



Sebastopol Citizens

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

Sebastopol City Council Meeting May 5, 2020 – Synopsis and Commentary

- All council members were virtually present.

Proclamations/Presentations have been suspended until further notice.

Public Comment (aka Open Mike):

- When it was announced there was no public comment, a glimmer of hope for a short meeting began to well up deep within me. Well, it must have been something else.

Consent Calendar: (Approved 5:0 without comment.)

- The minutes for the April 21 meeting were approved and will appear here shortly. [Scroll down to Past Council Meetings.](#)
- The Emergency Proclamation was extended. This allows the city to take a few shortcuts not otherwise legal (like holding council meetings on Zoom) and gives it the right to beg FEMA for compensation relating to losses due to the COVID-19 virus. Later, you'll see how **convenient** this can be for some.
- A resolution declaring weeds on private property to be a nuisance was made. You probably have already made that declaration yourself but this had to do with the density of weeds that present a fire hazard – you know, like those on your free range, au naturale neighbor's property. But if those weeds aren't cleared by June 2, the city will clear them and bill the offending party, although that won't help you with the weird neighbor. So make sure you comply. [The city could farm out the work to these two yayhoos!](#)
- A letter of "Support of Clean Energy in the Recovery Stimulus Package – COVID-19 Pandemic" was approved. The letter to Speaker Nancy Pelosi casts off by urging help for energy workers and businesses and then sails into a sea of pork fat by extending incentives for clean energy, offshore wind, energy storage and electric vehicles – all of which would benefit Sonoma Clean Power, which is chaired by Mayor Patrick Slayter. As mentioned above, you may see how **convenient** that is. The letter could have been improved by informing the good Speaker that she would have to "**opt out**" if she didn't like the idea. [Wouldn't her reaction to that letter be interesting?](#)

Presentation:

- A pitch for the ["BayREN Water Upgrades Savings Program"](#) was made. The idea here is that this program will fund water and energy upgrades to your home that you can pay back over a period of time. On a 4:1 vote with Council Member Hinton in the minority, the city will sign an agreement for Services with BayREN. While Mayor Slayter had some concerns about the complicated method of payback, it was **Council Member Hinton who asked the inconvenient questions** – asking how BayREN could guarantee local contractors could do the work. The answer was that would have to apply to BayREN first. Then Council Member Hinton asked how many other cities have signed up for this program. **The answer was that we would be the first.** You know, kinda like a canary in a coal mine.

Regular Agenda Items:

- The council discussed the job description in advance of hiring a Community Vitality Consultant. As Council Member Hinton pointed out, this \$40,000 expenditure was to be for one part time person over a period of a year. Instead it became a discussion about hiring a company named CoMission that, if it has a website, Google doesn't seem to know about it. It's headed by a former Sebastopol council member and mayor and its services will run until December 31, 2020. It plans to "improve the community at large, and discuss the best ways to connect local residents, businesses, and government to collaborate to build a healthier Sebastopol (economically, visually, environmentally, etc.)" Its **discounted rates** run from **\$94 to \$211** an hour and has no other clients. (Wait, is the canary still chirping?) On a brighter note, CoMission said that the city may be able to get FEMA to offset its expenses for this venture. See how **convenient** that is? The council voted 5:0 and approved hiring CoMission.
- The Measure "M" one quarter cent transportation sales tax will expire in 2024 and the [SCTA is considering an extension by placing it on the 2020 ballot](#). The council and a SCTA representative discussed it. All agreed the extension was necessary. The big question, since tax hikes did poorly in the last election, is when to put it on the ballot. The SCTA rep was cautiously optimistic--if the language of the ballot measure made it clear to the public how the funds would be spent.
- The council ruminated updating the projected end of the year budget. The city is facing a serious financial shortfall due to the tax lost because of, among other things, hotel and restaurant closures. The sales tax alone is projected to be down by \$830,500. The council voted 5:0 to carry over the budget as there is no sense in trying to plan for next year without having more time and data.

City Council Reports:

- The city manager announced that parking regulations throughout the city will be modified to accommodate curbside pickups for businesses.

A Parting Shot:

- **Vice Mayor Glass** reported receiving several complaints about people not wearing masks where and when they are required to do so. The city manager said that, while trying to avoid confrontation, the city will begin to use "enhanced enforcement", which sounds a lot like "enhanced interrogation." To all you "special people" who remember your mother telling you that you *were* special, she was lying. She only said that because she loved you. [Put on the mask, it not only can save a life, it can change yours.](#)

Elapsed Time: 4:30 hours (6:00–10:30pm)

Next City Council meeting is May 19, 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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