

Sebastopol City Council Meeting – September 4, 2012 – Synopsis and Commentary

--John Necker, Sebastopol Citizen

All City Council Members were present for the September 4th meeting which started off with some routine budget amendments adjusting payment for the Pepperweed Management Project that were overlooked (\$5208.00) and purchase of the abandon railway right of way located at Spooner Park(\$20,000.00), best known for it's industrial looking solar array that welcomes visitors to our sleepy little city when driving in from the South.

The General Plan is moving ahead with the help of Sonoma State. It's not too early to predict that Gurney and Kyes, with the full throated support of their core group, are planning to take control of that process and produce a plan that aligns with their rather narrow view of what is best for Sebastopol.

The upcoming election will decide the fate of their plans.

Also present was Supervisor Carrillo and Sonoma County Water Agency engineer Cordell Stillman pitching formation of a Joint Powers Authority that could replace PG&E as the supplier of electricity in the county. It was well presented and an interesting idea but not without some good points to the contrary. You may find more detailed information at the following link: <http://www.scwa.ca.gov/cca/> . This has many miles to go before the City of Sebastopol begins to take formal steps to consider it.

Council Member Shaffer introduced a request to reactivate work on the Ives Park plan for improvements and Village Park improvements. The City outlay would be \$25,000.00 for the Ives Park plan and \$75,000.00 for the Village Park improvements. This money would come from the City Park Impact Fee fund which is now at \$443,000.00.

Council Member Gurney initially opposed the idea. It was unclear if she did so because it was submitted by Council Member Shaffer or because she really didn't understand that the \$75k for Village Park was needed to keep a \$125,000.00 Open Space grant, in effect getting \$200k of work done for \$75k. She eventually relented.

And because there were several folks there representing Village park and one of them expressed some hopes for a picnic bench, she asked the City Planning Director to see if he could find one for them. She also pondered the idea of just how the City could supply more affordable housing there. It was unclear if she wanted standard housing, more mobile homes or both.

It passed on a 4:1 vote with Kyes remarking that the \$75,000 would be better spent on lotto tickets. He was probably being ironic. When addressed earlier by Mayor Wilson, he made some offhand apology about inattention due to his having fallen asleep. If this too was irony, it was less apparent here.

City Council Candidate Robert Jacob expressed concerns that the project might “gentrify” Village Park and said this was a social justice issue while calling for more mobile homes not fewer.

It was a 5:0 vote granting the waiver of \$7500 in permit fees for the Sebastopol Center For The Arts Building. It seemed like a good idea to everyone since its new location and many improvements will tie in well with Ives Park.

Public Comments:

One speaker noted that after a three year wait she was able to move into the Petaluma Avenue apartments in July only to find she was getting headaches from some cell phone tower. Perhaps she should have been warned about the pollen count here too.

Another speaker wanted the Council to stop the above towers nationally, step in between Iran and Israel, and make the Occupy tent permanent-as if it isn't that right now.