

Sebastopol City Council Meeting – August 20, 2013 – Synopsis and Commentary

This meeting was a double header. It ran from 2:00pm to 5:00pm and then again from 6:00pm to 8:30pm. All council members were present.

Consent Calendar

All items were approved. The most notable were:

- Approval of hotels and convenience sales and services at the Barlow project
- Allowing a non-resident to serve on the planning commission, (4:1 with Slayter in the minority)
- Renewing a contract with ChargePoint at the cost of \$2,295.00 to manage the three electric car-charging stations at the cinema parking lot. So whip down there in your electric car and charge for free. Although your car may be charging, the City isn't. For you politically incorrect carbon based life forms who use petroleum products, there is no free city fuel.

Discussion and Action Items

The first item proved to be very interesting. A couple who wanted to remove a large valley oak from their property had been denied by the Tree Board. Their appeal to the Council was denied at this meeting too. Four Council members agonized over their decision to deny. Only Vice Mayor Jacob, who, when running for office, was as green as a \$100.00 bill, was for cutting it down. So be aware, if you can't prove that a tree is somehow dangerous, you can't cut it down without being fined. However, the fine is less than the cost of the appeal process—for now.

The second item was the next chapter in the CVS/Chase saga. **Council member Eder** was armed with a car wheel, a fire engine wheel, a quote from a February 12, 2012 meeting, and three suggested locations for the emergency vehicle access (EVA) lane. All of the aforementioned tools were used to bludgeon this project. Damn the lawsuits! All speed in reverse! Also hard astern was **Vice Mayor Jacob** who wanted to adjourn to study more minutia at his leisure. **Council member Slayter** wondered if the awning rods were 3/4" or 1/2". **Mayor Kyes** was still fixated on the north door being unlocked all the time, bollards, and moving things around in the parking lot. **Council member Gurney**, while clearly giving her support to anything that would stop this project, had very little to say. Maybe her legal instincts are finally kicking in.

The Armstrong attorney (with their stenographer typing away) brought to the Council's attention that they all were supposed to be "winnowing down" requirements not adding them. **Vice mayor Jacob** blamed the slowdown and the City's funding shortage on Armstrong's lawsuit. **Cittaslow**, our new \$20,000.00 City department, would surely approve of this "Slow City" conduct.

In the second half of this double header, the Council discussed the general plan and putting it out to bid. It's too painful for me to relive again, so let's just say it moved ahead in **Cittaslow** fashion.

The Council also instructed staff to draft a 45-day Urgency Ordinance that will ban "formula businesses" that are evidently ready to pounce on poor little Sebastopol. Is the Council really afraid that, despite this town's insular reputation, Burger King, Starbucks or McMarijuana are planning to move in? Or is this ordinance simply trying to justify the last Urgency Ordinance that resulted in the present lawsuit and the banning of the CVS drive-through. Something to be able to say to the judge, "Hey look, we do Urgency Ordinance's all the time." Hmmm.....

After it passed 5:0, **Council member Gurney** expressed relief that the press wasn't present so it "wouldn't come out like the leaf blower ban."

Duration: 5.5 hours

John Necker