

Sebastopol City Council Meeting – February 3, 2015 – Synopsis and Commentary

All council members were present.

Public Comment: (aka open mike)

Say whaa....? **Only ONE** speaker. She warned us about the dangers of big box stores. This “big box” thing is blown way out of proportion. Really, how many times in your life do you really need to buy a big box?

Consent Calendar: (All items approved 5:0)

- The Council approved the budget schedule for 2015/16. This is an initial step in creating the actual budget. Two council members, the city manager, finance director and the city clerk will form the committee. Several public meetings will be announced and the budget itself is expected to be adopted in June of this year.
- Also approved was the routine suspension of a few City ordinances to facilitate the 69th annual [Apple Blossom Festival](#) brought to you, yet again, by the [Sebastopol Chamber of Commerce](#).
- In 2010/11 the Council approved a process by which individual council members could grant a small amount of funds to projects they felt merited them. **Mayor Slayter** requested that his current allotment (about \$600.00) be given to the Worlds Friends shuttle bus trip, medical costs for Frank, the ailing K9, and the City Hall landscape project.
- The installation of a sign honoring one of our sister cities, Takeo, Japan, was approved. It will be placed on a grass strip along Petaluma Avenue at the **Mario Savio Free Speech Plaza**. Although Takeo has actually named a street in honor of us, this is probably the best we can do. Takeo didn't have to deal with Caltrans. (**Note:** The Mario Savio Free Speech Plaza is now being referred to as the Mario Savio Town Plaza. Maybe it will eventually get back to just the Plaza - which was good enough for us commoners.)

Informational Items /Presentations:

The Council received the update of its **goals and priorities**. The ten main goals are:

1. Maintain long-term financial stability
2. Improve infrastructure
3. Increase parks
4. Enhance the walkable/bike-able community
5. Provide open and responsive government ([Oh, like that one!](#))
6. Maintain a highly qualified staff
7. Improve off-street parking
8. Develop a plan for our future
9. Enhance economic vitality
10. Enhance housing opportunities

Discussion and Action:

Current State law limits local jurisdictions to a 2% sales tax. Since the statewide sales tax is 7.5%, that means added local sales tax can't exceed 9.5%. But the County is planning to ask for a ¼ cent general

sales tax in June of 2015. So the discussion is will the cap be raised from 2.0% to 2.5%. The City, in a 5:0 vote, will support raising the cap to 2.5%.

A winery is being proposed at 5150 Sebastopol Road, just east of Llano Road. The County has asked the City for its input. And they are going to get it! The meeting was as packed as Pac Bell Park on opening day. About 26 speakers spoke for over 50 minutes, saying virtually the same thing – too much traffic, too much water use, too big and too close to us. Of those speakers, only four finished in less than a minute. The others used the full three minutes to repeat what the person that had just spoken said. Seven of the speakers spoke over their allotted time, demonstrating that while they demand others follow the rules, they themselves are exempt from such mundane constraints. Only the property owner spoke in favor of the project. Okay, there was one speaker who, arriving late, took a different approach. He suggested the owner abandon growing grapes and start growing hemp. Yes, he was a very happy fellow and clearly very much into his subject matter. The City has no jurisdiction in this matter but they will send a letter to the County strongly opposing the project on a 5:0 vote. ***What they said:***

- **Mayor Slayter:** Opposed winery traffic crossing the Joe Rodota trail and chided the owner for misspelling the name of the trail.
- **Council Member Glass:** Supported the public comments.
- **Council Member Gurney:** Said “I’m in the ‘hell-no’ category.”
- **Council Member Jacob:** Warned the owner that he will get sued and the project will not move forward without encountering every obstacle possible.
- **But the best lines came from Council Member Eder:** He said, “Who thought I’d look back on CVS fondly?” and “this is industry masquerading as farming,” and finally “it looks like the lovechild of Knott’s Berry Farm and Green Acres.” If it gets built, Eder encouraged blocking access with baby carriages. [See the Sonoma West Times and News for more details.](#) Also at: [\(The Press Democrat\)](#)
- The Council gave direction to Mayor Slayter for voting at the Sonoma County Mayors and Council Members Association meetings.

Former Community Development Agency Actions: Lastly, the City continued to clean up details post Governor Brown’s abolishment of all the State’s Community Development Agencies.

John Necker
Duration 3:15