



Sebastopol Citizens

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

Sebastopol City Council Meeting May 19, 2020 – Synopsis and Commentary

- All council members were virtually present.

Proclamations/Presentations have been suspended until further notice.

Public Comment For Items Not On The Agenda (aka Open Mike):

- One comment came in from someone rejoicing that cycling has improved since the pandemic and used that observation to give advice on how to take advantage and how to make the changes permanent. As of this writing, there have been 1,543,705 total cases and 92,790 deaths in the United States alone. My guess is if those numbers keep increasing, he will get what he wants and there will be less congestion on the bike trails too. Get a grip, man.

Consent Calendar: (Approved 5:0 after some discussion)

- The minutes for the May 5 meeting were approved and will appear here shortly. [Scroll down to Past Council Meetings.](#)
- The council discussed and approved the city using [electronic and digital signatures for city business.](#)
- It was announced that a citizen liaison seat at the [SCTA/RCPA Climate Action Advisory Committee](#) will become available on June 30.
- And a vacancy on the Sebastopol Public Arts Committee will take place June 30 and staff will start the recruitment process.
- A resolution was approved to allow the city to apply for a \$65,000 State Local Early Action Planning (LEAP) grant. It's a non-competitive reimbursement grant. So while the city won't need to pay out matching funds, it will have to finish the approved project first and then get reimbursed. The funds must be used for housing projects.
- Council Member Carnacchi asked the council to approve \$5,500 for banners recognizing the 100th anniversary of women winning the right to vote. In what looked like another attempt to torpedo his own project, he pulled this for discussion. Without changing the approved \$5,500 he wanted, he also received council approval to put up flags to celebrate that anniversary. He and the rest of the council might have missed a few inconvenient details. He seems to think the Boy Scouts were going to do this for him. Well, the scouts may not be "Be prepared" to "Do a good turn daily" with this. And his idea of attaching the flags side-by-side on the same pole with the American flag would run counter to protocol that requires the Old Glory to always be flown above other flags. Council Member Gurney may have wondered about this when she suggested the celebratory flags be flown alone on every other pole down Main Street. Will Council Member Carnacchi continue to undermine his own proposal? As someone else has recently said over and over again, "We'll see."

Regular Agenda Items:

- The council launched into a debate on the idea of approving permits for the selling of fireworks

at the usual temporary stands. In addition to the increased sensitivity to fire danger, this year's COVID-19 virus has set off other objections to those sales. The County Counsel does not consider the selling of fireworks an essential business. The Kiwanis have extinguished its iconic July 3 event. Along with Sebastopol, the last cities in the county that allow fireworks sales are Cloverdale (which has imposed a temporary ban and canceled its fireworks show), Rohnert Park (placed permits on hold) and Petaluma (displaying a little more flare, banned them this year and in the future because of fire hazard.) Most incoming public comment in support of fireworks sales tended to focus on the loss of funds that support the non-profits and landed well clear of any reference to an unimaginable apocalypse of having a wild fire during a pandemic. While displaying earnest concern about the serious affects on the Sebastopol Sea Serpents, the Gravenstein Lions Club and the VFW 3919 Sebastopol, the council voted 3:2 (Council Members Hinton and Carnacchi in the minority) to ban fireworks sales this year. The council also indicated that sales might not get off the ground in the future. The council will also consider Council Member Carnacchi's idea of moving sales to late December for use at the new year celebrations. But California State law currently shoots that idea down. The law reads that fireworks can only be sold between June 28 and July 6 each year. And we had wild fires in late 2019. [Click here and scroll down to see the date chart.](#)

- The Level of Service report was given. Among other things, it's a report on how well the city is providing services and includes: water, wastewater, drainage, parks, fire, police, schools and traffic assessments. We were doing OK until the pandemic arrived, so now is no time for non-discretionary spending.
- The Sebastopol Representative on the Sonoma County Library Commission has asked the city to find someone to serve out the remainder of his term. Mercifully, someone evidently eminently qualified finally applied and plans are being made for a Zoom interview. (5:0)

City Council Reports:

- The city is moving ahead with allowing temporary permits for outside dining at restaurants. It would include [parklets](#) in parking spaces, designated pickup areas for retail sales and other ideas to help merchants of all stripes. It will be administered by staff until June 2 when the results will come back to the council for discussion. If you have a business and are interested in this, give the city a call now. It ain't gonna be perfect. Give it some time to shake down.

A Parting Shot:

- [Here's a little quarantine advice.](#)

Elapsed Time: 3:00 hours (6:00–9:00pm)

Next City Council meeting is June 2, 2020 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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