



# 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 17, 2019 – Synopsis and Commentary

- All council members were present.

### Proclamations/Presentations:

- Police Chief James Conner is retiring after almost 24 years in the police department. The Chief seemed a little emotional at first – undoubtedly due to his frustration at retiring without ever seeing me behind bars. Ahh...life is full of its little disappointments.
- And in a probably unrelated move, Building Inspector Glen Schainblatt is also retiring after 15 years of service. His new job will consist of hunting, fishing and spending time with his grandson – but probably not in that order.

### Public Comment (aka Open Mike):

- The chairperson of West County Homeless Advocates, an ad hoc organization, with connections to Sebastopol churches and the Sunrise Rotary Club, spoke to their mission of feeding the homeless and offered some local solutions such as: safe parking, toileting and small home housing.
- Another speaker addressed the seeming endless project in his neighborhood at [the corner of Murphy and Healdsburg Avenues](#). (The Taj Mahal was built in less time.) This fellow complained about the poor traffic control and the noisy steel plates in the road. When he finished speaking, the city manager/attorney also expressed his frustration but informed us it was out of his hands. All of that is (poorly) controlled by Caltrans.
- A lady asked the council to consider “wildlife” corridors in Sebastopol. Lady, there ain’t no wild life in Sebastopol. At 8:00 pm 90% of the population is either asleep on their Lazy Boys in front of the TV, stoned while listening to [old Bob Dylan songs](#), or padding around the house mumbling, “Where in the hell are my reading glasses?”

### Consent Calendar: (Consent was given.)

- The Calder Creek storm-water system, which empties into to the Laguna, has had little maintenance over the recent years and is in need of trash, silt and vegetation removal. Tonight the council directed the staff to find a firm that can get the city through the permit process without having some little known but bellicose government agency coming down on us like a thunder storm of anvils because we didn’t get their blessings before the actual work started. The \$35,000 price tag should help the city [avoid another Sonoma West Times and News article like the one that appeared on April 10, 2013](#).
- The council also authorized staff to locate a firm that can “perform a location survey of both water system and sewer system components using Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) data. The GPS information would be used to develop the digital mapping.” The city only has old hard copies that can only be reproduced in a small format and are difficult to work with. The mapping may also improve future maintenance issues.

- The city will apply for a \$180,000 Community Development Block Grant for upgrading at the Youth Annex, which is where these meetings are held. The second choice would be a \$120,000 for improvements at city hall, should the Youth Annex grant application fail.
- Local amendments to the California Building Codes were adopted.
- Some amendments to the zoning ordinance pertaining to Accessory Dwelling Units – known as Granny Units to the hoi polloi – were adopted.

#### **Informational Items/ Presentation:** (Passed 5:0)

- **LANTERN**, a group of citizens doggedly determined to improve our library, gave a presentation about just that. They asked for and received a liaison to city hall. (Council Member Gurney and Council Member Carnacchi as the alternate). What they didn't get (and didn't ask for) is the approximately \$25,000,000 it will take to improve the library. But if you click on the link above, you can make a small donation that might lift the spirits of those who are trying to conjure up that other number.

#### **Public Hearing:**

- Bob Massaro/Huntley Square LLC, asked the city for a reduction in fees to help them with the cost of frontage improvements at the proposed development at [7950 Bodega Avenue](#). It's located where you run out of sidewalk walking west on Bodega Avenue and have to make a risky choice. It's either climbing up one side and then rappelling down the other steep dirt bank or shuffling out into the traffic lane, hoping some blissfully inattentive Sebastopol driver doesn't sneak up on you in a white Prius and flip you over the hood before you can get to the sidewalk on the other side. However, it is conveniently located just across the street from the cemetery, which can save your survivors a few bucks on transportation fees. The main objections came from Council Member Hinton, who said the frontage improvements are always the responsibility of the developer and should be so in this case. Council Member Carnacchi said many concessions had already been made, saying also the shower areas in the proposed units were so cramped the toilet paper would have to be covered when showering. He went on to say that the units were "glorified RVs" and buyers would be better off to spend \$20,000 on an RV and just park it on Morris Street. ( Ya can't make this stuff up.) But after an hour and a half of talking about 185' of sidewalk, the council agreed to a **\$70,000 reduction in fees** if, as **Council Member Gurney insisted**, the sidewalk and frontage work is done **FIRST** and then the project could start – thinking if the project goes belly up we'll still have our sidewalk. It went back to staff for the proper **language that will guarantee that**. It will be back. (Passed 3:2 with Council Members Hinton and Carnacchi in the minority.)

#### **Regular Agenda Items:**

- The council discussed the idea of creating a Community Vitality Coordinator. If you geezers are [thinking pickle ball courts and this guy](#) – don't get your hopes up. Nope. "The proposal is for a contract employee who can network with the community, engage citizen and business participation, and create collaborative partnerships to work with the City and community to improve the overall vitality of Sebastopol." **The OIS\* moment** came when Council Member Hinton proposed a selection method that involved a sub-committee, and the council as a whole and **Mayor Slayter seconded that**. Shortly following that second, the council voted on the proposal and the **Mayor voted against it**. It failed 4:1, leaving Council Member Hinton in the minority with a real puzzled look on her face. So staff will handle finding a coordinator . That passed on a 5:0 vote.
- The discussion of the status of the General Plan was tabled.

- Council Member Carnacchi's request for Joint City Council/Planning Commission Meeting was tabled for future consideration. (Being present at such a meeting would be only marginally more pleasant than being the center of attention at a water boarding session.)
- A job description and salary for a **full time Fire Engineer** was discussed. This is not an entry level job. The base salary is \$64,842. **The whole package with benefits is \$121,842**, which includes \$15,000 in estimated overtime. Now before your hair catches fire, suppose the engineer is in the middle of resuscitating you the night the upcoming election returns come in and his shift ends. Do you want him to finish or do you want him to fire up that big red truck and go back to the station and see how the cannelloni is doing? And this engineer will have many extra duties other than running all the equipment and driving the big truck. Some money could be saved by letting me drive the big red truck. Hey, what could go wrong? Passed 5:0.
- The 2020 council and staff assignments were tabled.
- The 2020 council meeting dates were set.

### City Council Reports:

- These were not tabled and so we learned the Mosquito Board passed its audit, some members of the council missed their meetings, the bus route changed somehow and stuff like that there.

### A Parting Shot:

- \*Only in Sebastopol.
- On my way to the meeting, there was this fellow at Bodega and Main banging (and banging it was) on a drum with an "Impeach" sign attached. Banging it here takes far less political courage here than it would take in, say, North Dakota. [Putting politics aside, he shouldn't give up his day job until he can do this.](#)

Elapsed Time: 5:00 hours (6:00–11:00pm)

Next City Council meeting is January 7, 2020, at the Teen Center, 425 Morris Street at 6:00pm.

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

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