

Sebastopol City Council Meeting – October 1, 2013 – Synopsis and Commentary

All Council members were present.

Public Comments

In addition to the rational commentators, our three perennial political gadflies managed to consume 33 minutes of the meeting exercising their egos at every opportunity. You will be spared the subject matter—you've heard it before.

Consent Calendar

To my amazement, the items here were agreed upon without comment! Well then, allow me to comment.

Item#1 dealt with upcoming vacancies for the Design Review Board. Members whose terms will expire on December 31, 2013 are:

- Lindsay Massey
- Lynn Deedler
- Robert Beauchamp

You may recognize a few of these names from other areas.

Item #2 was the acceptance of work done at Ives Pool and **approval of the change orders**. One of those change orders happened because **Council Member Eder** was having difficulty heaving himself out of the pool. He approached the pool board “as a private citizen” to have steps put in and gee whiz, just for a “private citizen,” they did it. **Cost: \$11,800.00 for the John Eder Memorial Steps.**

Item #3 was the acceptance of work at Tomadachi Park adjacent to the Village Mobile Home Park. **Cost: mostly covered by Open Space District Grant.**

Discussion and Action Items

There were two items of interest here. By far, the most important one was the final report of

the [Sustainable Design Assessment Team or SDAT](#) by the Sebastopol Connect Committee members.

After the presentation, the Council members' eyes were wild with excitement and they appeared about to levitate from their seats. But before they ran amok, a committee member, probably sensing trouble, arose and spoke to them about the “reality” of the situation. Since reality is little more than an annoyance to this Council, it was fortunate he spelled it out. He told them it was going to require a lot of money, which we don't have, and a lot of time. He also told them to choose what could actually be done and be willing to back off the things that could wait. Envisioning things, he said, was the easy part.

Of course, to accomplish these changes, the City will have to battle the two-headed dragon of Caltrans and Budget. Well, at least it's a move toward consistency and codification. Don't be put off by some of the fuzzy language in the first few pages. There are some ideas here worth considering.

In simplified terms, here are a few:

- Return to a two-way street system
- Install bicycle lanes
- Increase the width of sidewalks
- Make walking to and from downtown safer
- Make downtown attractive
- Stop accommodating traffic and accommodate pedestrian and cycle traffic instead

You may also want to read [attachment #1](#) and [attachment #3](#).

The other interesting item was to potentially change the start times of the Council meetings. In reality, (there's that word again) it was about making them shorter. Council members, Kyes, Jacob and Slater seem to be trying to do that by taking the gadflies to task about not staying on point during Public Comments. Here's what the Council is going to try:

- Closed sessions from 4:00–5:00pm
- Regular meeting still starts at 6:00pm
- No new business after 9:30pm unless unanimously voted otherwise
- No voting after 10:30pm unless unanimously voted otherwise
- Set break times
- Reduce Council reports

Reports are dear to the heart of **Council Member Gurney**, as she seems to love droning on about various things late at night with two or three of us in the public seating area. (If this is a tactic to drive me from the meetings, it is very close to succeeding!) It was clear that the rest of the Council could live without them but she dug her heels in and they backed off. Maybe in future, she could use the website for the mundane and spare us the late night monologues.

In the **What Were You Thinking?** category, during the Climate Action 2020 Stakeholder Advisory Group member selection, **Vice Mayor Jacob** mentioned he'd received information that one applicant had been critical of the Council's position on smart meters. (That's kinda got a [Joe McCarthy](#) ring to it, no?) Robert, Robert, Robert, that just got the gadflies buzzing again. One person out of the whole city complains about an applicant. So what? If it was so important, why wasn't that person at the meeting? And since that person wasn't at the meeting, why bring it up? Have mercy! So it was "Shields up, Scotty" for the whole Council as they tried to avoid voting for an unknown dissenter. Eventually, they recommended three people with **Council Member Eder** voting "no" and **Vice Mayor Jacob** maneuvering to vote last and then abstaining.

Closed Session

Existing Litigation Longs Drug Stores v. Peacetown USA

Duration 4.5 hours

--John Necker