



Sebastopol Citizens

E d u c a t e - C o m m u n i c a t e

Sebastopol City Council Meeting January 15, 2019 – Synopsis and Commentary

- All council members were present.
- Candidates for the Design Review Board and the Planning Commission were interviewed at a 4 pm meeting. Applying for the Design Review Board were three incumbents--Cary Bush, Ted Luthin, and Gregory Beale. A new Sebastopol resident, Marshall Balfe, a former Design Review Commissioner in Novato and an architect with 49 years of experience, also applied. The two openings on the Planning Commission saw only one applicant, incumbent Zachary Douch, so one seat remains open. Unless you are a close associate of Vlady Putin, it's probably yours for the asking.

Public Comment (aka Open Mike):

- The lady whose daughter was struck in the [crosswalk near Safeway](#) complained that she hasn't heard from the city about putting a delay on the traffic lights to let the pedestrians get out of way before the green light. As it turns out, the city has no jurisdiction in this matter as the lights and the crosswalk belong to Caltrans. The city has, or will, forward her concerns to Caltrans.
- Miss Sonoma County and the Outstanding Teen invited us all to attend the next contest at the [Spreckels Center](#). Like last year, **this is a stealth event** so good luck finding a link to it anywhere on the web.

Consent Calendar:

- The council received a report on the 2018 Minute/Reference Orders. "This item is to submit to the City Council a list of City Council Agenda Items that the City Council has reviewed and/or acted upon in the last calendar year." [You can check out their batting average here.](#)
- The council adopted a resolution covering the use of city and privately owned vehicles and travel and reimbursement procedures. (Approved 5:0)

Regular Agenda Items:

- **Appointed to the Design Review Board** were Cary Bush, Ted Luthin, and Gregory Beale. (Passed 5:0)
- Zachary Douch was appointed to the **Planning Commission**. (Passed 5:0)
- The council gave its non-monetary support to the [2019 Sebastopol Walks Program](#), but the program is classified as an "event" and so is covered by city insurance at no cost to the city. (Passed 5:0)

Informational Items/ Presentation:

- The [Redwood Empire Municipal Insurance Fund](#) gave us a report. If you decide to sue the city because you get a migraine whenever you try to fathom the bike lane markings, this is who you're going to have to deal with. REMIF is not an insurance company but a self-insured joint powers authority, a governmental entity. Fifteen cities use tax dollars and pay into the pool,

which provides protection against suits at a much lower rate than using a standard insurance company. In 1976, Sebastopol was one of the seven founding members.

Regular Agenda Items:

- The council approved a resolution a \$150,000 grant “for capital improvements, plus any funding for associated [WCCS](#) supportive services, from the [Community Development Commission for HEAP funds](#).” If successful, most of these funds will go to improvements and low income housing issues at Park Village, formally known as ...ah, forget it! (Passed 5:0)
- [At an August 7 meeting](#), then Council Member Hinton, opposed expending \$94,000 for a public works five yard dump truck to replace the 1994 truck that is four years past its replacement date. Tonight it came back with a \$76,000 price tag. That’s a savings of \$18,000. (About \$8,000 of that was moving from diesel to gas.) Maybe the city can use some of the savings to pay cyclists to use the bike lanes on Covert Lane that cost \$114,674 to make all seem worthwhile. ([See the consent calendar in November 7, 2017 summary](#).)
- **Vice Mayor Slayter’s idea to commit funds** generated by the 2% increase of the TOT to “address the on-going concerns and long-term critical unmet needs **for CalPERS retirement funding and housing and the impacts of homelessness**” got shot down with **Council Member Carnacchi** doing most of the shooting. First he ran through a long list of those he felt should have been contacted first and asked the council and the city manager if they had. “No,” was the answer. He then said that the voters were promised that the funds would be used for infrastructure and services, not housing and Calpers. He continued, saying committing the funds was illegal because there was no mention of housing or CalPERS on the ballot measure and if that was intended, there should have been an “advisory measure” on the ballot stating so. The city manager disagreed, saying the ballot measure was “100% legal” and the city had the right to commit general funds. All the council members agreed with Vice Mayor Slayter’s point that unless the city gets more aggressive in paying down the CalPERS burden, in 15 to 20 years, it will be a major problem. Still, there were concerns that such a commitment of funds could be construed by the voters as a bait and switch, and so it failed. The council will pursue Vice Mayor Slayter’s idea of pledging to set aside a certain amount of unencumbered funds to drawdown the Calpers debt before it becomes unmanageable.
- Amendments to City Council Policy No. 86 were made. They amends the procedure for dealing with vacancies on the Design Review Board, the Planning Commission and the Business Outreach Committee. The problem of finding applicants for these entities has increased, and the council hopes this may increase the number of qualified applicants. The changes allow the city to accept late applications and reopen the application process. [And it’s open now!](#) (Passed 5:0)
- Direction was agreed to for voting in various county business meetings and selection of county commission applicants. (Passed 5:0)

Consent Calendar #2:

- In a continuing , but incredibility tedious saga, two items were dealt with as a result of former [Governor Jerry Brown killing the redevelopment agencies](#) the city used to build several low income housing units. This is just the normal winding down of an agency that was sometimes criticized for being wasteful, if not corrupt, but was doing a lot of good here in straight arrow Sebastopol. (Approved 5:0)

City Council Reports:

- The City Manager announced an unexpected expenditure of \$40,000 to replace the failing heater at Ives pool. It was brought back to life but isn’t expected to remain in that state for very

long.

A Parting Shot:

- Sitting in the cheap seats with us, a lady closely associated with Council Member Carnacchi, thought it appropriate to interrupt the meeting with her remarks on procedure until **Mayor Hinton** brought to her attention just who **was** running the meeting. Does it ever seem to you that we have an overabundance of unique, entitled and special people in West County to whom rules do not apply? If they start to replicate at a faster rate, don't be surprised to see the county erect a wall (fence, barrier, whatever you want to call it) on the east side of the bridge and require screening before allowing entry checking for those trying to [smuggle in essential oils](#). Those trying to scale the wall might be repelled by bursts of energy from 5G phones and [sonic weapons like this](#).

Elapsed Time: 4:20 hours (6:00–10:20pm)

Next City Council meeting is February 5, 2019, at the Teen Center, 425 Morris Street at 6:00pm.

You can view this meeting and others at: <http://bit.ly/sebcctv>.

John Necker
SebastopolCitizens.org