



Sebastopol Citizens

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

Sebastopol City Council Meeting February 4, 2020 – Synopsis and Commentary

- All council members were present.

Proclamations/Presentations:

- Certificates of Appreciation to outgoing Planning Commissioners Colin Doyle and Gerald Glaser were presented. Glaser served as an alternate from 2017 to 2020. Doyle started by serving on the Design Review Board in 2001 before making the leap the Planning Commission where he endured from July of 2008 to January of 2020.

Public Comment (aka Open Mike):

- A speaker announced the [Emergency and Disaster Preparedness and Recovery](#) meeting on February 23rd. It will be at the Community Center from 1:30 p.m. to 4:40 p.m. at 390 Morris Street.
- Analy EcoAction Club, in collaboration with 350 Sonoma and Sebastopol Climate Action, is hosting a screening of the film "Hike the Divide, a Conversation About Climate Action on the Continental Divide Trail" by local filmmaker Connor Devane. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for tabling by local Analy Eco Action and Analy Activists clubs and local environmental groups. Film at 7 p.m., followed by a panel discussion with Analy student climate activists from 8:30-9:00 p.m. It's all happening on February 12th. Watch trailer here: <https://vimeo.com/348412233>. Students will be admitted free but a \$5 or \$10 donation from you is hoped for.

Consent Calendar: (Approved 5:0)

- Minutes for the January 15th and the January 21st meetings were approved.
- The budget sub-committee meeting schedule was set. In February they will be considering funding requests from community service agencies. So start begging now. If the council withholds funds from you unless you do them a favor.....
- [Wood, an environment and infrastructure solutions company](#), was awarded a **\$71,000** contract to develop a local hazard mitigation plan. (Imagine my relief when discovering that this has nothing to do with a drone and SebastopolCitizens.org.) The Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requires this plan if we decide to beg for any federal grant funds. \$30,000 of the budget came from the building department and \$50,000 came from that \$1.5 million we received thanks to [Assembly Member Marc Levine](#). [Click here to see the Sonoma West Times and News report](#). The study will focus mostly on “climate change, drought, earthquakes, flooding, landslides, and wildfire. Additional natural and human-caused hazards may include extreme weather, and public safety power outages.”
- Due to the retirement of out building inspector, the city will hire [Phillips Seabrook Associates](#) as a pay you go on-call flood plain administration consulting service. The hourly rate, which can vary from \$235 to \$110, will probably be offset by the salary that is no longer being paid.

Informational Items/ Presentation:

- There was a presentation by [Supervisors Lynda Hopkins](#) and [David Rabbitt](#) and Dan George, the retired Fire Chief from Gold Ridge FPD, pitching a proposed [Measure G, a 0.5% sales tax](#) to address some of the problems we experienced with the recent fires. “Beginning in 2014, the County Board of Supervisors authorized the ‘Fire Services Project’ to seek a more effective, efficient, and sustainable fire service system in the county, particularly the unincorporated areas.” Sebastopol would get 3.0 staffing – three firefighters on duty 24/7/365 – and \$959,000 for salary and other fire mitigation programs. Volunteers are, and still would be, welcome and needed.

Mayor Slayter’s math showed that it would only increase the cost of a \$30,000 car by \$150. (OK, he ain’t thinkin’ Lamborghini.) It seems to be for the best for the county as a whole but they used the **“P” word** – in perpetuity, which is what made the Palm Drive debacle so painful. [Read more details here](#) then you decide.

- **Vice Mayor Glass** asked the Health Action Committee for a presentation on vaping. This went on way too long considering they were preaching to the choir. There was once someone in Sebastopol who didn’t think that vaping was a danger to youth. That person is no longer with us, in many ways (and many parts too), [thanks to a committee of concerned citizens](#). So, Vice Mayor Glass will host a completely different type of committee that will include all stake holders, (tobacco vendors as well) and retire to a non-smoke filled room to hammer out a tax on tobacco and vaping products that may discourage its use by the young. Or we can just try shaming the kids that vape. Having to [wear polyester bell bottom pants](#) in public for a week might work.

Regular Agenda Items: (Passed 5:0)

- The 2019-20 FY mid-year budget adjustments were discussed. The big hit here came from the [Redwood Empire Municipal Insurance Fund](#) (our city’s insurer) that discovered its liability and workers’ comp portfolios were underfunded. Our costs went up 40.4% (\$290,000). This should be a one time only cost. It was covered by our reserve fund that still remains strong.
- Directions to the mayor on how to vote regarding various Sonoma County committees were agreed to.

City Council Reports:

- **Council Member Carnacchi** reported he was at Monday’s Palm Drive Health Care District’s meeting when it voted to dissolve itself. He mentioned that the county might name our city as the district’s successor agency that would administer the collection of the parcel tax and payment of the debt. Although it could be farmed out and all costs could be taken off the top of the collected taxes, no one at the big table in front seemed to have ANY interest in that entanglement.

A Parting Shot:

- Palm Drive Health Care District was forced to dissolve by a small but committed group of clear-eyed realist. What started out as a wonderful local hospital, through questionable management and motives, White House-like transparency and an inability or unwillingness to contend with the facts, it slowly contorted into a zombie-like existence – a hospital in name only – engrossed in the pursuit of not feeding our brains but rather our bank accounts. The District sold the “hospital” for \$2,000,000 (the price of a couple of fancy Sebastopol houses) and left us paying off a \$25,000,000 debt and a possible [multi-million dollar lawsuit by Anthem Blue Cross](#). Shrewd.

Elapsed Time: 4:00 hours (6:00–10:00 p.m.)

Next City Council meeting is February 18, 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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