



# Sebastopol Citizens

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

## Sebastopol City Council Meeting July 21, 2020 – Synopsis and Commentary

- All council members were virtually present.

**Proclamations/Presentations have been suspended until further notice.**

### Public Comment (aka Open Mike):

- The first speaker asked the council to support the California State Bank resolution, which will allow counties and cities to create their own public banks. The idea here is that they could provide lower interest loans than private banks.
- The second speaker voiced his dismay at the “vitriol directed at the police” that was expressed on the signs hung on the fencing around the lot [upon which will rest the new hotel](#).

### Consent Calendar: (Passed 5:0)

- The minutes for the special June 30 and the regular July 7 meetings were approved and will appear here shortly. [Scroll down to Past Council Meetings](#). Not all minutes are immediately available on the website.
- Because the city “has a need to submit an application of disability retirement to CalPERS” the council approved updating the process and authorized the city manager or his designee to make that application. Council Member Carnacchi got confirmation this related to the police department and then wanted a comma added and wanted the word “substantial” changed to “substantially.” Well, that was substantially important.
- The council approved amending the lease with the Sebastopol Community Cultural Center to allow it to be responsible for permitting outside events. Then it would not have to obtain a special event permit from the city.
- The deadline for applying for the Climate Action sub committee was extended to August 4, 2020. Two categories are still open: Sebastopol Business owner; environmental justice/equity background. If you like long, tedious meetings, you should apply. The committee is expected to seat between 11 and 13 members, which will guarantee meetings of prodigious duration.
- Because the climate in Sebastopol is so stable, the Laguna will never again catastrophically flood, and the city has a plan for rolling out a dike to hold back seven feet of water (just in case), it has awarded [Earthtone Construction](#) a not to exceed \$93,818 contract to remodel and repair the kitchen at the Sebastopol Community Center. Most of these funds are covered by flood insurance and a FEMA reimbursement. Pray for an extended drought.

### Regular Calendar Agenda Items:

- There were four applicants for the open seat on the Public Arts Committee and tonight the council seated long-time member Marghe Mills-Thysen after heaping lavish praise on the other applicants. (5:0)

### Public Hearing:

- In August of 2019, the council adopted an urgency ordinance “establishing a moratorium on the establishment of new non-hosted vacation rentals of more than 30 days per year.” Because of delays that include the 2019 evacuations, local emergencies and declarations and the ongoing and not miraculously disappearing pandemic, it was extended to August 6, 2021. **The moratorium does not** apply to the following: non-hosted vacation rentals that are currently registered with the city, non-hosted vacation rentals of less than 30 days per year or hosted vacation rentals of any length in time (both existing registered rentals and new applications for hosted rentals). As expressed at the May 21, 2019 hearing, the Council was not concerned with these rentals, as they maintain the long-term residential use. (4:0 with Council Member Hinton recused.)

### Regular Agenda Items:

- The council received a report by W-Trans regarding [Florence Avenue](#). If you didn’t have any input on this item, you were the only one west of Sarajevo who didn’t. Red zones and parking spaces were jumping from the east side of the street to the west side then back again in an attempt to give the residences, especially on the north end, at least a chance of backing out of their driveways without getting T-boned. The council finally approved some changes, but you are going to have to wait to see what actually happened. It was too much for me as it became like [“Who’s on first.”](#) (5:0)
- An independent review of the Sebastopol Police Department was approved. Jerry Threet, consultant, will do the review for a cost of between \$30,000 and \$40,000. It will take him about 10 weeks for the first phase (maybe 12 to 14) as he can only allot 20 hours a week to the review. When the acting chief of police was asked if he approved of an audit, he said he did because “we are above board and transparent.” It was just that he didn’t think this auditor was not biased. Vice Mayor Glass asked “who’s the boss here?”, implying the chief was asking to pick the auditor – which he did not say. She also jumped to the conclusion that if “Jerry,” as she often referred to him, wasn’t selected as the auditor then a “rubber stamp” auditor would be the result – forgetting that a “rubber stamp” selection would take a vote of the council of which she is a member. Council Member Carnacchi wanted to put the audit out to bid and Council Member Hinton said she had been following Mr. Threet on social media and he didn’t seem unbiased to her. Vice Mayor Glass then wanted to know how much city resources had been used to “undercut” Mr. Threet. Council Member Hinton replied to that implied insult with a resounding “None” at which point Mayor Slayter jumped in and stopped that part of the discussion. After more discussion the council voted 4:1 to hire ol’ Jerry with Council Member Carnacchi in the minority over not putting it out to bid and Council Member Hinton a reluctant “aye” as long as the police budget was part of an audit.
- Evidently having already burned through \$40,000, CoMission was granted another \$40K instead of the \$80,000 - \$125,000 they wanted for consulting work that will revitalize the Sebastopol business community. Well, according to some [public comments received](#), the jury is still out on this idea. Mayor Slayter suggested, and the council agreed, to let CoMission continue and then meet with the council for reassessment when a work plan will be formed. Specifics have not been abundant as seen in the following CoMission statement: “Of this budget, we plan to leverage approximately 10-15% of these funds towards services and developments outside of CoMission, such as developing infrastructure at the Chamber of Commerce, inviting experts to present at webinars, tapping local artists and designers for marketing collateral, etc.” Etc? (5:0)

### City Council Reports:

- The city manager stated that countywide “enhanced enforcement” of the pandemic declarations

are on the way. A noncompliance hotline will be setup and administrative citations will be issued. Those who were born lacking the social responsibility gene will be fined. And they seem to be congregating at the skate park. As a warning, the city closed it for a few days for noncompliance and verbal abuse there of city workers and a need for repeated police presence. It didn't work. So shortly the skate park will be closed indefinitely. If you are waiting for al fresco dining downtown, you may go hungry while waiting. There is a lack of interest by the downtown restaurants, but it is probably the [Caltrans hurdles that will prevent anything like this from taking place](#).

**A Parting Shot:**

- From public comment and other sources, there seems to be a great need by some to find something horribly wrong with our police, and there is nothing like political pressure to produce desired results – warranted or not. There is more than one type of “rubber stamp.”

Elapsed Time: It seemed like forever (6:00–11:30pm)

Next City Council meeting is August 4, 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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