

Sebastopol City Council Meeting – November 19, 2013 – Synopsis and Commentary

Proclamations:

For reasons unknown, the Council felt compelled to recognize the opening of the LGBT Fountaingrove Lodge in Santa Rosa. So if you are judged to be politically correct and know someone on the Council, you too may have **Vice Mayor Jacob** read your free commercial at the beginning of a city council meeting. If you aren't so favored, you'll have to buy your own add.

Council Member Gurney began by praising herself for being the library liaison, then remembered to share and did that for Ann Stroberger who was a reference librarian in Sebastopol for 46 years. It was, of course, a long proclamation.

Discussion and Action Items:

There was more discussion about Council involvement with the General Plan update committee. Here is roughly what your Council said:

Council Member Eder: Said this should be the people's general plan and no council member should attend as it may influence the process.

Council Member Gurney: Thought it would be okay for two council members to attend as "observers." (Here the City Attorney stated that if three attend and participate, it might violate the Brown Act.)

Council Member Slayter: Mostly just asked for clarification of the other member's ideas.

Vice Mayor Jacob: Wanted council members to attend on a rotating basis.

Mayor Kyes: Views it as his duty to attend and participate.

The public comment on this item mirrored the Council's discussion, for the most part, except for the one person who is still worried about "the global general plan." Come on man, let's just fix the Sebastopol one first!

Since a Council member cannot be barred from a public meeting, they voted 3:2 to attend as only "observers." **Mayor Kyes** and **Council Member Eder** in the minority.

Consent Calendar:

Most of these items were routine and approved without discussion. However, **Mayor Kyes** needed to discuss some esoteric accounting language about Granular Activated Carbon Change-Out Service and Interior Resurfacing of Vortex and Sanitary Sewer Manhole.

Needless to say, that was absolutely captivating! **Council Member Gurney** voiced concern that the Planning Director might somehow skew the reports of the General Plan consultant. She and some of her attending supporters clearly regard him as Sebastopol's own Darth Vader. The City Attorney mentioned that it is part of the staff's job to edit the report for clarity and keep the process within budget. That seemed to calm her fears a little. Well, the General Plan is going to get manipulated all right but it's not going to be by staff. It's going to be done by the Council and their supporters and **you** may want to attend those meetings to witness it.

Public Hearing:

The Council voted 5:0 to extend the emergency No-Drive-Through ordinance for another year to December 18, 2014. They need more time to study it and pretend it wasn't directed at CVS. Also studying it from a seat in front of me was the attorney for Longs/CVS. After the vote he calmly arose and walked out of the meeting looking much like a man holding three aces.

Public Comments:

This ate up about 25 minutes. By law, the Council has little control over this area of public comments. It covered, among other things, "monolithic and covert conspiracies," the dangers of fluoride, billion dollar think tanks running our county, a Ross Perot-like chart display that had a lot to do with Australian civics, our national debt that ended with a quote from the Bible, intimidation by **Vice Mayor Jacob**, rejection of the idea of global warming and then—confirming my worst fears—**Cittaslow is part of an international plot!** (Where does this come from?)

When this sort of ranting becomes painful, it helps to remember that it is *good* to live in a country that still values our Founders' belief in free speech. They were probably hoping for a higher level of discourse but sometimes you have to take what you can get.

At the end of public comments, **Vice Mayor Jacob** addressed the charge of intimidation. **He correctly stated** that he only speaks during public comments when the speaker goes off topic, is rude, or makes personal attacks on the staff or Council. His commendable efforts in this regard have shortened the meetings and kept them more focused. Tonight's meeting was an example of that very thing.

Now if he could stop **Council Member Gurney** from giving ten-minute reports at the end of the meeting to an empty house.

Duration 2:15 (This is not a typo!)

John Necker