



Sebastopol Citizens

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

Sebastopol City Council Meeting July 17, 2018 – Synopsis and Commentary

- All council members were present.
- Mayor Slayter announced he had a request to power off or silence cell phones. Our very own **Donna Quixote**, just returned from tilting against G5 cell antennas, shouted from the safety of the foyer where she squirrels to avoid the cascade of EMF in the meeting room, squawked loudly she wanted them off, not just silenced. If *she* met those two conditions it would please many.

Proclamations/Presentations:

- Reyna Ramirez was recognized for 5 years with the Public Works.

Public Comment (aka Open Mike):

- A [Valley View](#) resident reminded the council that they are still waiting for the lights at Bodega.
- Two speakers pressed the council to affix the phrase “Home of the Gravenstein Apple” to city signs and documents because that is what sets us apart and makes us unique. (There are many things that do that!) She didn’t use the word “precious” – but it won’t be long before we start hearing that too. Much later in the meeting, Council Member Gurney suggested we could even add “Peacetown U.S.A.” to the signs and documents. See, it’s comin’.
- **Moving well beyond junk-science and into the outer realms of voodoo science**, several self-proclaimed experts pontificated for 15 minutes on the perils of EMF in the Sebastopol Library and how it was endangering the children there. Much to our amazement, we discovered that they had talked the city into hiring not one, but two electricians to follow them around the library while they practiced their dark arts. Claiming that electricians didn’t know how to use a [clamp on ammeter](#), they graciously offered a future visit to school the uninformed and correct all problems if only the city would pay for their air fare from the East Coast – and a rental car. Meanwhile, the retired electrical contractor who had actually held a [C10 license](#) and was taking these notes, [had that other meter going off again](#).
- The last person to speak was the library’s branch manger who stated that ***the library was open and safe***. Amen.

Consent Calendar: (Approved 5:0)

- Holly Hansen was sentenced to another year as Outreach Community Coordinator. For her services, the city will pay her a sum not to exceed **\$3,000** per month.
- The city rejected a claim from [someone who fell at the Mario Savio Free Speech Plaza](#).
- The city has nine departments with 49 full-time equivalent employees but no full-time IT staff, so it has extended the contract with [Marin IT](#) at a cost not to exceed **\$57,760** per year to deal with IT issues. **Cost** to the general fund is \$23,840 plus \$17,388 from the water fund and \$16,532 from the sewer fund.

- Neither does the city have a Human Resource ah....*resource*, so it will contract with [Regional Government Services \(RGS\)](#) to cut through the tangled web of having employees without getting bit. The cost is not to exceed **\$50,000** per year. **Cost** to the general fund is \$12,500 plus \$19,000 from the water fund and \$18,500 from the sewer fund.

Informational Items/ Presentation:

- Bodega Avenue *is unique* in that it is a major east-west arterial corridor for vehicular traffic with average daily traffic counts in excess of three times the City's population. **Council Member Gurney** approached [Sonoma County District 5 Supervisor Lynda Hopkins](#) and successfully convinced her to sponsor a **\$25,000** grant to help alleviate some of the problems caused by such a volume of traffic. The city intends to use this \$25,000 county grant to pay for part of the approximately \$250,000 cost for the [HAWK](#) crosswalk warning system at the [Bodega Ave/Nelson Way](#) intersection.
- The chief of police gave a very detailed report related to the Morris Street RV parking and just how little can be done about it at this time. [You may find reading that report both interesting and frustrating.](#) However, noting the real concerns of public safety, the council and staff are investigating solutions that will do more than drive the RVs into the residential neighborhoods.

Regular Agenda Items:

- The council voted to place two items on the November ballot. Ballot measure A proposes a change allowing the "use tax" (Measure Y) to live forever unless killed by the voters. The use tax does seem indispensable. In a background statement the city says, "Based on City budget projections, should Measure Y expire, the City will lose approximately \$1.4 million annually. This revenue generated by Measure Y represents approximately 15% of the City's annual resources. The General Fund supports many programs and services including police, fire, public works, and administration." But a tax without an expiration date can be problematic. An example of such a West County tax, with questionable returns, may come to mind. In any case it's a take-it-or-leave-it situation. So now you can approve this one in perpetuity or risk letting it expire in 2020 and face financial doom. A more moderate solution is to propose the tax with expiration date. But this city is frugal with moderation. The other item, "a transient occupancy tax assessment (TOT) is charged to travelers when they rent accommodations (i.e., a room, rooms, entire home, or other living space) in a hotel, inn, tourist home / house, or other lodging for a period of less than 30 days. Currently, City of Sebastopol's TOT rate is set at 10%, and by increasing the City's TOT rate by 2% (to 12%) would be a revenue enhancement that would generate approximately \$617,000 in revenue annually" and would more closely align with neighboring cities. This too has no expiration date but at least only your aunt Beulah will be paying it when she comes to visit – not you. (Passed 5:0)
- The council considered a 50% reduction in fee for the Mr. Music [Peacetown Summer Concert Series](#). The application fees for this year's 11 events totaled \$10,450.00 with a refundable deposit of \$1000. Since Mr. Music was unaware, until recently, of the fee structure changes, the council reduced his fee to \$2,500 plus a refundable \$1,000 security deposit. Council Member Glass and Vice Mayor Hinton wanted to grant him the old fees (\$900.00 total fees) but a compromise was achieved. Mr. Music pledged to plow some of any excess funds back into the park and host a work day there too. You can look for these fees to increase next year. (Approved 5:0)
- The city will issue a request for bids for the community trailer pad located at Village Park, formally known as Village Mobile Home Park. This continues to be a moving target because of unknown utility connections, ADA and seismic requirements and actual size of the trailer is also

unknown. No funds will be spent yet as the city is trying to get an idea of costs. (Approved 4:1 with **Council Member Carnacchi in the minority**.) He thought the cheaper asphalt was a better idea even though he earlier supplied the quote of the evening: “If you don’t use concrete it’s your own asphalt.”

- This item reads as follows: “This item is to request the City Council authorize staff to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to qualified consulting firms for conducting two Traffic Corridor Safety Studies: for two segments of SR 116 through the city, namely the two-way portion of Petaluma Avenue towards the south end of the city, and for the one-way parallel sections of Petaluma Avenue/McKinley Street and North & South Main Streets which encompass the downtown core.” Like the above item, the city flies this out there to get an idea of the real costs of such a study. The only cost at this point is staff time. This went around the tower for a while until being waved off to collect more information and land at a later date. (Approved 5:0)
- The next item reads: “Consideration of Approval of Authorization to issue a Request for Proposals for consultants to perform a study on the feasibility of **returning two-way traffic** to downtown core city streets that currently are one-way.” This will also get some tweaking before going out to bid. Of major concern to **Council Member Gurney** was much more **stake holder input** – especially from the folks downtown. (Approved 5:0)
- Voting delegates for the upcoming League of California Cities conference were assigned. (Approved 5:0)
- An Urgency Agenda Item was approved to oppose [S.3157](#) that would all greatly restrict the city’s ability to control what utilities bolt onto that pole in front of your house – such as small ugly cell antennas. Although [this outfit might be available](#) to subtly remove the blight, their technique, although very satisfying, might prove problematic. (Approved 5:0)

City Council Reports:

- More uninteresting show and tell except the discovery that **the old cement plant** has been purchased by the **Barlow**. RV parking.

A Parting Shot:

- During public comment, when one of the “Gravenstein Apple” ladies used up her time, the other informed the council she would donate a minute of her time to the one who should have stopped talking. The mayor could have informed her that is not allowed – but didn’t. Between that and some council members’ astounding intermittent ability to continually repeat themselves, it’s no wonder these meetings drone on.

Elapsed Time: 4:45 hours (6:00–10:45pm)

Next City Council meeting is August 7, 2018, at the Teen Center, 425 Morris Street at 6:00pm.

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

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