

Sebastopol City Council Meeting – September 3, 2013 – Synopsis and Commentary

All Council members were present.

It seemed like all Council members found something they didn't like about the consent calendar items so instead of just taking a vote on them, the Council decided to further micro manage the process. Discussion was moved to the end of the meeting to accommodate the favored ones that were there for something else. The rest of us got to sit there until 9:40pm.

So we skipped over to the **Discussion and Action** items.

The 2013-2014 **Goals and Priorities** are now the 2013-2015 Goals and Priorities largely because the Council crammed so much detail in there, it's gone virtually nowhere. And even though they all agreed it was still an imperfect document, they voted to approve it after tweaking it for almost two hours.

The next item was the creation of a sub committee to explore ideas for a **new City Hall and Civic Center**. The City has no money for anything like that but evidently wants to be ready in case Warren Buffet finds us worthy of his philanthropy. The idea is to get most of the City agencies under one roof to improve service.

Another sub committee was formed to explore opportunities regarding the **old Shamrock Cement plant** on Morris Street. The asking price has been dropping and is now around \$400,000. **Council Member Gurney** hopes to find a way for the City to get “some control of the property.” It remains a mystery why a piece of property like that is having trouble selling in **Cittaslow Sebastopol**.

Now back to the **Consent Calendar**

The City rejected a claim by the survivors of a lady who, while walking on a city sidewalk, fell, struck her head and subsequently died. The city's insurer requires a routine rejection of claims so the insurer can assess them. This passed 4:0 with Kyes in abstention.

The next item was the inability of **The Business Outreach Committee** to fill its vacancies. If that can't be done by November, it will be disbanded.

It looks like the amendment to the M Zone will move forward, allowing a hotel and integrated shops at **The Barlow** to start the application process. And there will be blood. Already **Vice Mayor Jacob** is concerned about “keeping prices too high for the poor” and ending up with a “chichi Yountville hotel.” **Council Member Eder** continues to fret about the chichi hotel failing and being replaced with one from The Evil Empire. He was assured that the City had the force to repel that eventuality but he voted against it anyway. It passed 4:1.

The City wants to overlay some streets and will hire a consultant to help us get the best bang for our buck. The consultant will assess the streets, recommend work needed and produce a bid that will go out to contractors who will do the actual job.

Public Comments had a few interesting moments. One member of the public, who seemed to be fixated on international plots, continued to applaud and remark when she agreed with other speakers even though **Mayor Kyes** asked her not to. Then, in a refreshing display of asserting some control over the unruly classroom, **Vice Mayor Jacob** told her, and the others who can't seem to control themselves,

to show some respect for others and stop wasting our time bending every public comment session into an opportunity to advance their particular agendas. He reminded them that public comments were to be relevant to the topic at hand. He also sprang to the defense of the **Planning Director** who was verbally attacked by an EMF-phobe. So deep was this lady's EMF fear that she displayed several different types of foil (none of it aluminum), including something that looked like a small, pink version of a TOW missile launcher. To use that one, you put your phone at the bottom end of it and listen at the top to avoid the magnet in the earpiece. (Hey, I ain't makin' this up!) [Here's the military version](#) of someone making an outbound call on the new safe phone. (OK, I made that one up.)

Note to the rest of the Council: You, too, should come to the defense of your City staff when they are so attacked. They're not allowed to respond but you should. Otherwise, some could get the false impression that you agree with these attacks.

Well done, Mr. Vice Mayor.

Duration: 3:40

John Necker