

Sebastopol City Council Meeting- June 3, 2014- Synopsis and Commentary

The regular meeting started at 6:05 PM and all council members were present.

After the salute to the flag the Agenda took us directly to **Proclamations and Presentations**. Mayor Jacobs read out the proclamation declaring June of 2014 as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Month for our proud city, reflected on how the treatment of said sexualities has changed, and finished by musing on new sexual identifications to come (we shudder to think what they might be).

Chief Weaver then introduced two new volunteers to the Police Department, both sounding well qualified and eager to serve.

Next, time was allotted to offer **tribute to Michael Kyes** who had served as Councilmember and Mayor since being elected to serve in 2010. Councilman Kyes passed away unexpectedly on Sunday, May 25th. Twelve members of the public as well as all four councilmembers spoke. In summary, Michael is remembered as a longstanding progressive very much concerned with all things environmental. He was also a “numbers guy” and a “bit of a gadfly” about what items cost and how they’d be paid for. Most notably, he was remembered as a gentleman who would argue his point strongly and then want to enjoy a glass of wine with his recent opponent.

By 7:11, following a short break, we were back in our seats and the minutes of the last two sessions were discussed and approved (unanimously) with little ado. Likewise, there were four items on the **Consent Calendar**, three of which passed unanimously with no discussion. The fourth item involved a Job Description for a Senior Administrative Assistant/Technician which also passed after a few clarifying questions from the council.

Next up, **Public Hearing items** and Fire Chief Braga asking for a resolution ordering weed abatement within city limits. He said most property owners had already complied meaning they had mowed and weed-wacked as appropriate (whatever happened to the concern for sound abatement?) Apparently fire hazards trumps all and the resolution passed unanimously.

The second item required ten minutes of discussion regarding the authorizing of the City of Sebastopol Lighting Special Assessment District. Most notable was the council’s ignorance of who owns and maintains the vast majority of the streetlights - - namely their nemesis, PG&E. When it comes to public lighting there is little that the city actually controls.

The third item for public hearing was the presentation and discussion of the 2014-2015 Fiscal Budget. This budget shows an increase in expenditures of about 300K and projected revenues flat or possibly down. After a power point presentation complete with pie charts, bar graphs and data table there were eight citizens who

spoke to said budget. There were calls for less spending (and less taxing) to blaming the \$92K repair bill for the City Hall roof leak on the proximity of cell towers.

The council weighed in on the various comments and criticisms and then the remaining time was spent considering why the Budget Committee (Jacobs, Kyes and staff) budgeted (via Community Benefit Grants) a small amount for the Arts Center and ZERO for the Chamber of Commerce. Finally after admitting that the Chamber may have “dissed” the sitting council for political reasons, they none-the-less served the community favorably by promoting Sebastopol and sponsoring the annual Apple Blossom Parade and Festival. When all was said and done the Chamber is to receive \$5K and the Arts Center \$7.5k. Thankfully common sense prevailed over sensitive egos. Note: Total time for the budget presentation, comments and needed motions (all passed unanimously) was nearly an hour.

Discussion and action was put forth regarding hiring a consultant, Muni Services, to “crunch the numbers” relating to options for adding onto the Utility Users Tax (UUT) Said proposed tax is to the tune of 3.75% for water, sewage and garbage disposal. UUT is currently assessed against PG&E user fees. Give that the county is rumored to be proposing their own additional tax, a ½% increase in sales tax, this may all be a moot issue. Let’s hope so.

Lastly (and thankfully) City staff reports were non-existent and council reports very brief. And the public comment session prior to that was a mere thirteen minutes featuring the “usual suspects” who warned us against the massive conspiracies that are slowly but surely robbing us of both our health and freedom.

Duration: 4:11

D. Swedenborg