



Pomona Police checkpoint angers residents

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POMONA - A weekend checkpoint caused residents to express concern and accusations to fly at a City Council meeting on Monday.

Councilwoman Cristina Carrizosa said residents were frightened and that the behavior of officers reminded her of movie scenes depicting the Gestapo.

Several people spoke at the meeting about Saturday afternoon's DUI checkpoint at Mission Boulevard and San Antonio Avenue.

Police Chief Joe Romero said the remarks about the Gestapo were offensive to the officers at the checkpoint and that they were owed an apology.

Pomona businessman Francisco Espinoza said the checkpoints targeted Latinos and urged the council to "take control of the city."

"Take it back. You control the Police Department, and you work for us," he said.

Carrizosa said the city needs to be safe for residents without police using such an intense approach.

"The display of force was unequal to anything I have seen," Carrizosa said, referring to the number of officers involved.

"I certainly believe we need to put a stop to this," she said.

The department conducts checkpoints regularly around the city with the use of state and federal grants. This checkpoint was timed with the Cinco de Mayo weekend which, like other holidays, is linked with alcohol consumption, he said.

"It's a drinking weekend and has nothing to do with race," he said.

Councilwoman Paula Lantz, who said her views on checkpoints often differ from Carrizosa's, said: "What I saw Saturday was extremely disturbing."

Lantz said she saw people driving to shops and offices in the area being stopped by police.

Police Sgt. Patrick O'Malley said Tuesday that officers did stop people.

These were "people that are contacted because they committed vehicle-code violations and there was probable cause" to stop them, O'Malley said.

A total of 2,925 drivers were contacted from 4 to 11 p.m. at the checkpoint.

A total of 125 drivers were cited for vehicle-code violations or driver's license issues. Two people were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol, police said.

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