weekend. I have both a corded electric blower and a battery powered blower and they are both pretty loud - they spare the air, but not the ear. Having gardening contractors coming in on weekends, even with electric blowers, would be sonically intrusive.

I'm relatively certain that's not in the proposal, but it's always best to be clear - plus there's no way to know whether that's the core objection of those voting "no" in the poll, unless they've emailed you.

-David

Stay smart, stay safe & stay sane... *unless it doesn't help.*

Anthony Suber

From: Andrea Luskin <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, January 17, 2022 7:21 PM
To: Anthony Suber; George Rodericks
Subject: Gas-Powered Leaf Blowers

[The e-mail below is from an external source. Please do not open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.]

Dear Mr. Suber and Mr. Rodericks,

I'm really disappointed to see we're not phasing out gas-powered blowers all together.

Over the past few years we've learned how awful these blowers are for the environment from an air quality standpoint and anyone who has spent anytime at home from 8 to 5 has known for years the incredible noise pollution they create.

Additionally, all blowers have a detrimental effect on soil quality in areas where there is just soil and no mulch. The leaves serve as natural mulch. Blowing these areas dries out the soil which then causes more environmental distress, increasing the need to use more water to keep plants in these areas alive.

We are surrounded by towns who have banned gas-powered blowers. We should do the same.

The argument that our properties are too large is a poor one. Portola Valley has plenty of large properties as do other nearby towns. Likewise, the argument that our gardeners can't afford this is a poor one. The overwhelming majority of Atherton residents can afford to purchase a leaf-blower and/or extra battery for their gardeners.

The town should make this easy for residents. Test out a few options at Holbrook Palmer or around the Town Center, make some recommendation based on noise, weight, and effectiveness, partner with a couple different manufacturers to secure a volume discount offer, provide a rebate code, and have residents place their orders.

Please have the town reconsider this decision.

Regards,

Andrea Luskin

Anthony Suber

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, January 28, 2022 6:39 PM
To: Anthony Suber
Subject: I would support a near-term ban on very loud leaf blowers.

[The e-mail below is from an external source. Please do not open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.]

The proposed rules seem fine, but I would prefer a stronger (and nearer-term) ban on really loud leaf blowers. I don't know what db level to propose, but there are some that are extremely annoying. I bought my gardeners electric leaf blowers and they say they work just fine.

Mike Farmwald

[REDACTED]

Anthony Suber

From: Carolyn Adams < [REDACTED] >
Sent: Saturday, January 22, 2022 3:39 PM
To: Anthony Suber
Subject: Leaf Blower Restrictions

[The e-mail below is from an external source. Please do not open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.]

Dear Mr. Suber,

I was reading about the Atherton proposed leaf blower restrictions and suggest that such restriction be limited to Sunday. Often gardeners work Monday through Friday and are only able to do extra property maintenance work on Saturday. Also, a social event at home on a Saturday often requires a quick clean up with a blower.

Thank you.

Best regards,

Carolyn Adams

[REDACTED]

Anthony Suber

From: Sara Richter <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, January 12, 2022 12:38 PM
To: Anthony Suber
Subject: Leaf blower survey

[The e-mail below is from an external source. Please do not open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.]

Hi,

I do have a question - I am not familiar with electric leaf blowers...do they emit noise?

Thank you,
Sara Richter

Anthony Suber

From: Betsy Dixon <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, January 18, 2022 7:48 PM
To: Council
Subject: Leaf blowers

[The e-mail below is from an external source. Please do not open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.]

Dear Town Council Members,

Would you please let me know what the decision of the Council was with respect to initiating an investigation into a town ban of leaf blowers?

If nothing is being pursued on this matter, what is the best way to advocate and identify to you the degree to which there is community support for such a ban.

Please let me know if there is a staff person to whom I should direct these inquiries.

Many thanks for your service to the Town's residents.

Very truly yours,
Betsy Dixon

[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

Anthony Suber

From: mqmadding (null) <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, January 13, 2022 9:15 AM
To: Anthony Suber
Subject: Leaf Blowers

[The e-mail below is from an external source. Please do not open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.]

Dear Mr Suber,

I rarely if ever comment on most things happening in the town but I will now. I am all for limiting gas leaf blowers to weekdays and don't want to see them banned out right like other cities have. Thank you for allowing landscape maintenance people to continue doing their jobs.

However, enacting such a measure will only be as good as the Town's enforcement measures. Many homeowners have their maintenance people doing the yard work on Saturdays which is hugely annoying and noisy. So unless the town is going to enforce the regs, there will be no meat behind the measure.

Sincerely,

Margie Madding

Sent from my iPad

Anthony Suber

From: Don & Gerry Nelson <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Saturday, February 5, 2022 11:54 AM
To: Anthony Suber
Subject: LEAF BLOWERS

[The e-mail below is from an external source. Please do not open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.]

Hello Anthony.....

I recently read "The Future of Leaf Blowers" in your Winter publication and wanted to contact you to request any updated information that might be available.

The Town's plan to end the use of gasoline powered garden equipment has me more than a little concerned. Let me explain why:

I am told that a gardener might need to carry up to 6 or 8 charged batteries to complete a day's work. And that the electric versions have considerably less power than gas powered.

Most gardeners do not limit their customer base to Atherton only. A result of requiring electric for Atherton, would cause gardeners to double the amount of equipment they must carry; electric for Atherton and gas for their customers in neighboring communities. More than likely, this would discourage gardeners from retaining their Atherton customer base or accepting any new customers within our Town.

Also, it is important for us to realize that the amount of pollution from gasoline powered garden equipment is infinitesimal when compared to the total of all gas powered equipment in use throughout our area.

Mandating electric garden equipment is not a reasonable idea and can cause and far more problems than it solves. Please don't allow us to become the victims of unintended consequences.

Don Nelson
[REDACTED]

Anthony Suber

From: Jon Windham < [REDACTED] >
Sent: Monday, January 17, 2022 11:19 AM
To: Anthony Suber; George Rodericks; Council
Subject: Opinion poll on gas powered garden tools

[The e-mail below is from an external source. Please do not open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.]

Anthony and George,

The question posed in the online poll ("Do you support or oppose the proposed changes to the regulations around gas powered garden equipment?") is troublesome because it will not give you an accurate understanding of how Atherton residents feel about gas powered garden equipment.

I strongly endorse efforts to eliminate gas powered garden equipment completely. Given this, how should I answer this question?

- The proposal is woefully short of what is needed in my view, so I could easily vote "no".
- But on the other hand, half a loaf is better than none. Moreover, a "no" vote might be interpreted as me wanting no new restrictions at all. So perhaps I should vote yes.

Either way, you would not have an understanding of my perspective based on my vote.

A better survey would ask: "Do you feel the proposed changes go too far, not far enough, or are about right with regard to regulating gas powered garden equipment?"

Jon Windham
[REDACTED]

Anthony Suber

From: JULIE CRONIN <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, February 8, 2022 7:37 AM
To: Anthony Suber; George Rodericks
Subject: Opposition to change in gas powered garden equipment

[The e-mail below is from an external source. Please do not open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.]

Good Morning,

I live in Lindenwood and rarely have been able to enjoy my yard in the last six years due to constant noise from construction. There is often construction on Saturdays too. To add powered garden equipment noise in the middle of the day when most residents want to enjoy their yards detracts from the ambiance of our Town.

I understand the need to have some equipment noise on weekends, but I really hope the hours are minimized. I also hope you remove the allowance on Sundays.

Thank you ,
Julie Cronin

[REDACTED]

Anthony Suber

From: Betsy Holak < [REDACTED] >
Sent: Wednesday, January 12, 2022 1:02 PM
To: Anthony Suber; George Rodericks
Subject: Power garden equipment

[The e-mail below is from an external source. Please do not open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.]

Hi,
I have entered my opposition to the gas powered garden equipment restrictions. As a home owner that does much of my own garden maintenance AND works a full time job, I frequently must do maintenance on weekends. This includes the use of electric and gas powered equipment.

Please include a homeowner exemption to this restrictive regulation.

Thank you,
Betsy Holak

[REDACTED]

Anthony Suber

From: Carole Grace < [REDACTED] >
Sent: Saturday, January 22, 2022 5:38 PM
To: George Rodericks; Anthony Suber
Subject: proposed leaf blower regulations

[The e-mail below is from an external source. Please do not open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.]

Mr. Rodericks and Mr. Suber,

I support your proposed restrictions on gas powered yard maintenance equipment and hope you will consider coordinating with neighboring Menlo Park. Many yard maintenance crews work in both communities and it would be very helpful if the rules were consistent in both towns.

Menlo Park currently bans the use of gas blowers on weekends, holidays and Spare the Air days, however since the rules are not enforced, yard crews largely ignore- or perhaps are ignorant- of the rules. The same is true in Palo Alto, where the long standing gas blower ban became largely ignored after crews realized the rules were rarely if ever enforced. To have success, your town will need to be very proactive in notifying both property owners and yard maintenance crews of the new rules and then be diligent in enforcing the rules. Again, it would be very helpful if the rules were consistent across neighboring communities including Atherton, Woodside, Portola Valley, Menlo Park, and Palo Alto. All have tried gas blower bans, to varying degrees of success. A common, consistent approach would be helpful for all.

One aspect of your proposed new rules I disagree with is that of allowing the use of electric equipment on Sundays. Please don't do this! We all need a break from truck traffic, noise and dust at least one day a week, especially considering how much construction work is ongoing in the mid peninsula.

Carole Grace
[REDACTED]

Anthony Suber

From: George Rodericks
Sent: Tuesday, January 25, 2022 7:29 AM
To: Margaret Winters
Cc: Anthony Suber
Subject: Re: rules for blowers

Margaret,

Thank you for the comments. These will be shared with the Council as part of the item's review in February.

George Rodericks
City Manager
Town of Atherton
80 Fair Oaks Lane (New Buildings)
Atherton, CA 94027
(650) 752-0504 - Office
grodericks@ci.atherton.ca.us

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On Jan 24, 2022, at 8:38 PM, Margaret Winters <[REDACTED]> wrote:

[The e-mail below is from an external source. Please do not open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.]

Dear Mr. Rodericks,

We are fully in support of elimination of all gas powered leaf blowers being used in Atherton. As you may know, Los Altos, Palo Alto, and Menlo Park all have a ban on these things, and I cannot believe that Atherton is so far behind. It's disturbing to see, as we take walks, how many "gardeners" use these air-polluting machines to do what a hand rake would take care of in a few minutes, and with no air pollution. Many times over the 30 years we've lived here I've observed first hand the excessive and unnecessary way these machines are used, oftentimes just blowing a few leaves around and not accomplishing anything.

Please step up your timeline to get rid of all gas powered blowers and encourage homeowners to use hand rakes or low decibel electric blowers instead.

Thank you,

Dr. and Mrs. Philip Winters

Anthony Suber

From: Old Acct <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, January 12, 2022 6:54 PM
To: Anthony Suber
Subject: Gas leaf blowers

[The e-mail below is from an external source. Please do not open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.]

The Saturday gardening service at [REDACTED] is BEYOND loud. I installed an app on my phone to register the decibels and they are way off the chart. I've told them twice that their gas blower is illegal because it's too loud but the gardeners don't care. And it's on a Saturday too which really disturbs our outdoor peace and quiet. I don't know what the next step should be. The owners are from China and are never there.
Sincerely,
Tricia Young

Sent from my iPhone

Anthony Suber

From: Amy Delson [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, January 12, 2022 2:04 PM
To: Anthony Suber
Subject: Atherton Ban Leaf Blowers

[The e-mail below is from an external source. Please do not open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.]

I agree that gas-powered leaf blowers should be limited. Given how polluting they are, gas-powered leaf blowers should be banned altogether. But, more importantly, leaf blowers should be banned due to noise pollution for those of us who work at home or wish to relax outdoors. Any quieter version of a leaf blower should be required. Generally, they just blow the leaves around.

Thank you for considering this matter,

Amy L. Delson, AIA

Anthony Suber

From: George Rodericks
Sent: Friday, January 21, 2022 2:37 PM
To: Doug Kaewert
Cc: Anthony Suber
Subject: Re: Gas powered garden equipment

George,

This is to give my opinion on the proposed change to the gas powered garden equipment ordinance.

I don't like garden equipment noise anymore than the next person. But I also recognize that not everyone in Atherton has a Monday-Friday gardener for all gardening tasks. Some people use rototillers to plant vegetable gardens. Some even still mow their own lawns. Those who work may not be able to do these tasks on weekdays. So prohibiting use of gas powered equipment on Saturday is a real issue.

So for primarily this reason I oppose this change.

Doug Kaewert

Anthony Suber

From: George Rodericks
Sent: Monday, February 14, 2022 7:49 AM
To: Anthony Suber
Cc: Francesca Reyes
Subject: Fwd: Gas powered leaf blower ban

Public comment.

George Rodericks
City Manager
Town of Atherton
80 Fair Oaks Lane (New Buildings)
Atherton, CA 94027
(650) 752-0504 - Office
grodericks@ci.atherton.ca.us

[Schedule A Meeting With Me](#)

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Begin forwarded message:

From: pennymeier <pennymeier@ci.atherton.ca.us>
Subject: Gas powered leaf blower ban
Date: February 13, 2022 at 1:03:53 PM PST
To: grodericks@ci.atherton.ca.us

[The e-mail below is from an external source. Please do not open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.]

Dear Mr. Rodericks,

I am waiting to say I disagree strongly with the ban on gas powered leaf blowers in Atherton next year. The number of batteries a gardener would have to carry with them, plus the cost of a powerful blower would be hard to bear. Is it environmentally more sound to dispose of old batteries over any emissions from gas blowers? I agree with banning the blowers on Spare the Air Days, but given the size of Atherton lots it seems unreasonable to force us to use the much less powerful electric blowers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,

Penelope Meier

Atherton