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FEATURED

## Anti-mining group members accused of confronting councilman at home

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Sahuarita police officers have been conducting extra patrols around Town Councilman Ed Lytle's home since Thursday night when he reported three people claiming to be with the Save the Scenic Santa Ritas anti-mining group confronted him at his home.

The incident first came to light in a daily call log released by the police department and while neither the log nor Commander Manny Amado confirmed the incident involved Lytle, online records show Lytle lives on the street where officers were dispatched shortly before 6 p.m. Thursday.

The commander said the department is withholding the council member's name at their request.

Amado said the council member in question called Chief John Noland Thursday night to report two women and one man in their 30s to 40s approached him.

"These three members of the SSSR organization walked up to the council member as the council member was parking their vehicle in their driveway and walking up to their home," Amado said. "They said something to the effect of, 'We've been watching the council meetings online and it appears that you are not listening or paying attention to the organization or to our group when they speak about saving the Santa Ritas, and we're here to change your mind' or something to that effect."

The trio was not aggressive, but made it clear they wanted the council member to pay more attention, Amado said.

"The council member politely said, 'I am not going to be intimidated by you. I'm going to, you know, vote whichever way I'm going to vote if that time comes, or something to that effect, please leave,'" Amado said. "Now we know they're from the Scenic Santa Ritas because they introduced themselves as such, and they said they had driven down from Phoenix."

Once asked to leave, they did so without incident, Amado said.

The group did not violate any laws, but had they refused to depart they could have faced trespassing charges, he said.

The call log stated officers were directed to check the residence twice per shift and drive by the home to ensure nothing suspicious is happening and Amado confirmed those extra patrols are ongoing.

No other council members have reported similar incidents, Amado said.

Lytle did not return voice messages seeking comment.

Save the Santa Ritas' Executive Director John Dougherty said they don't have formal members, but doubts anyone associated with their cause would engage in such behavior.

"We certainly do not advocate any of that kind of activity. We make our speeches or comments at the council meeting. I contact them via email, but no, this is not something that we would condone. Nor am I accepting that this is anybody from our group. This could be Hudbay posing (as us) and doing this," Dougherty said. "I know we're in a high-stakes operation here, and I don't trust Hudbay as far as you can throw a rock, and I don't know what's going on here."



Unless or until someone is arrested, Dougherty said "it's all very speculative."

Dougherty has since requested the 9-1-1 call and police report from the town as has

the Green Valley News.

According to their website, the Save the Scenic Santa Ritas Association formed in 1996 to protect the mountains from industrial, open-pit mining. They hope to prevent the Toronto-based Hudbay Minerals from constructing the Copper World mining complex.

Hudbay is moving toward a final/definitive feasibility study in the near term and is aiming for a final sanctioning decision this year.

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Tags

- Save The Santa Ritas
- Sahuarita Police
- Councilman Ed Lytle
- Confrontation
- John Doherty
- Lt. John Carlson
- Hudbay
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Reporter

