

Sebastopol City Council Meeting July 7, 2015 – Synopsis and Commentary

All Council members were present.

Public Comment (aka Open Mike):

- There was the usual boilerplate anti-corporate rants, as if corporations never do any good—like offering low-cost goods to folks who are too poor to get to Santa Rosa or programming produced by NPR. Dwelling on the negative and overlooking the positive may be politically correct but it's poor critical thinking.
- The fellow who wanted to hear train sounds down Main Street has reconsidered that idea and now just wants us to wave at everyone at high noon. He even had a supporter tonight! You know, that sounds like a lot more fun than standing on the corner of Highways 12 and 116 waving opposing signs at each other and saluting civilians.

Proclamations/Presentations:

- Certificates of Appreciation were given to Jim Fain and Russ Pinto of the [Complete Streets Advisory Committee](#).

Consent Calendar:

- The Council approved (5:0) to seek bids for the skate garden ([formerly a skate park](#)) expansion project. It includes “Council-approved play equipment and picnic tables,” night lighting, the elimination of some fencing and the lawn, at an estimated cost of \$670,956. Funding that was obtained includes:
 - \$134,550, which the **Planning Director** clawed back from the State
 - \$381,853, which the **Planning Department** received from the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
 - \$22,730 from the skate garden fund
 - \$131,823 from the City of Sebastopol's Park In-Lieu fund

Council Member Eder reminded all that a promise was made to the residents of Flynn Street that they would not suffer from lighting spill over.

- The Council accepted (5:0) the bid of \$165,960 from Team Ghilotti to make repairs to Keating Avenue. Construction is expected to take place in late August and take about 60 days.
- The Council approved (5:0) \$91,894 to upgrade police radio console equipment.
- The Council approved (5:0) a letter of opposition to AB 57 that seems to **limit a city's authority** to regulate the placement of cell antennas. This has nothing to do with EMF but is more of a city planning issue. Although the irony here is that the Council **exceeded its authority** when it effectively banned smart meters because of its irrational fears of EMF. [NBC Bay Area News has more information here](#).
- The Council approved (5:0) the replacement of the City's consulting traffic engineer.
- The Council approved red zones at Wischemann Hall and at 536/538 Cleveland Avenue.

Informational Items/Presentations:

- There was a presentation of a children's book that teaches kids about the

importance of saving water. The presenter, resplendent in a blue cape and matching tiara, gave a much-too-long book report, complete with a slide show. How long has it been since you had to sit through a book report? You're right. Not long enough. Her saving techniques may be news to children but most adults are probably already using them.

- There was a presentation by [Lantern](#) (Library Association for a New Techno-current Regional Entity). Wow! That's a mouthful! Let's just go with Lantern. The train for a new library is moving out of the station. For several good reasons, Lantern has decided the library should stay at the present location and focus most of its energy on fundraising. Lantern asked the City to commit to a new library. Well, we would probably all do that in principle; it's the cost that takes all the fun out of it.

Public Hearing:

- A formula businesses ban was discussed. The Council bemoaned the [Press Democrat article by Mary Callahan](#) that used the word “ban.” They may deny now that they ever wanted a ban, but that's not what they said when the late Mayor Kyes broached the idea. **It was a ban, pure and simple** and directed at the **Great Satan, CVS**. From the chatter tonight, the Council seems to be moving for a complete ban city wide for any business that has more than 25 stores. It's going back to staff for adjustments.

Regular Calendar Agenda Items: (Discussion and Action Items)

- There was a review of the proposed Tomodachi Park sign. The sign proposed by Mayor Slater was accepted 3:2 with Council Members Eder and Gurney in the minority.

A Parting Shot:

- Corporation issues always attract the gadflies. And tonight the **Queen of the Gadflies**, the driving force behind the CVS disaster, was in attendance and buzzing too. Her favorite control technique, shouting out “Can you speak into the mike please?” was the constant refrain of the evening. Her inability to hear the speakers goes much deeper than that of the microphone or any physical issues. You can explain it to her but, unfortunately, you can't comprehend it for her. And even though she now lives in Santa Rosa, the Council still responds her kibitzing from the front row. Man, that gets old in a hurry.
- Oh yeah, as promised in the last summary, the blackberry report: still very green with some tart red and black pushing though. Needs a couple of weeks. Bumper crop though.

Elapsed Time: 4:45 (6:00 – 10:45 pm)

John Necker