



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 7, 2016 – Synopsis and Commentary

All Council members were present.

- At the outset, **Mayor Glass** expressed her displeasure about a Marin newspaper article claiming Sebastopol was no longer interested in **smart meter issues**. **She was not amused.**

Proclamations/Presentations:

- Michael Nielsen was recognized for 15 years of service to the police department.

Public Comment (aka Open Mike):

- The first speaker objected, several times, to various and sundry actions take by Presidents Trump and Obama. It was difficult to follow, but a plot may have been involved.
- Three speakers urged the Council to declare Sebastopol a **sanctuary city**. It didn't appear that any of them lived within the city limits and so the risk of losing federal funds for using the **"S" word** didn't seem to concern them much. Sebastopol is a **de facto sanctuary city** and declaring it so is just downright silly. It brings to mind my late father's advice after my return from a rough day at high school: "Son, fight the fights you can win."
- Four speakers instructed the Council to enforce the ordinance that bans **smart meters**. They forgot to mention the ordinance is illegal, that it is validated only by junk science and **alt-facts** and produced no evidence that "the people of Sebastopol" support the ban. What? All 1.5 million of them. **Sad.**
- Another speaker praised Fire Chief Braga [for doing the right thing](#).

Consent Calendar:

- A letter was approved, at the urging of the [League of California Cities](#), for passage of [AB 1 and SB 1](#) that could slow the deterioration of our local (and state) streets. According to the letter, the bills would result in a 12-cent increase in the gas tax (20-cent increase on diesel) over three years, a \$38 increase in vehicle registration fees (\$100 flat fee on zero-emission vehicles) and other broader fee increases. On the up side, the bills would generate \$2.4 billion for the state system and \$2.2 billion for local roads. On a 100-point scale, Sebastopol's roads are rated at 50. And how much will it cost us to improve on that? [Click here and scroll down to page three](#). Maybe it's time to increase our tax base, no? (Passed 4:1 with Council Member Carnacchi abstaining.*)
- The Council again routinely waived a few ordinances to allow the [Apple Blossom Festival](#) to take place. At the urging of **Council Member Hinton**, who is demonstrating her rare ability to state her position succinctly, the City also **waived the permit fees**—citing that it was Sebastopol's signature event. (Passed 4:1 with **Council Member Gurney in the minority**.)
- The Council also approved sponsorship of [Sebastopol Walks](#), which is returning after a year's hiatus. (Approved 5:0.)

- The 2016/17 budget was approved. (Approved 5:0.)
- Some more CalPERS hurdles were cleared regarding the City's agreement with the police. [You may find more details on that agreement here.](#) (Approved 5:0.)
- Changes in zoning ordinances were approved to accommodate the new proposed hotel, allowing four stories, a height of 50 feet, and valet tandem parking. (Approved 5:0.)
- A \$166,681 amendment to the W-Trans contract was approved. This addresses ongoing crossing problems at Bodega Avenue and Nelson Way and squeezing in bike lanes in other areas that will require some curb and gutter work. (Passed 5:0.)
- **\$151,451** was approved for putting out to bid the striping of the Local Streets **bike paths**. Carnacchi pulled this so that a member of the public could argue that bike lanes in a town like this are just too dangerous and could lead to a false sense of security. His solution, which was not without merit, was to just share the road. He was probably not aware that this had been in the works for years and the **Council was in no mood to shelve the project**, although Carnacchi flirted with the idea. The Council gently rejected both ideas. (Passed 4:1 with Carnacchi in the minority.)

Public Hearing:

- Annexation of Village Mobile Home Park and Tomodachi Park was discussed. The City owns the land but wants to annex it to provide more efficient sewer, water, police and fire protection as well as code enforcement. Back when dinosaurs roamed the Laguna, Village Park was purchased with the idea of making it just whatcha call a regular park. That idea has come to the same end as those dinosaurs.

Regular Agenda Items:

- There was a discussion of art in public places. Evidently there are those who believe we actually possess some of that now—confirming the old axiom “*Art is in the eye of the beholder.*” But hope springs eternal as a local, [Ned Kahn](#), was awarded the task of creating some serious art for the City. The City has an existing **\$45,000 fund for the project**. Although the location is still in a state of flux, it looks as if it will happen. Here is some history and a peek by [Amie Windsor of the Sonoma West Times and News](#).
- The Council discussed giving some financial assistance to a proposed ten-unit small residential development at [7950 Bodega Avenue](#). That's where the sidewalk ends going west on Bodega. There, the intrepid walker is faced with a life or death choice: turning left onto Bodega with self-medicating west county drivers coming up from behind, or turning right and scaling a steep dirt bank and descending a steeper one where a misstep may result in an awkward forward roll into the traffic lane. Odd, it seemed worth the risk when Marty's Top 'O The Hill was there—at least on the way back. Anyway, the City is interested but a few ordinances may have to be amended for the developer to go ahead with the project.
- The Council discussed their plans at the upcoming Sonoma County Mayors' and Council Members' meeting.

City Council Reports:

- Around 10:30pm, we were blessed with a lengthy report on ground water by Glass, and another on Sonoma Clean Power by Vice Mayor Slayter.

A Parting Shot:

- * **Council Member Carnacchi** pulled the AB1 and SB2 items for discussion so the matter was addressed well after 10:00pm. He had a question about one of the bills **but couldn't remember** what it was or exactly what part of the bill was the issue. After some valiant web searches by the City Clerk and Vice Mayor Slayter, he finally found the offending passage and then not only had little to say about it but abstained from voting on it at all. There should be warning on the application forms: "Warning, public service can cause severe lapses of perspective."

Elapsed Time: 4:50 hours (6:00–10:50pm)

Next City Council meeting is February 21, 2017 at the Teen Center, 425 Morris Street at 6:00pm.

You can view this meeting and others at: <https://livestream.com/accounts/14608643>.

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