



Sebastopol Citizens

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

Sebastopol City Council Meeting June 21, 2016 – Synopsis and Commentary

Former Sebastopol City Manager Mel Davis dies at 82. July 6 service planned.

Robert Jacob is on extended leave. All other Council members were present.

Public Comment (aka Open Mike):

- The first speaker wanted to grow hemp in Sebastopol and also wanted the Council to stop wars. The connection is a little unclear to me but maybe [smoking hemp](#) might correct that.
- The second speaker wanted the Council to be more mindful of the historical value of City proclamations. He brought in some books dating back to the 1800s and spoke of Andrew Jackson and Abraham Lincoln and [their proclamations](#). Well, if we get some folks of that caliber sitting on the Council, most of us will probably notice their presence and be more mindful.

Consent Calendar: (Approved 4:0)

- The beginning of some administrative cleanup and condensing of the City's Personnel Resolution, which governs the City's employer/employee relations, was approved.
- [Bond Blacktop, Inc.](#) was awarded the contract to slurry selected streets. The cost is budgeted at **\$110,690** and funds come from the "Street Reserve" special sales tax and Measure M grant funds.
- Marghe Mills-Thysen was re-appointed to the [Public Arts Committee](#).
- The City will begin looking for a replacement for resigning [Design Review Board](#) member Bill Shortridge. The application period will run from about June 23rd to July 27th of 2016. Applications will be available at City Hall and on the [City's website](#).

Regular Agenda Items:

- **The Council voted to approve the 2016-17 budget.** There was an interesting move regarding the **Graton Casino Crime Mitigation Fund**. Since its inception in 2012, the City has placed these funds in a deposit account that could be expended at the discretion of the Chief of Police for training and equipment. This year, the City was going to send the \$16,161 to the General Fund with none necessarily going for training and equipment. After a **memo from the Chief of Police**, the City will deposit the money in the usual account. Both **Mayor Gurney** and **Council Member Eder** said they didn't want to tell the Chief how to do his job and then immediately **directed him to spend the money on traffic enforcement**. They stated that if he needed something, he could come back to the Council and ask for it. If you look up "micro manage" in the dictionary, you'll see a picture of two people. **Guess who?** (Passed 4:0)
- The Capital Improvement Program was adopted. There are many worthwhile projects in the pipe that our tax base just can't cover. (Passed 4:0)

- City employee pay rates were approved. (Passed 4:0)
- Also approved were bargaining agreements with City employees who have no bargaining unit, and those in the Service Employees Union and the Sebastopol Police Officers Association. This mostly deals with cost of living raises and insurance. (Passed 4:0)
- At the insistence of CalPERS, the language for the contracts of the City Manager and Clerk were modified with no changes to any of the provisions. (Passed 4:0)
- \$100,000 transfer from the Measure T and Measure Y tax funds to the street fund was approved. (Passed 4:0)
- The Council approved Diane Davis to implement a [Sonoma County](#) grant to reduce youths' access to alcohol and adult high-risk drinking. There are about 60 establishments that sell alcohol in Sebastopol and **Ms. Davis and Officer Jacques Levesque** have met with them all to make them aware of their responsibilities in serving alcohol. (Passed 4:0)
- A City consultant from [Studio L'Image](#) presented some ideas for signs in town that are intended to reduce sign clutter, improve consistency, and just plain look better. The consultant presented the Council with three broad concepts and asked the group to choose one with which she could move forward. The details (colors, font, etc.) will be addressed later in the process. She eventually succeeded and the **Council agreed on a concept with Council Member Eder in the minority.**
- The **Public Arts Committee recommends a “Sculpture Garden Area”** on the lawn east of the Public Works building on Morris Street. It was after 10:00pm when this was addressed. The Council and the few of us remaining were in no mood for a **loosey-goosey** proposal lacking any detail. It was sent back to the Arts Committee with instructions for **them** to put together a specific plan and resubmit it. [Let's hope for one of these!](#) The Council did approve modifying City Resolution 6012 to make temporary art subject to review by the Public Arts Committee. Both were good moves. (Passed 4:0)
- On June 30th, four members of the [Complete Streets Advisory Committee](#) are terming-out but there were only three applicants. What to do? According to staff, some Council members and members of the public, this committee is very close to dysfunctional. Its original proponent, **Council Member Slayter, suggested suspending the committee indefinitely. Mayor Gurney agreed.** But **Council Member Eder** said doing so would “drive a stake into the heart of volunteerism.” To a lesser extent, **Council Member Glass agreed** with him. So it was suspended, but, in September, **just before the elections**, a sub committee of Slayter and Eder will meet to see if they can breathe life into Complete Streets. (Passed 4:0)

A Parting Shot:

- Well it got by me. As it turns out, the **UGB is not going to the voters** as reported on [June 7th](#). The supporters needed 470 signatures to get it on the ballot but when they produced 970, the **Council decided to do the voting for you.** How efficient. This is a big deal! This is now locked in for 25 years and cannot be changed except as a ballot measure that must be approved by the voters at large. **Why not give all of us a chance to vote on something so important?**

As reported in the *Sonoma West Times and News*, “... Sebastopol has 4,300 registered voters. In the last election (not including last Tuesday’s primaries) 3,219 voters hit the polls. The 975 verified signatures **represent 22 percent of all registered voters** and 30 percent of the last voter turnout. [Read the details by Amie Windsor here.](#)

Elapsed Time: 5 hours (6:00–11:00pm)

Next City Council meeting is July 5, 2016 at the Teen Center, 425 Morris Street at 6:00pm.

John Necker

SebastopolCitizens.org