

Sebastopol City Council Meeting – December 2, 2014 – Synopsis and Commentary

All Council members were present.

Consent Calendar:

The first order of business was the approval of the results of the recent General Election. Approval here is only a legal term and in no way reflects my approval of the outcome of said election. The results were a lock before the ballots got printed.

Proclamations/Presentations:

The City Council took its oath of office and then, according to protocol, **Vice Mayor Slayter** called for nominations for mayor. Only he received a nomination and is now **Mayor Slayter** on a 5:0 vote. Council Member Gurney was then nominated for Vice Mayor. She offered the nomination to **Councilman Eder** who declined and nominated **Council Member Glass**. Glass also declined, stating she needed more experience. **Vice Mayor Gurney** was seated on a 5:0 vote.

Outgoing Mayor Jacob thanked his colleagues and the staff for all their help during his tenure.

Public Comment: (aka open mike)

This portion of the meeting was relatively tame for this town. First, the rational speakers.

The Ukrainians are coming, the Ukrainians are coming! [Sebastopol World Friends](#) are sponsoring them and you may meet them at the Sebastopol United Methodist Church on December 10th at 7:00 pm.

[The Sebastopol Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center](#) is hosting its annual tree lighting on December 4th. For more info, click on their link.

And then there was **Cittaslow, your \$20,000 city department** that is not doing anything that the above organization couldn't do with that much money. The Chief of Citta slowly touted her accomplishments and supported them with her own subjective and unscientific survey. We still wait for a more objective account of just what they are doing and how much money they bring into the City.

Then, in the “way out der” category: There are storm clouds on the horizon both literally and figuratively. One of our regular “government plot” speakers spoke at length to [allow clapping](#) to show approval of what is said at the meetings. His wife immediately applauded.

If **Mayor Slayter** allows such juvenile conduct, will he also allow my **booing and hissing**? If so, we can just drop all pretense and enjoy the meetings as an all-out farce.

Consent Calendar:

The Council entered into an agreement with Prunuske Chatham, Inc. for preparation of a Laguna Preserve management plan. It is required by the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, a major funding partner of the Laguna Preserve that includes Laguna Youth Park, areas west of Morris Street, [Meadowlark Field](#), [Tomodachi Park](#), and the now infamous [Railroad Forest \(aka Railroad Briar Patch\)](#). The District wants to protect its investment. The Plan was budgeted at \$90,000 and will come from our Parks Reserve account. More details from Mary Callahan at [The Press Democrat](#).

Council Member Eder wanted assurances the plan addressed spraying of herbicides and pesticides,

creek setbacks, public input and a **list of agencies** that were involved in this process. That last concern is a particularly good one in light of the above-mentioned Railroad Briar Patch debacle. This item passed 5:0.

Discussion and Action Items:

The Council considered appointing a subcommittee regarding Climate Action 2020 planning. Sonoma County's Regional Climate Protection Authority was awarded \$1 million from the State to get all nine of the county's cities to reduce greenhouse gases. This will be an attempt to get everyone on the same page so each city isn't reinventing its own wheel. This is when the Council's sniping at other cities and the county does us no favors. **Council Members Glass and Eder will be that subcommittee.** Let's hope they play nice. This passed 5:0

The Council will also proceed with plans to pursue a draft design for the expansion of the skate park, the details of which will come before it and the Planning Commission. This passed 5:0 but there were a few things that popped up that are going to need a closer look. The big one is the possible addition of stadium lighting (30' poles) for the skate park. As it turns out, several of the **Flynn Street residents** attended a Planning Commission meeting where it was decided that there would be no stadium lights. While the **Mayor and Council members Glass and Gurney mostly fussed about fence and bench locations**, **Council members Eder and Jacob are clearly pushing for lighting the skate park.** This completely pulls the rug out from under the Planning Commission's deal with the residents. Hey, it's not in their backyard! Should we applaud that type of behavior?

The Council also considered the creation of a naming policy for City streets and parks. This is a good idea that could restrict council members from doing what former Council Member Kyes did – which was to abruptly add an item to an upcoming agenda and have it passed without virtually any public input. That, my friends, is how the **Plaza became the Mario Savio Free Speech Plaza.** This is going back to staff

And while it is getting retooled, staff will explore the renaming of a section of Hwy. 116 by the MSFS Plaza in honor of our sister city, [Takeo, Japan](#). As you can see, they have done this for us. But for now, it's to be only honorary. Takeo didn't have to deal with Caltrans.

The Council tackled the policy of placing monuments, memorials, and artwork on City property. This, too, is a good idea since we have no policy at all. All of the art, murals, and some of those other things that may not fall into either category, are just OK'd and placed with no discussion about how long they'll remain in place. **And how about some counter culture art? [Don't we have someone around here to whip up one of these little jobs?](#)** It passed 5:0 but it may need a lot more work.

A Parting Shot!

Councilman Eder pushed hard for a clear and precise policy for the above but he couldn't get the votes and he didn't look happy about it.

[Well, that's about all, folks!](#)

John Necker
Duration 4:30 (ouch!)