

Silver Lake council to help enforce ban on gas-powered leaf blowers

on June 6, 2013 [14 Comments](#)

[Silver Lake](#)



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[By Tony Cella](#)

The [Silver Lake Neighborhood Council](#) took on the job Wednesday night of assisting the Los Angeles Police Department in enforcing the ban on gas-powered leaf blowers.

“We know they’re loud. We know they’re dirty. We know they cause diseases for those with COPD [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease] and other respiratory diseases,” said council member Anne-Marie Johnson, whose motion to create a leaf-blower task force was approved the governing board.

The task force won’t have a budget because the dollar amount wasn’t stated on last evening’s agenda but Johnson already had plans for the committee. The board member intends to create bilingual flyers to remind residents that gasoline-fueled leaf blowers are illegal and explain alternatives, such as electric refuse scatterers. She said the task force will deal with offenders on a “neighbor by neighbor” basis.

Johnson also said she would refer violators to buyback programs, where city agencies would exchange illegal blowers for city-approved models at a nominal charge, if any. Gas-powered leaf blower buy-backs, similar to illegal gun turn ins, have existed in the past but their present status is unknown.

She claimed the council will use outreach and informative methods to counteract ban violators because not all home owners, or employees of landscaping companies, know of the ban.

“The city did a horrible job of outreach and education,” she said.

Johnson also mentioned, however, that not everyone is so innocently ignorant.

“This is one of the many ordinances people gladly ignore,” she said.



Silver Lake Neighborhood Council meeting/Tony Cella

Up until the council agreed to help, the LAPD dealt with ban breakers on it own. The cops requested the help because the department is underfunded, understaffed and has higher priorities than dealing with lengthy calls regarding noise nuisances, such as leaf blowers, Johnson said. Violating the ban can lead to a fine of up to \$100.

The code “does not preclude anyone from using other devices such as a gas-powered vacuum device or electric-leaf blower,” according to the LAPD website. “Officers enforce Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 112.04(c) in the same manner as any other infraction.”

Johnson recommends residents contact the council if they spot offenders or write down the time, place and date of the offense and report the instance to the Department of Street Services’ Investigation and Enforcement Division if the offenses are severe.

Business owner Karen Speitel, who attended the meeting, denounced gas-powered leaf blowers as a “huge problem for businesses” and wished the ban, instituted in 1998, included electric blowers because they generate almost as much noise. She also volunteered to pass out Johnson’s flyers at her business.

In the past, the ban has been criticized as anti-Latino and classist because many violators are poor immigrants working in the landscaping business.

Treasurer Anthony Crump, who supported the measure, dubbed Johnson “a champion of quality of life issues” but recommended she focus on matters such as businesses cleaning up after themselves.

“That effects a lot more people than gas-powered leaf blowers,” he said.

Tony Cella is a freelance reporter who has covered crime and grime in Los Angeles, New York City and the Kenai Peninsula, Alaska. [Click here](#) to contact Cella with questions, comments or concerns.