

Sebastopol City Council Meeting – July 17, 2012 – Synopsis and Commentary

A four and a half hour meeting wasn't long enough to hear all the public comments on the CVS issue. In fact, it was only long enough for two members of the Design Review Board to speak (five minutes each) and less than ten members of the public at large at three minutes each.

Despite Mayor Wilson's pleas for civility, the vitriol was flowing in both directions. One particularly obnoxious speaker accused Council Member Shaffer and Planning Director Kenyon Webster of conspiring with CVS and Chase and called for a special investigation into the matter. The other City staff members were only accused of being biased.

Disappointingly, after comments were closed, not one Council Member displayed enough courage to make any sort of statement supporting the staff that works so hard for them.

So public comments will carry over to the July 19th meeting which promises to be as long and as embarrassing.

Armstrong Development presented a very convincing case for their appeal of the Design Review Board's denial of the CVS project, noting many instances of compliance with Resolution 5864 in which the City Council provided direction to Armstrong and the DRB.

Those who challenged Armstrong did a poor job of masking their vehement dislike for Chase and CVS as corporate entities which is clearly their real point of opposition to the project.

At the end of the Armstrong's presentation, Vice Mayor Kyes stated that there is currently only one tree in the project footprint, but it might be some sort historic tree and needs to be investigated. He made no reference to Armstrong's plans to plant seventy-five trees there.

On other matters, all Council Members voted to place the one half percent tax increase on the ballot with a sunset clause of eight years. Although Council Member Kathleen Shaffer was very reluctant to do so, she voted with the other members. All Council Members will sign their

names in support of the tax.

Council Member Gurney asked that a resolution delaying the installation of smart meters be placed on the August 7th agenda. In response to a group citizens living near a car wash, and other complaints, she also asked to place on the agenda a discussion of how we can better enforce our noise ordinance.

Public comments not relating to the CVS project, produced the usually perils of lyme disease, EMF and a new one about a U.N. treaty/plot that was responsible for the deterioration of our roads.

John Necker,
A Sebastopol Citizen