

Dear Palo Alto City Council Members,

Re: Residential Traffic Safety

In my April 11 e-mail to Council members I said that the shrubs in the planting strip near my Palo Alto home have been singled out for unnecessarily strict, selective code enforcement. And I asked that you each examine my side of the story at <http://leibrand.netdojo.com/paloalto/enforcement.html>

Palo Alto's handling of this case has been **inconsistent, incomplete, and arrogant**. This is so uncharacteristic of my past dealings with city officials.

The handling of my case is **inconsistent** with code enforcement actions of the last thirty years and **inconsistent** with non-enforcement of the many other obvious code violations in town.

It is **incomplete** because the Planning Department has taken a narrow, literal view of one section of the Municipal Code, while ignoring other sections that apply. My pleas for *common sense and fairness* have fallen on deaf ears.

It is **arrogant** because the Special Legal Counsel for Code Enforcement did not return my phone call and did not respond to my e-mail. He instead filed a criminal complaint against me. The Chief Planning Official for Planning and Community Environment, although she did answer one of my letters, would *not* answer my questions. The Code Enforcement Officer *refused* to meet with me. At no point was any sort of *mediation* mentioned.

A copy of my letter to the City Manager on April 5 is attached. His response to the letter was apparently to delegate the case back to the City Attorney's Office. The Special Legal Counsel for Code Enforcement issued a press release! I did not bring this case to public attention.

I was unprepared to be swarmed by reporters from the local papers and from TV news channels. I have tried not to use pejorative words but now the word **bully** comes to mind. When a case is tried in the press, reporters and editors are under severe time constraints. The stories contain omissions and exaggerations. Mistakes occur. Misleading statements are made. Was this really the Palo Alto legal consultant's strategy?

I am getting expressions of support from as far away as Florida and the City of Palo Alto is getting bad press. It is unfortunate that the Police Department is taking the brunt of the verbal abuse. All the Police Department employees I have talked with, including the officers who arrested me, have been professional, courteous, and helpful.

Palo Alto's "Project Visibility" is a step in the right direction to ensure traffic safety. But plants are easy targets. They just sit there. I hope that Palo Alto can be *at least* as diligent about solving the *real* safety problems in residential neighborhoods: **stop sign violations, speed, and cut-through traffic**.

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