

Sebastopol City Council Meeting – October 16, 2012 – Synopsis and Commentary

All Council members were present for this mostly routine meeting.

Consent Calendar

The City Public Works director spoke to the problems with well #7 on Cooper Road. Arsenic levels in the water have been rising and the well has been off line since mid-August. Part of the problem is that the state standards for arsenic have become more severe so meeting them has become more difficult. Arsenic is something that occurs naturally and it's in parts per billion so there is no danger of poisoning. But it is something that must be remedied.

We still have three wells operating but if one more should fail, supplying the demand could become difficult. The City will engage BESST, Inc for water sampling.

This is yet another reason why Measure Y should be supported.

Informational Items

Three Design Review Board vacancies will occur this December 31st.

Presentations

By a 5:0 vote the Council approved the Comprehensive User Fee Schedule. These are the fees that the City collects from citizens and builders for things like remodels and other things.

Some may find it interesting that the fee for the use of Ives parks is \$50.00 and \$65.00 for the Plaza – the location of our Farmer's Market.

Discussion and Action Items

Speaking of the Plaza, Vice Mayor Kyes introduced an item to rename the Plaza the “Mario Savio Free Speech Plaza.” This was something that was clearly arranged well ahead of this meeting as about fifteen people, none of whom this writer recognized, were in attendance to

support this idea. Several of them spoke in support and drew even more support from Colleen Fernald, a City Council candidate who is usually more interested in U.S. Government high altitude spraying. Only this writer spoke against the idea, suggesting either honoring the late former Mayor, Bill Roventini, or the Sebastopol area Japanese-Americans who were removed to the Merced Detention Facility in 1942.

Since Kyes was raised in Berkeley, and Gurney and Wilson are both UC Berkeley grads, it wasn't surprising that they all voted for the item and chose not to pick a local hero. Inexplicably, Shaffer, not a Berkeley grad, voted with them. Only Slater voted against saying that the six years Savio lived here didn't warrant such an honor.

The other item of particular interest was Gurney's attempt to regulate, politicize and diminish the role of the Environmental Coordinator. In a poorly disguised and rambling statement, Gurney tried to justify her ideas to the other Council members. "If I was a planning director I would like this because it would shield me from attack," Gurney said.

One of Gurney's anti CVS supporters, who arrived just before this item was being brought up, echoed that feeling. Ironically, this is that same woman who sat silent as her cohorts viciously attacked the Coordinator at the CVS meetings.

In the end, Gurney's motives proved to be so blatant that even Kyes was against them and she failed.

Candidate Watch

Colleen Fernald spoke in favor of renaming the plaza.

--John Necker