

## Sebastopol City Council Meeting November 3, 2015 – Synopsis and Commentary

All Council members were present.

### Proclamations/Presentations:

- Maria Pennacchio was recognized for her 15 years of service to the City. Born and raised in Sebastopol, she left the police force for the County where she now works as a fraud investigator. But missing her hometown, she also now volunteers as a reserve officer here—a non-paying job. That is public service!
- A proclamation recognizing Veterans Day and veterans was read. [VFW Gold Ridge Post 3919](#) is looking for a few good veterans. You probably qualify. Give it a look. [It can't be as bad as basic training!](#) At ease!

### Public Comment (aka Open Mike):

- **Mayor Slayter** reminded us that Sebastopol World Friends is having a dinner [November 7th](#).
- The [Sebastopol Chamber of Commerce](#), in league with [Cittaslow](#), the [Downtown Association](#), [The Barlow](#) and others, has managed to get us a good review in the *USA Travel Magazine*. Pick it up today.
- **The Council was thanked** for its financial support of the [apple press](#) at the [Luther Burbank Gold Ridge Experiment Farm](#).
- A squared away young man complained about being reported to the police while using a **leaf blower** on Florence Avenue at **11:00am**. He was told to cease because he was in violation of **City Ordinance 8.25.060**, which states that noise levels must not exceed **55 dba**. Really!?! How loud is that – about a conversation in a restaurant or office, background music or air conditioning unit at 100 feet. **The ordinance also states** “(1) All personnel conducting sound measurements shall be trained in the current techniques and principles of sound-measuring equipment and instrumentation.” Well, the officer probably isn't trained for that but he is highly trained to be out on patrol doing a lot more good for our community, which is surely where he would rather have been.

### Consent Calendar:

- The **Superintendent of Public Works** presented the Council with the **Annual Sewer System Performance Report**. We have **29.6 miles of sewer mains** in the City and our sanitary sewer overflows were a bit higher than the average for the region. Some were caused by repairs that will mitigate future problems, another was caused by part of a manhole falling into the main, and another was caused by debris for a total of six. (Accepted 5:0)
- The skate board park expansion moved forward. (Approved 5:0)
- Compensation for the management of the **Village Mobile Home Park** came before the Council. The City has owned the property for several years. Tombe Realty has managed it since 2010 and has never asked for an increase of the \$2,500 per month fee. The new proposed fee is \$3000 per month. The services provided by Tombe Realty are quite extensive and it is doubtful that the City has the staff and/or the expertise to handle such an undertaking. However, **Council Member Glass thought the increase too much**. Fortunately, no one else on the Council or the City Manager thought that. **Tombe Realty** sees itself as doing a community service and **if they walk away** from this, the City is going to be paying someone else much more to do the same thing. (Approved 5:0)

### Informational Items/ Presentation:

- The finance director gave a report on our 2015–2016 fiscal health as of the first quarter of this fiscal year. The report states that we are meeting project levels. Sales tax, TOT, (hotel room tax) and the [UUT](#) supply 81% of our tax revenue. Of that, the sales tax on food leads the way. **Vice Mayor Gurney** asked for the report to be **posted on the City website**.

### Public Hearing:

- Some **user fees** (building permits, business licenses, etc.) were modified slightly (Approved 5:0). **Glass** reminded us that the fee amounts aren't arbitrary. **By law they cannot exceed** the actual cost of the service.

### Regular Agenda Items:

- The Council considered the **“expenditure plan”** submitted by the **Public Arts Committee**. The City has a “percent for art” program that allows developers to pay an in-lieu fee to the City instead of actually supplying the public art itself. This fund is now at about \$57,500 and will be over \$92,000 by 2017. This money is largely the result of The Barlow project. **Glass** wanted the art to be generated by **local artists** but other members of the **Council disagreed**, feeling art should be **more expansive**. So the art will be generated by someone in the state of California who has been vetted and approved by the Public Arts Committee. In a moment of candor, **Council Member Eder** questioned the **quality of some of the local “art”** and suggested a more expansive pool of artists might help remedy that. He may be pilloried for that statement but he's right. Some of it is downright embarrassing. (Approved 4:0. **Mayor Slayter** earlier became ill and left. This is the **first meeting** since his election that he has not fulfilled.)
- The **Laguna Wetlands Restoration Project** got more attention than some of us thought it would. The most **laughably incongruous criticisms** came from the fellow who launched the now infamous Railroad Brier Patch cleanup that got the City into trouble with a few governing agencies. But it is an ill wind that blows no good. The impact of that cleanup actually initiated this project. The County “suggested” it be done in the aftermath. **Glass** reminded us that this plan is being **produced by professionals with scientific backgrounds**. It will return for further discussion.
- [KOWS](#) Radio wants to erect a **low-wattage antenna** (50 watts) at the Pleasant Hill Reservoir. Much to my surprise, it generated very little debate. But this was only the **Council approving the application** for a use permit. **Eder** worried some about **cell towers** being erected too. KOWS had technical reasons for that not happening. **Jacob then said the “E” word \*** but nothing happened. The Luddites were probably at home folding aluminum foil hats for the next public meeting on this. Since KOWS is a very eclectic volunteer organization that fits well into the self-image of West County, it will be interesting to see how the antenna installation will be received. (Approved 4:0)

### A parting Shot:

- **55dba!!!** A [Western Scrub-Jay](#) in my back yard makes more noise than that!

Elapsed Time: 3:45 (6:00–9:45)

Next City Council meeting is December 1, 2015 at the Teen Center, 425 Morris Street at 6:00 pm.

\* (EMF=Electronically Misinformed Folks)

**John Necker**