

## Sebastopol City Council Meeting – July 23, 2013 – Synopsis and Commentary

All council members were present.

### **Proclamations:**

August 11–17 was proclaimed National Health Center Week in Sebastopol. Find out more about [your health care center here](#).

Warning: The Surgeon General has found that attending too many Sebastopol City Council Meetings can cause high blood pressure, drowsiness, insomnia, heartburn and an attitude.

And this meeting caused all of that and more as the Council is now beginning to appear more like Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*—especially the tea party scene where logic is in short supply. (No, not *that* Tea Party!)

### **Discussion and Action Items:**

First to appear before the Council was a group representing the project at 961 Gravenstein Highway South—a team trying to overcome a last-minute appeal by someone who does not live in Sebastopol.

The architect stated the appeal has no merit and should be rejected at this very meeting. She also stated she was comfortable with all 15 recommended changes presented by the subcommittee since the July 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting.

**Council Member Gurney**, much like the powerful and dangerous Queen of Hearts, insisted the Council go through all 15 recommendations in great detail. This is the same tactic she used while trying to decapitate the CVS/Chase project.

In the past, all council members begged off by saying they are not designers and then fell down the rabbit hole of micro design. They did it again.

## *What They Said*

### **Council Member Gurney:**

Council Member Gurney thought the recommended new building pattern was too repetitive and stated she didn't want Sebastopol to have the "cookie cutter" look of Windsor. Gurney also worried about the building being too high and the planter boxes, likewise, being too high.

### **Council Member Kyes:**

Council Member Kyes is also worried about the height of the building and joked that the pictures in the recommendation packet were of CVS.

### **Council Member Eder:**

Council Member Eder was concerned that the recommendations hadn't been posted 72 hours before discussion. He didn't like the elevator or the stairs and wanted the project to be "cool." Like Alice's Hatter, Eder fretted about the underground parking and an ambulance turn around area. (But after murdering enough time, he decided to leave that decision to the building, police and fire departments.) It was difficult to tell, Eder said, if this was a good building with only "all these words on paper" to peruse. "This isn't over," he stated, "until we see the blueprints."

### **Council Member Slayter:**

Council Member Slayter read and explained, in detail, all 15 items of the recommendations that he and Council Member Eder had come up with.

### **Council Member Jacob:**

Council Member Jacob wanted to know how many parking spaces were required. Grinning like that famous cat and praising the appellant for his courage, he simultaneously managed to inform him that he was going to deny the appeal. (Oops! First he's here then he's there.)

The appeal was denied and the project limped ahead by a 5:0 vote.

The Council should have denied the appeal on July 2<sup>nd</sup> and let the project move ahead. Done.

Finished. After all, planning and design review and staff had already signed off on it. But the Council decided to ignore them all and redo the whole design review process, yet again. They seem incapable of delegating authority. Instead they murdered an hour and a half as we all suffered from high blood pressure, drowsiness, insomnia, heartburn and an attitude.

The next party to appear before the Council was made up of representatives from the Barlow project. They wanted to amend the M Zone to allow some sales and service shops and a hotel. City staff and design review recommended allowing some shops but not the hotel. What did the Council decide, you may ask? They voted 5:0 to start the hotel process and 3:2 to allow the shops. (Gurney and Jacob were in the minority.)

Does the Barlow know that it is unlikely they can get there from here? Obstacles in this rabbit hole will only get larger and less logical just like *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

Elapsed Time=4.75 hours

John Necker