

Sebastopol City Council Meeting – April 21, 2015 – Synopsis and Commentary

Council Member Jacob was absent.

After the gavel, there were two announcements. **Mayor Slayter** thanked everyone involved with the **Apple Blossom Festival** and asked the Chief of Police how many festival-related incidents had occurred. The answer: **ZERO**. Part of that is the nature of our community but a big part of it is a law enforcement team that knows how to defuse potentially confrontational situations.

The City Manager/Attorney asked for a closed session after the regular meeting because of some late-breaking information. The City is, or is about to be, sued because of a tree removal permit issued to Rotten Robbie gas station.

Public Comment (AKA Open Mike):

Much to the disappointment of many, the aluminum be-helmeted EMF alarmist was back, babbling on in disjointed sentences about France banning EMF in schools or someplace. Yet again, she displayed her ignorance of the *real* dangers in life. It's not the EMF in France that will kill you; it's the [Duck Confit](#)!!!!

Proclamations/Presentations:

The Council heard from a used car dealer who wants to relocate his small business from the old Ford dealership to [885 Gravenstein North](#), a small lot next to O'Reilly Media. The Council agreed and voted 4:0 to change the zoning there. It will also make the zoning more consistent with the area in general.

Consent Calendar:

- The resolution for establishing “**parklets**” starts out with the words “**Whereas there has been a substantial interest in creating allowances for parklets....**” Really, substantial is it? Have you been reading about it in the local papers? Perhaps Gwen Ifill of the PBS NewsHour has been reporting on our parklets? No? Well, my guess is this may be the only place you've been hearing about using parking places so people can sit out in the streets and look hip. **This was Council Member Jacob's idea** and he presented it with little discussion of the problems it may cause. **The ordinance** used is the same one **San Francisco** uses. (Population about 800,000.) Sebastopol's population, a **substantial amount** of which is, evidently, in favor of parklets, is about 7,500. **Jacob**, not staff, should present to the Council his version of the ordinance that better fits our little town. It passed 4:0 without comment. Brilliant!
- Also approved was a resolution allowing the City Manager to participate in the restructuring of its insurer's ([REMIE](#)) health plan. Blue Cross is out and replaced with an identical plan and a few less expensive ones. **Council Member Eder** worried that now that the plan is self-insured, the City could be liable for expenses if things don't work out. The City Manager responded that we have ahh...insurance to cover that. It passed after discussion 4:0.

Discussion and Action Items:

- The annual light assessment was approved. In 2015-16, it will drop to \$20.16 from \$23.32 for a typical family dwelling. The total proposed 2015-16 budget is \$108,250. Passed 4:0.
- **The Village Building Convergence (VBC)** has requested the City make some **special provisions for its projects**. The VBC painted the street at the Barlow, among other things (and the paint is starting to come up, though VBC promised to maintain it). In the words of my sainted grandmother, "Vee shall see." VBC seems to think we need this sort of thing because,

alas, we have no sense of community. (Several of us in my neighborhood happen to be getting together this Saturday. Maybe we'll paint the host's driveway to make us feel more neighborly.) Anyway, it looks as if some small concessions will be made for "modest" projects but largely VBC will now have to follow the rules - [just like us isolationists](#).

- The Council adopted an "**Art In Public Places**" statement that may improve the quality of some of the "art" around town. (Hopefully this won't affect our driveway painting this weekend.) **And check out the art at Calder Creek in Ives Park.** You gotta *bring* something to that art. *Anything!*

A Parting Shot:

- **Eder** continues to press for consistency in our ordinances. He pointed out that a monument, like the Peace Wall, took only three Council votes (both he and **Slayter** opposed it), while art faces a much more rigorous process. So if the wall would have been presented as art, which it sure ain't, we may have avoided being subjected to it. He will try to get this item added to an upcoming agenda.

Elapsed Time: 1:50 (6:00 – 7:50 pm)

John Necker