

Aggressive search of DiMatteo residence caught on video

By Kathryn Reed

Officers in full SWAT gear with assault rifles using a flash-bang to enter Gino DiMatteo's South Lake Tahoe home was caught on video by his neighbors.

DiMatteo's civil defense attorney, Ted Long, has released the video to *Lake Tahoe News* and KRNV-TV in Reno. The latter is seen here.

"We are expecting the whole thing to blow up in their face. It's been weeks now and we have not seen a lick of evidence," Long told *Lake Tahoe News*.

DiMatteo's residence and business – Push Fitness – were searched on Aug. 31, the same day he was arrested on a variety of drug charges as well as bribery. However, Angela Swanson, the South Lake Tahoe City Council member he is accused of bribing, has yet to be charged. Instead, the El Dorado County District Attorney's Office is letting her name be associated with a crime she has never been charged with.

She remains on the council and is actively participating on the boards she is assigned to. Swanson was not available for comment Oct. 1.



Gino DiMatteo

returns to
court Oct. 3
in
Placerville.

Long doesn't believe Swanson will be charged because he doesn't believe she or DiMatteo did what the DA investigators are alleging.

It has come out that Swanson was the catalyst for a donation from DiMatteo to the Lake Tahoe Educational Foundation, of which Swanson is a board member. This cash donation of more than \$1,000 came on the same day the council agreed to allow DiMatteo to move his medical marijuana dispensary. That decision was later rescinded by the majority of the council.

It is also one of the issues in which Long is representing DiMatteo. Long says his client has a letter from the city attorney that says go ahead and spend money to move. DiMatteo did – \$60,000, according to Long.

Long, who is a former city councilman, said his first course of action is to go to federal court to get the city's decision to ban DiMatteo from moving overturned. He says the odds are 50-50. At a minimum, he wants the city to pay DiMatteo so he can recoup his losses for tenant improvements that were for naught.

Long also wants the DA and El Dorado County Sheriff's Department to pay for the more than \$30,000 in damages to DiMatteo's home when officers stormed it in August.

DiMatteo was already detained when officers ransacked the residence, Long said, so there was no need for the forceful entrance.

"What if his two teenage daughters had been there? It could have caused serious injury, if not death," Long said of the flash-bang. "It was totally unnecessary. I could have unlocked

the door.”

(Rob Wolfel – who was not available Oct. 1 – is DiMatteo’s criminal defense attorney.)

DiMatteo will be in court in Placerville on Oct. 3. He has pleaded not guilty to all charges. He also wants a speedy trial – to which he is entitled to 45 days after being arraigned.

“We want to force them to produce something and then force them to go to trial,” Long said of the prosecution. “If there was some evidence, we would have seen it.”

Long also told *Lake Tahoe News* that at no time has DiMatteo been in the witness protection program, as has been rumored.