

Sebastopol City Council Meeting October 6, 2015 – Synopsis and Commentary

All Council members were present.

Proclamations and Presentations:

- Juvenal Reyes received a service award for ten years of service to the City.
- October was declared [Domestic Violence Awareness Month](#).
- October was also declared Chamber Awareness Month. That would be the [Sebastopol Chamber of Commerce](#).
- October 7 is International **Walk** and Roll to School Day. Not to be confused with **Rock** and Roll to School day – [which is a lot more fun](#).
- October 18–24 is Freedom From Workplace Bullies Week.

Public Comment (aka Open Mike):

- A fellow complained about his aged mother's water bill. Staff will investigate.
- Neighbors of Rotten Robbie continue to claim it's out of compliance. It is, however, legally grandfathered in and the Council will be slow to shoot itself in the foot a la CVS.
- Another urged an ordinance to ban riding a bike with a dog on leash.
- And there was another speaker, but his point was difficult to pin down.
- **Mayor Slayter** asked the Council to authorize him to join [Mayors Against Illegal Guns](#). It was made so.

Consent Calendar: (All accepted without comment except the last one.)

- Three planning commissioners will term-out on December 31, 2015. The City has seven but can have no less than five, and it will have three seats available. The application period runs from October 8 through November 30.
- The Design Review Board is also terming out three members. The application period runs from October 8 through November 30.
- The above also applies to the Public Arts Committee.
- Some poor dear slashed a tire on a drainpipe while parking and wants the City to pay for it. The Council rejected the claim and sent it to the insurance company.
- Since the retirement of our long-serving engineering director, the City has hired Henry Minkus as our engineering management director, so the council had to approve some changes in committee assignments.
- The skate park expansion is going to affect the drainage at the south end by the [Sebastopol Rifle and Pistol Club](#). Since these folks are heavily armed, the project engineer will handle that drainage issue and bill the City for a sum not to exceed \$3,800. Wise choice!
- The Council approved the final map for 961 Gravenstein Highway South. This is the final O.K. for lot #35, a multi-use commercial building.
- The City is contemplating participating in the [Groundwater Sustainability Agency \(GSA\)](#). It modified its agreement with [GHD](#) to get the technical support it needs to make an informed decision on related matters. GHD costs will not exceed \$10,000.
- **Council Member Eder** pulled the above item for discussion. It was folded into the presentation below. California draws 30% to 50% of its water from 14 underground “basins.” The Santa Rosa Plain and the Sonoma and Petaluma Valley basins are at “medium” capacity. The City is moving cautiously toward joining a larger groundwater sustainability agency. Soon we will have to make a decision on what path we choose to take and GHD will help us make an

informed decision. If Mark Twain didn't say it, then Yogi Berra did: “Whiskey Is for Drinking; Water Is for Fighting Over.” [Or not.](#)

Presentations:

- The city engineering manager gave us some information on the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (see above).

Public Hearing:

- City Ordinance 992, dealing with energy and wastewater requirements, has been superseded by state law and was brought into compliance tonight. We led the State for a while. (5:0)

Regular Agenda Items:

- Earlier this year, the City Council approved a “living peace wall” at the 90-degree turn at McKinley and Petaluma Avenue by the Rialto Cinemas. At this City Council meeting, the Council voted on four proposed names. They are:
 - Nelson Mandela
 - Barry Ponneck
 - Reverend George Houser
 - Alicia Sanchez

Does not a peace wall erected just across the street from a peace monument in a town that fancies itself “Peacetown, USA” seem horribly ostentatious? **This didn't happen with a lot of public input, did it?** Were you asked to sit on the committee that proposed these names? Do you think it a good idea that two of these names are still living persons? (Well, the **Mayor** and **Council Member Jacob** didn't think so either.) What are we going to do if, after their names are chiseled in the wall, they run off and join ISIL? You can read more [details here](#). Find the Peace Wall [website here](#). (5:0 with some dissent from Slayter and Jacob.)

- The second reading of the **formula business ban** completely **disintegrated**. With **Council Members Eder and Glass** in the lead, the bar for starting a business downtown will now be set at a new height. It seems those two will be satisfied only when we are selling each other crystals and free-range beeswax candles. It will be back, yet again, in two weeks. **Council Member Jacob** tried mightily to lower the bar but failed. Oh, so here's what you [have to do to clear it when it eventually becomes law](#).
- The City awards procedure was discussed and will be modified.
- The City started the process of looking for an **Economic Development** person. **Vice Mayor Gurney** expressed concern that if someone is found, s/he should reflect the values of the community (whatever that may mean) and *also* consult with businesses other than those belonging to the **Sebastopol Chamber of Commerce**. Hmmm...
- As of September 15, there was only \$3,200 in Sebastopol's Community Fund. There was a discussion about how to raise more voluntary contributions to help worthwhile recipients in our community. **Vice Mayor Gurney** agreed, as long as it **wasn't distributed “like Rotary.”** Well, it probably won't be. If my sources are correct, **Sebastopol Sunrise Rotary**, because of the recent Cajun Festival, will have about **\$30,000** to distribute to the community, not \$3,200. [Here's a list that might interest you](#). And here are some things the [Noon Rotary Club](#) does.
- The Council gave direction to **Council Member Glass** on how to vote at the upcoming Mayors' and Council Members' Association Meeting.

A Parting Shot:

At **10:10pm**, when the Council was asked if there were any Council Reports, **Council Member Glass** decided to give one on a recent meeting she attended in San Jose. She promised it **would be short** – her estimation was inaccurate. My eyes glazed over right around the “**Tax Incrementation Is Back**” panel discussion report. No doubt they lined up for that one. Thankfully, **Vice Mayor Gurney printed her report**, handed it out to the Council, the Mayor dropped the hammer, and we all went home. We need no oral reports after four hours!

Elapsed Time 4:15 (6:00pm–10:15pm)

Next Council meeting is October 20th at Teen Center, 425 Morris Street @ 6:00pm.

John Necker