

Sebastopol City Council Meeting – May 6, 2014 – Synopsis and Commentary

Proclamations and Presentations:

- [National Bike Month](#) and May 8th Bike to Work Day
- [Drowning Prevention month](#)
- Municipal Clerks' month (*Being politically correct, the Council, yet again, presented our Clerk with **NO** flowers—only the resolution that she had typed.*)
- [Community Resilience Challenge](#)
- [Lyme Awareness month](#)

Public Comment (aka open mike):

If you had attended this meeting, you would have discovered that the Rockefeller Foundation was somehow funding the Resilience Challenge, grants are perverting us, we shouldn't have to share the sunshine with solar arrays, and the Council's rejection of **fluoride** was the right thing to do. Speaking of which, this could explain why the City, that has its own unique water system, should so fear fluoride. [Click here to see the answer.](#)

Consent Calendar

Approved without further discussion were:

- A resolution supporting **property tax reform**. This statewide effort would allow reassessment of non-residential property while not violating Proposition 13. “Small businesses” will not be reassessed. A few points of interest listed in the resolution are:
 - In 1978 Proposition 13 reduced property taxes by about 57%.
 - Prior to Proposition 13, there were no limits on tax rate increases (some went up 50-100%).
 - It rolled back tax assessment values to 1976 rates.
 - If the property was sold, it was reassessed at 1% of the sale price with a 2% per year cap.
 - A group called **Evolve** is trying to change the way non-residential businesses are taxed. [Click here for their position.](#)
- An amendment to the [Redwood Empire Municipal Insurance Fund's](#) JPA.
- Agreement regarding transfer of [BEGIN](#) Program loans.

[The Quarterly Financial Report](#) for the third quarter ending March 31st was presented. There is “a dramatic drop” in capital improvement revenues in fiscal year 15/16.

- \$100,000 in new project income was projected for 14/15 but there is now no new development projected beyond that fiscal year.
- The projection of \$133,444 for new sewer connections for 13/14 is lagging at \$66,144.
- There is “a dramatic drop” in capital improvement revenue. \$75,000 was projected for 14/15 but there is no new development on the horizon.

When asked by **Council Member Eder** if, in fact, things were developing as expected, the Administrative Services Director agreed that was the case. Well, if you are going to be bleeding, it's good to know the flow rate!

In an act of self-protection, the Council repealed an ancient ordinance [Chapter 5.12](#) that

prohibits engaging in, among other things, fortune telling, prophesy and mind reading by means of crystal gazing, necromancy and even magnetism. Someone brought this to the attention of the Council a while back at “Open Mike.” Good on her, now this Council will no longer be in violation of Chapter 5.12 every time it meets.

Discussion and Action Items:

Mayor Jacob read [his resolution](#) urging federal and state officials to support some plan to reopen Palm Drive Hospital. It passed 5/0 with few modifications. His plan to form a [sub-committee](#) generated more discussion. **Council Member Kyes** was good to go with it as proposed but **Council Members Slayter and Gurney** had some reservations about the unintended consequences of getting involved in something so open ended. In the end, Mayor Jacob accepted **Council Member Gurney's proposal** to send a letter to the Palm Drive Hospital Board stating that the Council was ready to help where it could, if asked by the Board to do so.

Council Member Eder, whose wife sits on the Palm Drive Hospital Board, abstained from voting due to his perception that it might be a conflict of interest. He did, however, ask for a show of hands of those who supported keeping Palm Drive open. There were many people there and, from my seat, all the hands went up. He then asked who did not. No hands were seen. This is a **form of intimidation** of the majority over the minority. While our Council smugly speaks of “building a community,” this is one of their tools for keeping the minority in its place. They still don't know what my position is. My hands stayed in my pockets on both occasions.

The City Manager called for another CVS closed session to be scheduled soon—possibly May 20.

City Council Reports:

They were brief.

And a parting shot!

Lyme disease prevention could not have a worse spokesperson. She rambled on about Lyme disease, mosquitoes, EMF, and the [Rasputin](#)-like mechanizations of our long-suffering Planning Director. At every opportunity, she and other gadflies spoke, consuming just about an hour of **public comment** time. And how much sense do they make? [Less than this.](#)

Duration 4:45

John Necker