



Sebastopol Citizens

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

Sebastopol City Council Meeting February 2, 2021 – Synopsis and Commentary

- All council members were virtually present.

Proclamations/Presentations:

- February 1 through 7 was declared National Gun Violence Survivor Week.
- February was proclaimed as Black History Month.

Public Comment (aka Open Mike):

- A speaker for the [Sebastopol Area Senior Center](#) wants you to know they are “Still Serving Seniors in Sonoma County! Rides/Meal Delivery/Classes & More.” You may also find them at: (707) 829-2440.
- The next speaker, a Jeanne d'Arc who is determined to save us from the unholy army filling the air with EMF and causing all manner of disease with the possible exception of shingles, called in by **phone**. That was disappointing because we didn't get to see the the latest haute couture of the EMF set. She thanked the council for helping to block smart meters at a mobile home park. Much like herself, she said that the meters are ungrounded, have the habit of melting and exploding. Wrong. What those meters can do is move you to a [Time-of-Use rate plan](#).

Consent Calendar: (Passed 5:0)

- The minutes for the January 19 meeting were approved and will appear here shortly. [Scroll down to Past Council Meetings](#). Not all minutes are available on the website.
- The consulting firm of [Schaaf and Wheeler](#) will investigate and evaluate “potential methods for providing flood protection for the Sebastopol Community Cultural Center at a **Not-to-Exceed cost of \$14,070**.” The results of this study should prove interesting. In the past the council was toying with the idea of buying what is, in effect, a giant water balloon to encircle the Community Center. All that had to be done is deliver it to the site on a big truck or trucks and enlist a crew of laborers to roll it out. Then they would fill it with water. It would grow to about seven feet high when filled with water. That might take a few minutes. What could possibly go wrong with that idea in the middle of a rain storm? A public speaker criticized the city for outsourcing the consulting work that needs to be done, evidently not realizing the city doesn't have the cash or the expertise to do these types of jobs “in house.” He also implied the above Schaaf and Wheeler didn't have the expertise to do the job for which they were hired. He thought the city should have hired a firm that was capable of “analyzing floodplains.” Well, yeah. The following is from their website: “Schaaf & Wheeler also has an extensive and successful background analyzing floodplains, revising FEMA flood maps, and performing Flood Insurance Studies.”
- As required by law, the Emergency Proclamation of Local Emergency was extended for another 60 days. If you are approached by the highly trained, multi-lingual emergency strike team, please follow their instructions immediately. It's for your own good.

- The budget meeting schedule for the fiscal year 2021-22 was approved.

Regular Agenda Items:

- The council decided to just give up and let Caltrans continue to maul and devour Ned Kahn's proposed artwork on Highway 12. The Public Arts Commission and the artist, after some extensive research, decided to install it on the grass at the Public Works Corporation yard, across the street from the Youth Center on Morris Street. The up side of that is it avoids Caltrans entanglements. The down side is that not one council member wanted it installed in such a remote location. They had several suggestions that would more prominently display the piece instead of it becoming Sebastopol's Hidden Treasure. There was a little resistance from the committee, but that faded after the artist became interested in some of the suggestions. The other advantage is the art looks much more like the original concept before Caltrans rejected the original because of traffic safety concerns. This will be back.
- The council also discussed revamping the Planning Commission. And why are we discussing this? Because "At the last City Council meeting, the Council received a report and survey from CoMission for additional community involvement and engagement." At this meeting a Planning Commissioner spoke. He was against adding another member, which would make the commission the largest in the county. It has seven members now, one for about every 1,000 citizens. Whoa. Too much democracy. He also said we should let the alternate term out and eventually reduce the number of members to five. And he said if people want to participate they can just come to the Planning Commission Meetings. To me that seems like a simple time tested effective way to get involved and engaged. And, if after attending those meetings for about a year, and if they make the cut, they can move up to the "Majors." At the City Council meetings they will see political curve balls coming at them that will debunk everything they learned in high school physics. Anyway, the council sent a few suggestions back to the commission for consideration. What they did all agreed on, is that whatever is decided, the majority of seats on the Planning Commission must be filled by city residents.
- Boards and committees abound in the county and elsewhere. The council considered those who want to serve. The council then directed the mayor, or her representative, whom to vote for in the upcoming Sonoma County Mayors' and Council Members' Association Meeting.

A Parting Shot:

- The fellow who was worried about outsourcing managed to step in it by suggesting, during this public comment time, that the city council members weren't involved in enough "shared government capacities" which would be county and state commissions, boards and committees. And that was just after a long discussion of involvement in eleven of them. Zoom picked up some steely looks. Before the meeting ended, each volunteer council member managed to list just some of the many required responsibilities other than the biweekly city council meetings.

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

Next City Council meeting is February 16, 2021 at the Teen Center, 425 Morris Street at 6:00pm.

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

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