



Sebastopol Citizens

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

Sebastopol City Council Meeting December 1, 2020 – Synopsis and Commentary

- All council members were virtually present.

Public Comment (aka Open Mike):

- A speaker thanked Council Member Carnacchi for his hard work while on the council.
- Another speaker regretted that the council was not as diverse, in many ways, as the community and said, without offering proof, which is in vogue lately, that the present system is responsible for “voter suppression.” This doesn’t mean we have to recount votes, does it?

Consent Calendar: (Approved 5:0)

- The election results were certified, thereby electing Diana Rich and re-electing Neysa Hinton to the city council. Both were sworn in. Outgoing Mayor Slayter then gave a lengthy and altruistic goodbye – except where he encouraged us to “punch a Nazi.”
- He then called for nominations for the election of the mayor and vice mayor. Council Member Glass was his, and the only, nomination for mayor. She was installed on a 5:0 vote. Not to be outdone by her predecessor, Mayor Glass’ even more lengthy remarks covered just about everything with the possible exception of the development of the quark theory – but it might have gotten in there. The length of both of those remarks drew a mild rebuke from a member of the public and both earned an honorable mention by [Mary Callahan in today’s Press Democrat](#) (page A3). Mayor Glass then nominated Council Member Gurney for Vice Mayor. The only one nominated, she was installed in a landslide vote of 5:0.
- Every year the city must approve Annual AB 1600 Report about fees collected on new development projects. These fees finance, among other things, street and sidewalk upkeep. It was made so.
- The council heard a request to purchase mobile data terminals for all police vehicles. “In 2015, Assembly Bill (AB 953) enacted the Racial and Identity Profiling Act (RIPA) into law which, among other things, **requires each California law enforcement agency employing peace officers to annually report their stop data to the Attorney General.**” This system will not only allow the officer to access the records management system while in the field but should improve accuracy, and efficiency. The encryption will ensure privacy that the present police communication systems cannot. There’s another upside. Your neighbor’s scanner will no longer be able to rat you out on a DWI stop. The cost is **\$121,144.83**
- The staff asked the council to authorize getting bids for an online permitting system. “Currently, each department maintains its own records, with the assistance of very basic files (excel spreadsheets, word documents, and PDFs filed in the City’s server). This will greatly improve access to all that data and also provide the public access to no-confidential data via a web portal.
- Authorization was granted to the city manager to establish a new classification and pay rates for administrative technician, and junior accountants. This item was pulled by Council Member Hinton for more review and staff seemed to think that was a good idea too.

Public Hearing:

- The council discussed and adopted tobacco retailer license fees. For 2020-21, if a DOJ Tobacco Grant is won, the new and a renewal license fee will be reduced from \$222 to \$60. (Approved 5:0)

Regular Agenda Items:

- The council discussed a Sign Program and Sign Exception for [231 Petaluma Avenue](#), a three-tenant commercial building between the Feed Store and CVS, where Peets Coffee used to be. As part of the CVS settlement/debacle, the council still has its teeth sunk into the hindmost of anything to do with the CVS project. Even though indications are they would like to find a way to disengage, they still had to deal with this issue. An applicant wanted to increase the light allowance behind any sign there from 2700 Kelvin to 5000 and add another sign to the building. The council wisely had sent this off to the Design Review Board where people with good taste sit. The board sent back a recommendation of, among other things, only two signs and lighting range of between 3200-3500 Kelvin. (That number evidently produces a better color rendition than the more yellow 2700.) Both Council Members Slayter and Hinton were "comfortable" with the board's recommendations. Vice Mayor Gurney didn't like those numbers at all. Confusing Kelvin (color) with Lumens (brightness) she looked as if she could go ten rounds with CVS again, saying, "there's no point in increasing that number other than to benefit the advertiser." She finally realized that no one else was in her corner and the item passed as recommended by the board 5:0.
- City council and staff committee assignments were discussed and made. This is usually routine stuff and it was so tonight except when it came to assignments to the Budget Sub Committee. Mayor Glass has been on it for quite awhile and Council Member Hinton for three years, and they both made it clear they wanted to stay there. But Council Member Rich had a strong interest in it too. During the discussions, Vice Mayor Gurney suggested that Council Member Hinton give up her seat to Council Member Rich so someone else could benefit from the experience. (That from someone who has a death grip on several of her favorite committee assignments.) Council Member Hinton said since she wasn't granted any leadership assignments this year, the budget subcommittee was something she wanted even more. And she said it with a little passion. At this point, Council Member Rich graciously withdrew her bid for the job. In an astounding display of insensitivity, Vice Mayor Gurney objected to the withdrawal and continued to push for Council Member Hinton's replacement. When Council Member Rich again graciously repeated her position, Vice Mayor Gurney tried to get her to bump Council Member Hinton off another committee seat instead. [The vice mayor has just uncloaked. Shields up, Council Member Hinton.](#) But good will and better politics won out, so the Budget Subcommittee will consist of Mayor Glass and Council Member Hinton. (5:0 on all assignments.)
- The council discussed "selection for the Voting Delegate and Alternate(s) to Vote in the Mayor's Absence for the 2021 Sonoma County Mayors and Councilmembers City Selection Committee Meetings and Sonoma County Mayors and Councilmembers Board and General Membership Association Meetings." (5:0)

A Parting Shot:

- Every year Committee Assignments remind me of the commitment someone must possess to want a seat on the city council. It's not just every other Tuesday night. [Look at this list of other positions that they are expected, or in some cases, must fill.](#)
- When Council Member Carnacchi congratulated Council Member Rich on winning his seat, he closely paraphrased a line that some say an earlier office holder uttered when he moved on:

Washington: [to Adams after he has been sworn in] I am fairly out, and you are fairly in. See which of us will be the happiest.

--

Elapsed Time: 4:45 hours (6:00–10:45pm)

Next regular city council meeting is December 15, 2020 via ZOOM
You can view this meeting and others at: <http://bit.ly/sebcctv>.

John Necker
SebastopolCitizens.org