



# Sebastopol Citizens

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

## Sebastopol City Council Meeting November 15, 2016 – Synopsis and Commentary

All Council members were present.

### Proclamations/Presentations:

- Dan Potts was presented with the Sonoma County Law Enforcement Volunteer of the Year Award. He was selected **number one** out of 400 potential winners.

### Public Comment (aka Open Mike):

- Probably because he missed all the previous meetings and discussions and decisions regarding traffic at Nelson Way and Bodega Avenue, a speaker suggested the City should install cameras there.
- There was yet another complaint about the KOWS antenna.

### Consent Calendar: (The first three were approved without comment.)\*

- The Council **rejected the two bids** for improvements at Ives Pool. Two separately funded projects were sent out for bid—the expansion of the women’s bathroom (\$150,000 funded by Ives Pool) and the federally required ADA improvements (\$240,000 funded by grants) **for a total of \$390,000**. The rejected bids came in at \$598,849 and \$634,365.
- The Council approved a payment of **\$110,690.96** to [Bond Blacktop, Inc](#), which has completed its slurry work around town. The cost is covered by a local sales tax and Measure M. No, not that Measure M [this Measure M](#).
- **\$73,067** will be allocated to [GHD](#) for the purpose of providing engineering designs and a bid package for a future relocation of the sewer main that follows Zimpher Creek. Erosion and other issues will require it to eventually be relocated. Although GHD came in over the **cost estimate of \$50,000**, they were low bidder and offered other services that staff felt justified the higher price.
- \*The Council discussed approving the [2016 General Plan](#) and its final EIR. A member of the public asked for discussion on this item and was informed by **Mayor Gurney** that *some* Council member would have to agree if discussion were to take place. But the Council sat there, like Mount Rushmore. The property owner then asked for all of her supporters—numbering somewhat less than a full battalion—to stand. Well that did it. Council Member Jacob rolled over. He never could withstand a room of standing people, even if he’s not up for re-election. Eventually, after many heartfelt stories, none of which had anything to do with City process, the Council voted to lower the density limit of her property, continuing violations of City codes there notwithstanding. Oh yeah, and the General Plan was approved too (4:1 with Council Member Eder abstaining). After years of work on it, your Council came that close to not approving the General Plan and the EIR. [Click here and move the slider to 5:17:18 to hear the crux of the issue from the General Plan Consultant.](#)

### Informational Items/ Presentation:

- Geof Syphers of [Sonoma Clean Power](#) made a presentation about energy savings. He neglected, however, to present how installing smart meters can also save energy.

### Regular Agenda Items:

- The Council is considering moving from Sonoma Clean Power's [Clean Start program](#) to the [Evergreen program](#). It directed staff to research the ramifications of such a move and report back to the Council at a later date. The program claims to provide **100% locally generated power** from the Calpine Geysers facility.

### Public Hearing:

- An application was made by the Piazza Hospitality Group for a zoning amendment, which would allow an increase to four stories (50') in height as a maximum for their proposed Hotel Sebastopol at [6828 Depot Street](#). They also asked for valet parking, [tandem parking](#) and an increase in compact parking spaces. The project provides 122 parking spaces, 92 of which will be the valet/tandem [parking east of Brown Street](#). **The Planning Commission** found the parking requests reasonable and the height request was thought to be consistent with the proposed General Plan and so **approved the use permits** if the Council enacted the zoning ordinance amendments. But Piazza made the fatal mistake of asking for a **development agreement** in which they would ask the City for some fee relief and a room tax-sharing plan. Well those requests are unlikely to be granted. And it stimulated the Council to start spawning another set of ideas Piazza will now have to confront, the most bizarre of which is the following: **Vice Mayor Glass, along with Jacob and Eder**, are willing to allow the Brown Street parking if the City secures the right **to later build affordable housing over it**. Think about the practicality of that. How can housing be built over a functioning parking lot while not eliminating the parking in the process? Now to the voting. The Council voted 5:0 to create a subcommittee of Slayter and Glass to negotiate with Piazza. **Glass, Eder and Jacob voted to hold up the project** until the subcommittee finishes negotiations. (**Gurney and Slayter were in the minority**.) After hearing about three other current subcommittee requirements, Gurney wondered if it could take up to six months to get this one report back to the Council for approval. Anyway, to get a better look at the project that is now a little more questionable, [click here and then click on "more info"](#).

### Regular Agenda Items:

- The final design for the Way Finding Program signs came before the Council and is finding its way forward.
- The Council approved a lease with KOWS for their antenna at [1282 Pleasant Hill Road](#) at the rate of \$100 per year.
- **Eder** requested that his \$500 in Council Initiative Funds be given to the fire department toward the purchase of a defibrillator.

### City Council Reports:

- At 11:30pm, Glass just had to tell us about transparency at the Marin/Sonoma Mosquito & Vector Control board.

### A Parting Shot:

- Speechless after the General Plan, the hotel parking and transparent mosquitoes.

Elapsed Time: 5:30 (6:00–11:30pm)

Next City Council Meeting is December 6, 2016 at the Teen Center, 425 Morris Street at 6:00pm.

You can view archived City Council meetings at: <http://livestream.com/accounts/14608643>

**John Necker**

**[SebastopolCitizens.org](http://SebastopolCitizens.org)**