

## Sebastopol City Council Meeting March 1, 2016 – Synopsis and Commentary

All Council members were present.

### Proclamations/Presentations:

- March 7 was proclaimed the beginning of [MS Awareness Week](#).
- March 20-26 was proclaimed [National Surveyors Week](#).

### Public Comment (aka Open Mike):

- No Speakers!

### Consent Calendar: (All approved without comment)

- The Skate Park expansion bid was awarded to [M3 Integrated Services Inc](#). They were low bidder at **\$613,298**, under the budgeted amount of \$675,403. Lighting ([Deadly LEDs?](#)), a play area, and a larger green area are included. ([See our July 7, 2015 "Consent Calendar" for more.](#))
- There was a second reading to amend a City ordinance to allow an alternate seat on the Planning Commission. It will become law in 30 days.
- And there was a second reading to amend the City code to bring us into compliance with the State Water Resources Control Board. See ["Public Hearings"](#) in our February 16, 2015 summary. It also will become law in 30 days.
- Some sidewalk and easement issues were cleaned up at the site of a future fish restaurant at 935 Gravenstein Highway South. [You may recognize the old business there.](#)
- **The building permit fee schedule was changed!** Ah! Got 'ya. The changes were editorial only but the fees will remain unchanged. Now it's much easier to read.
- Each year, each Council member is allocated a budget of **\$500 crazy money** that can be spent on something they personally favor—as long as it's legal and conforms to City regulations and policies. This year, the Council decided to pitch in for expenses related to our Sister City, Takeo, Japan.
- New York, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Birmingham and a coalition of local governments, including ours, are filing an [amicus brief](#) that supports President Obama's [executive action](#) relating to immigration.

### Informational Items/ Presentation:

- The Director of **Ives Pool** gave his annual report. **It's amazing.** The only public pool in West County, it's been operating for 75 years, has 85,000 visitors each year (it's open 364 days) and is open an average of 15.5 hours a day. Through the Rotary program, thousands of kids have been taught to swim. [You can send your monetary support here.](#)
- The Sebastopol Area Community Alliance also presented their annual report.

### Regular Agenda Items:

- The Council continued to discuss ways to slow traffic at [Bodega Avenue and Nelson Way](#) ([See "Public Comment" in our February 2, 2016 summary](#)). About ten people from Burbank Heights and the surrounding neighborhood showed up to press for a stoplight. The Council was sympathetic. The chief of police was sympathetic. The engineer was sympathetic. Even the engineering director who told them there's no money for a traffic light now was sympathetic. So staff will explore other options and report back later.
- The Council discussed choosing a 4x6 sign that would slow traffic coming into the city limits. They were very concerned about how polite the signs were—even to the point of excluding the

exclamation mark! Now the signs may be a [little too polite](#) to achieve the desired effect. [Maybe we need something a little more proactive](#). Anyway, after **Council Member Eder** gave us a tutorial on **art appreciation**, it was decided the sign will go back to the graphic designer for tweaking.

- And there was discussion about raising the speed limit on the City's portion of Pleasant Hill Road, the section next to the cemetery, from 25 mph to 30mph. The lower speed was not established by a traffic survey but a new 35 mph limit was. **And what does that mean to you?** The police can now use radar to enforce the law. FYI: In business and residential districts in California, the speed limit is 25 mph unless otherwise posted. Play it safe, [people are walking here](#). (Approved 5:0)
- The Council awarded the **\$35,000** contract for Pine Grove Square to [Linda Herman Consulting](#). [Their mission, should they decide to accept it](#), is to produce a preliminary plan to plant a new Civic Center in the large parking area near Hop Monk between Petaluma Avenue and Gravenstein Highway South. When that's completed, they will try to find a developer who will build it for free. You see, the Civic Center (with parking, no?) will contain commercial space for the developer to rent out, thereby covering costs and turning a profit. O.K. (Approved 5:0)

### City Council Reports:

- Most of the **City Manager's report** took place at the beginning of the evening. On Thursday, March 1, he met with CVS, several City staff members, the attorney from Small Town Sebastopol, and Armstrong Development, the building contractor and engineer. All agreed that everything was in order and **demo and grading permits were issued**. CVS will release \$45,000 for a traffic study, and \$105,000 as a second payment to the City to cover **Small Town Sebastopol's attorney fees**. The remainder of those funds will be spent on something that the **City and Small Town Sebastopol must later agree** upon. There was one little paper-filing hiccup at the County(?) but that is not expected to cause any delay and demo is expected to start next week.
- At the end of the meeting, the City Manager announced that he had mistakenly left some details out of his above-mentioned CVS report. If at all possible, **CVS wants to build the bank building**, which will not require another design review process. If they want to build something other than a financial institution, it must pass a design review by the City Council.
- And another issue that could prove entertaining: The granting of an application permit for the **KOWS antenna has been appealed** and will be heard by the Council probably in April.
- Shortly, there will be some nighttime concrete pumping at 961 South Main and other late-night construction in the Whole Foods parking lot.

### Closed Session:

- The City is considering hiring a new employee—probably in finance.

### A Parting Shot:

- **Councilman Eder** also attended that CVS meeting and reported he has questioned, and will continue to question, some changes CVS has made. He also wondered [who the project archaeologist](#) is. Eder should tread carefully. **The City can't afford another lawsuit**, especially since CVS will not make the same mistakes twice.

Elapsed Time: 3:45 (6:00pm–9:45pm)

The next meeting will be a **joint** City Council/Planning Commission meeting on March 8, 2016 at the

Teen Center, 425 Morris Street at 6:00pm.

The next ***regular meeting*** will be March 15, 2016 at the Teen Center, 425 Morris Street at 6:00pm.

**John Necker**