

Sebastopol City Council Meeting July 21, 2015 – Synopsis and Commentary

There was a closed council meeting at 4:00pm to discuss exposure to litigation and also something to do with the property at 6665 Sebastopol Avenue.

Council Member Eder was absent.

Public Comment (aka Open Mike):

- The first speaker urged the Council to focus more on encouraging local spending downtown.
- The second speaker encouraged something that may have just the opposite effect. Abandoning the idea of the sound of a moving train coming through town at high noon on Fridays, he will now settle for just fixing a train horn to a building downtown and giving it a blast at high noon on Fridays. This could take some getting used to. Some of us vets are likely to break for cover at the first toot and if you have a heart condition, this may settle the issue for you one way or another.
- **Mayor Slater** announced an **open house at the police station** from 5-8pm on August 4. Some of you may have attended [a more personal event there](#) but those of you who haven't (or maybe even if you have) are encouraged to attend.

Proclamations/Presentations:

- Patrick Amiot was recognized for his donation of the “[Slow Down Sebastopol Cat.](#)”

Consent Calendar:

- The Council extended the contract with the Community Outreach Coordinator, Holly Hansen. Passed (4:0).
- If you want to get married by the City Clerk at City Hall, it's going to cost you \$50. State bill AB1525 kicked in on January 1 and “extended the right to solemnize marriage to City Clerks”—like they don't have enough to do already. Passed (4:0).
- The Council sent a letter to Governor Brown opposing fracking. Passed (4:0).

Regular Calendar Agenda Items: (Discussion and Action Items)

- **Save the date!** September 18 is going to be a City sponsored “parklet for parking day.” If you are wondering, it's an “annual **open-source global event** (?) where citizens, artists, and activists transform parking spaces into PARK(ing) spaces.” Even though it passed on a 4:0 vote, **Council Member Jacob** expressed concerns about the waiving of the **\$480 fee** because the City can use the money.
- There are four unused parcels on the east side of Hwy 116 just south of the O'Reilly complex. The Council lives with dread that some **corporation** is going to snap them up and try to [build a big something](#) so they can go through the same meat grinder that CVS went through. Staff reported they are on the watch for that and there has been little or no interest in developing or combining any of the parcels. (A small used-car lot will eventually be opened on one of them.)

- The City is cutting back on its water usage. A 50% reduction of irrigation of the ornamental lawns at the police, fire, public works and other areas about town will result in a savings of 767,100 gallons of water for seven months until we get to winter—[if it ever comes](#). The lawns are expected to survive. Removing and replacing the lawns with drought-tolerant landscaping is estimated at \$525 per 100 feet. OK, reductions sound good. Look for the “We Are Doing Our Part” signs.

The discussion that followed was typical for our Council. After listening to a very detailed report from our resident expert in this area (the Public Works Director) sitting not thirty feet away, **Council Member Gurney** started pitching a reduction to zero. **Council Member Glass** countered with a reduction of 25% citing soil erosion. (This Council does covet its complete control.) In the end, they finally left the matter in the hands of the only person in the room who knew what he was talking about. (Passed *as originally suggested* 4:0.)

- The Council approved Initiative Funds of \$500 for each Council member. They may spend that money as they choose on projects they feel are deserving.
- The Council also named **Mayor Slayter and Council member Glass** as representatives to **The League of California Cities**, an association of cities within the state of California, founded in 1898. Most of the state's 482 cities are represented in the League. The League publishes *Western City*, a monthly magazine, and holds an annual conference and exposition. It also advocates for cities at the state capitol, including proper distribution of state taxes to the cities.

A Parting Shot:

- The City Manager/Attorney reported that **CVS** is cleaning up the weeds on its property as requested. It is sending out requests for demo bids on July 30. Although they may be optimistic, they are hoping to pull their permits in the first week of August.

Elapsed Time: 1:30 (6:00 – 7:30 pm)

Next Council Meeting is August 4

John Necker