

Sebastopol City Council Meeting December 1, 2015 – Synopsis and Commentary

All Council members were present.

Election of Mayor and Vice Mayor:

- **Council Member Gurney was elected as our new mayor.** Council Member Eder nominated Council Member Jacob but he declined and nominated Gurney. Council Member Slayter nominated **Council Member Glass for Vice Mayor** and it was made so.

Outgoing Mayor Slayter got a gavel and flowers. In the past, when our overworked **City Clerk** was recognized for going beyond the scope of her work, she got nada. So this must be the new politically correct procedure: if you are a gentleman, you get flowers; if you are a lady, you get a slap on the back and then back to work.

Public Comment (aka Open Mike):

- The first speaker worried about the increasing homeless problem and what to do about it.
- Then came a series of **pot growers** who spoke about the impending doom of **March 1, 2016**, when the State of California will set the pot-growing laws, if local governments haven't done so by then. Clearly they were in consort with **Jacob**, and all stood when he asked them to do so in support of getting laws on the books stat. It seems his supply chain is threatened by State employees with weed whackers. This Council is overly concerned with preserving “medical marijuana” and not enough concerned with “medical martinis.”
- The **Chamber of Commerce** reminded us of the Christmas tree lighting ceremonies between 5:00pm and 8:00pm on December the 3rd. At their website, you can also nominate a business or person for the 2016 Community Awards.

Consent Calendar: (All approved 5:0)

- Some changes were made to the policy that governs how the City **recognizes its employees** for actions that **go beyond their scope of work**. Perhaps recognition should be given for those who remain seated and don't blaspheme and/or throw heavy objects at some of the more egregious speakers during **Open Mike** – like a **Cruix de Comment Medal**. (Tonight's speakers were more mellow than usual.)
- The City had given the County approval to extend its trail from Highway 12 to Occidental Road, reconstructing the City-owned segment in **Meadowlark Field** in the process. The Council tonight agreed to let the County maintain that segment.
- The Council accepted **Argonaut Constructors'** bid of **\$239,507.40** to make selected street repairs in our fair city. You may [click here and scroll down](#) to see if your street was one of the lucky winners.
- The City website is being updated, complete with a municipal code that is online searchable. You can search it now but you gotta want it bad to find it. Soon you will be able to easily discover that **your neighbor** who is harboring 58 chickens is **NOT** in compliance. (Hint: 6.10.100)

Informational Items/ Presentation:

- Our Outreach Coordinator, **Holly Hansen**, gave her July through December report. The City manager and clerk stated that she is providing services “above and beyond” her contractual obligations. Her report confirmed that.
- Tasha Beauchamp of **Cittaslow** also gave a report. After listening to the quality of both reports,

one wonders since we have the former why we need the latter.

Regular Agenda Items:

- **Parking Issues:**

- Red zones approved at [Walker and Eleanor Avenues](#), [Morris Street](#), and [Laguna Parkway](#)
 - A **two-hour zone** adjacent to the Marigold Indian Bistro on [7225 Healdsburg Avenue](#) was withdrawn from consideration because some of the neighboring businesses objected.
 - Also approved were “**speed awareness**” signs on Bodega between [Washington Avenue and Robinson Road](#) – if the City can find \$13,000 for flashing speed signs.
 - And then there was the approval of signs that will inform drivers they are entering **Our City Limits**, so now they have to **obey “all traffic laws”** because of the “increased presence of pedestrians, bicyclists, and other vehicles.” Well, you can't help but wonder about that one a little bit. You probably already agreed to obey all the traffic laws when you were issued a driver's license.
- A while ago, the City hired an engineer to study the possibility of installing bike lanes on Highway 116. **The good news:** the study is 90% complete. **The bad news:** the City's grant application for \$800,000 to the [Metropolitan Transportation Commission](#) (MTC) was not successful. So now, what to do with the \$200,000 from Sebastopol's Traffic Impact Fund that it budgeted for this project? *
 - [KOWS](#) has started the process of applying for a permit to install an antenna at the City's Pleasant Hill Reservoir site. At this meeting, KOWS asked to have the \$2,695 permit fee waived. At 11:10pm, it was waived.

A Parting Shot:

* This bike lane issue just blew up in our faces, went on too long, came to no conclusion, and will come back to haunt us at another meeting. Since the grant application had failed, all **Gurney** was trying to do was get a **vote on what the process moving forward should be**. But the speakers and other council members all wanted to talk about [what class](#) the trails should be and where they should go. So the Mayor gave up and tabled it.

Jacob insisted, and finally won, a motion to dig up an old Class 1 feasibility study that has already been before the Council and now will return yet again. What he hopes to accomplish reviewing old studies is beyond comprehension.

Elapsed Time: 5:15 (6:00–11:15pm)

Next City Council Meeting is December 15, 2015 at the Teen Center, 425 Morris Street at 6:00pm.

John Necker