



# Sebastopol Citizens

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

## Sebastopol City Council Meeting November 5, 2019 – Synopsis and Commentary

- All council members were present.

### Public Comment (aka Open Mike):

- It looks like staff is doing their part in speeding up meetings by making the summary of the Consent Calendar shorter. It is usually read aloud to the public by the mayor, word for word. If a document is placed in front of an elected official and he or she gets the chance to read it aloud, even if the building is on fire, he or she will finish reading it before running out of the building.
- A speaker thanked Vice Mayor Slayter for helping her be prepared during the evacuation and to remind us all that the annual Thanksgiving dinner that her group provides at the Community Church of Sebastopol will again take place from 1:00 to 5:00pm. **Everyone** is invited.
- There was a complaint about a deteriorated sidewalk.

### Consent Calendar:

- The council approved a resolution to authorize the suspension of the one hour parking limit in the Sebastopol Downtown Association District during the period November 15, 2019 to January 5, 2020. This was approved after some worry about employees parking there all day. (And the RVs?) Council Member Gurney asked the Downtown Association for a report on how well it worked saying that shorter parking produced a faster turnover (ya think?) resulting in more shoppers. Her areas of expertise are vast indeed. (Approved 4:0 as Her Honor Mayor Hinton was stuck in traffic.)
- The city is eligible for a \$160,000 state grant to accelerate housing production. It's a reimbursement grant, which means the city must first expend funds on a state approved project and then the state will reimburse the city. "Additionally, the projects that are proposed must be completed and, where required, adopted by the City by June 30, 2022." (Approved 4:0)
- The council authorized a request for bids for ADA curb ramp upgrades along Hwy. 116. In 2016 Caltrans agreed to stripe city designed bike lanes along Hwy. 116 after it did the repaving if city agreed to later install ADA curb ramps along our portion of Hwy. 116. Caltrans claimed to have "no funding source for the curb ramps." And the city agreed. (There's one born every minute.) The total project estimate for the ramps is **\$451,920**, half of which will be paid in fiscal year 2019-20 and the other half in 2020-21. The money will come from SB1, Measure "M" and traffic impact fees. **So that's how much the "green mile" cost the city. Council Member Carnacchi was terrified**, probably justifiably so, that the work be completed by April 18, which is the day of the [Apple Blossom Festival](#). Despite assurances, he looked uneasy – that was probably justifiable too.
- \$88,000 was transferred from the general fund to the Community Development Block Program to cover a shortfall for pool, path, door and gate work at Ives Park. It was brought on by
  1. Architect discrepancies and errors at \$10,000-\$20,000
  2. Extra pool work paid for by the city at \$15,000

3. Grant Reduction at \$60,000 because this money was earmarked for the police station.

4. Extra work and unanticipated conditions at \$29,000

Council Member Carnacchi also stated that the city should have known the \$60,000 could not be used to fund the Ives Park work. (The transfer was passed 4:1 without his approval.)

- The council approved an emergency declaration due to PG&E cutting off power and the Kincade fire. The analysis of the declaration reads: “There are no direct budget impacts associated with ratifying an Emergency Proclamation issued by the Director of Emergency Services proclaiming the existence or threatened existence of a local emergency. Declaration of a local emergency may provide the opportunity for the City of Sebastopol to get reimbursed by Federal or State Agencies for costs associated with storm related impacts.” (Approved 4:0)

### Public Hearing:

- A public hearing, as required by [Proposition 218](#), was to be held on the study to increase water/wastewater rates but an error in mailing left approximately 33% of the property owners not notified. So this hearing will take place later, after another mailing. The cost of the second mailing will be paid by the consultant. (Passed 5:0)
- Vehicle camping on Morris Street and other areas was discussed. That description has little connection with the reality of the situation and would more closely describe [Travels With Charley](#). [See the report here](#). The council ignored the City Manager/Attorney’s suggestion that, considering established case law that severely limits what action the city can take to solve this problem, it would be best to just leave things as they are. The council camped out on this for about two hours, proposed many solutions, some of which might be practical and none of which will have any real impact on the problem. The real star of the evening was **Council Member Glass who went on a 20 minute riff** that was all over the map and occasionally to the point. (If anyone wants to mail her an egg timer it’s OK with me.) So the council handed the whole tangled web off to staff and tasking them with distilling the two hours down to something practical and returning it to the council. That too will probably be ignored and we’ll just start yet another micromanaging session. (5:0)
- A 50% reduction in fees for the 2019 Peacetown Summer Concert series was contemplated. Council Member Gurney preferred to enter the concert as a line item in the budget. Mayor Hinton and Council Member Carnacchi warned that could be a “slippery slope” because maybe the Apple Blossom Festival and others might want the same treatment. **Council Member Gurney, who was getting a little snippy** and was in danger of losing her Peacetown aura (undoubtedly because of overwork) replied that the concert “was not like the Apple Blossom that takes up all the parking spaces and uses the park for four days.” Well, that produced some interesting expressions of the faces of her peers. (This is the second time she has said something like that.) Her suggestion failed and the reduction passed 5:0.
- In support of the **Mayor of the City of San Jose (population 1,000,000+-), Vice Mayor Slayter**, who is also the **Vice Chair of Sonoma Clean Power**, asked the council to sign a letter, that “comes through Sonoma Clean Power staff”, to **“propose transforming PG&E into a mutual benefit corporation** - in essence, a cooperative owned by its customers.” That would mean all the wiring, transformers, lights, meter reading, billing and purchasing of power would be the responsibility of the City of Sebastopol (population 7,666 +-.) Why not just hand it all off to Sonoma Clean Power? All they are doing now is buying power and billing you. This would get them out of the office to shinny up a few poles to change a few lights and swing a few service drops. Good healthy exercise in fresh air. What’s not to like?

**A Parting Shot:**

**Vice Mayor Slayter**, during the discussion above, remarked electric power “should not be owned by a for-profit company.” One wonders if that would apply to one that was managed properly and was not in competition with Sonoma Clean Power?

Elapsed Time: 3:30 hours (6:00–9:30pm)

Next City Council meeting is November 19, 2019, at the Teen Center, 425 Morris Street at 6:00pm.

You can view this meeting and others at: <http://bit.ly/sebcctv>.

**John Necker**

**[SebastopolCitizens.org](http://SebastopolCitizens.org)**