

Sebastopol City Council Meeting February 16, 2016 – Synopsis and Commentary

All Council members were present.

Proclamations/Presentation

- Patricia Dines was honored for her work on the STEP Newsletter. Not [STEPH](#), but [STEP](#).

Public Comment (aka Open Mike):

- The first speaker, a gadfly whom many hoped had buzzed off, has returned. Her least tasteless remarks were faulting the City Council for not stopping war. She didn't mention which one.
- The second speaker asked the City to install a stoplight at [Burbank Heights](#). She also congratulated **Police Chief Weaver** on being named [Citizen of the Year](#) by the Sebastopol Chamber of Commerce. It was a good thing she did too as no one on the Council mentioned it at all. Hmm..... Anyway, the Chief will be *in the front row* for the [Apple Blossom parade](#). Yell something nice to him. He'll be there on his **wedding anniversary!**
- A fellow who makes high-end boots, **very high-end boots**, encouraged us to give up wearing shoes with oil-based soles for the sake of the environment.

Consent Calendar: (All were approved 5:0 without comment.)

- The Council approved amending the contract with **Questa** Engineering to oversee the construction of the expansion of the [Skate Park](#). They designed it and have the expertise to ensure quality while City staff has neither the time nor the technical knowledge to do so. The “approximate” cost was anticipated in the budget. Oh, y cuánto **cuesta?** **\$53,034**.
- There have been some changes in the State-mandated recycling program, so the Council passed a resolution to get in sync with those changes.
- The 2016/17 budget schedule was adopted. This sets the schedule for the meetings leading up to the adoption of the final budget on June 21, 2016. [Several public meetings will be held](#).

Informational Items/Presentation:

- **PG&E** gave a presentation detailing the change-out of the street lighting from HPS to LEDs. Ten people, groaning under a load of junk science and anecdotal reports, spoke against the idea. Their fears ranged from eyestrain to seizures to “vibrations are the basis of life” and the fear of LEDs harming [good vibrations](#). So the Council, having ten votes on the line, **made no decision**. To cover their retreat, the Council asked PG&E to shower them with more spreadsheets and information. It's clear that the Council isn't going to opt in on this energy and money saving program as offered. Just say no!

Public Hearings:

- The Council introduced the first reading of an ordinance amendment to create an alternate position on the Planning Commission. The Commission sometimes has trouble making a quorum.
- The Council is asking for a reduction of ornamental landscaping watering to no more than two days a week or a reduction of 25% relative to our 2013 consumption. This is a reaction to our Governor's ham-fisted drought policies that punish, rather than reward, water agencies that have been conserving water all along. The problem seems to be that the State, in its haste, threw two different numbers at us and we didn't catch the second one. We were operating on the 20% reduction number mandated not the 25% number. Even so, **we came in at 24%+ anyway**. It's true, no good deed goes unpunished.

Regular Agenda Items:

- The Council moved closer to approving an **Urban Growth Boundary** that is much along the same lines as Measure “O” that was passed by a voter initiative in 1996. It will otherwise expire at the end of 2016. **Measure “O”** greatly limited urban growth in favor of infill and “city-centered” growth. With the blessing of the Council, a citizens group has formed to create a ballot initiative. The initiative will make it impossible for future councils to amend it without voter approval. It will also avoid any CEQA entanglements. The group will take input from the Council but the language of their ballot initiative will trump all such Council input. [Click here for more detailed information](#) and a map on page 9. The boundary changes appear to be small. If adopted, it will term out in 25 years. Look for a petition in your neighborhood soon.
- Sebastopol is one of ten members of the Sonoma County Waste Management Agency ([SCWMA](#)). The term ends in February of 2017. Considering all the legal problems it has and the even bigger problems we would have disengaging in February, the Council voted to extend its commitment for another year to see what shakes out in the mean time. (4:0 Jacob absent)
- The Council is pushing ahead with painting **bike lanes** on some of our streets. It will issue a request for proposals (RFP). This will be for the design part only and is estimated at **\$50,000** to lay about eight miles of bike lanes/lines on City streets. (4:0 Jacob absent)

City Council Reports:

- Mayor Gurney had what appeared to be two pages but didn't read them and instead submitted them into the record. What a good idea. She will probably email them if you ask.

A Parting Shot:

- So if ten people came to oppose LED lighting, what is the position of the other voters in this town? At least one of those ten was from Santa Rosa. What is the position of the rest of the voters in Santa Rosa? And the PG&E area runs from Bakersfield to Eureka. What is the overall reaction to LED lighting there? Difficult to say. And who would ever have thought we'd see the day when our own **EMF** (Electronically Misinformed Folks) would cling to the weird yellow light and the old, mercury filled, electromagnetic-spewing HPS fixtures?

Elapsed Time: 3:20 (6:10pm – 9:30pm)

Next City Council meeting is March 1, 2016 at the Teen Center, 425 Morris Street at 6:00 pm.

John Necker