

Sebastopol City Council Meeting – May 7, 2013 – Synopsis and Commentary

All Council Members were present.

Mayor Kyes announced that he had nothing to report from the closed session.

Proclamations:

May 2013 is designated as Drowning Prevention Month. [Ives Pool](#) manager Ricardo Freitas spoke briefly about many of the services provided at Ives. The Rotary Learn to Swim Program is in its 29th year and has helped over 9000 second graders to learn to swim. It is the only public pool in Sonoma County run by a successful nonprofit organization.

The Council endorsed the [350 Home and Garden Challenge, 2013](#).

May 5–7 was proclaimed Municipal Clerk Week. Our City Clerk, Mary Gourley, possesses a depth of knowledge about the history of Sebastopol government that few can match. Undoubtedly she appreciated the proclamation but some of us were surprised that the City could not produce even a simple bouquet of flowers too.

Public Comments:

Teresa Ramondo, Executive Director/CEO of the [Sebastopol Chamber of Commerce](#) announced a very successful [Apple Blossom Festival](#). Sebastopol even got a write up in the May 2nd issue of *Sunset* magazine.

Others announced their discoveries of hidden messages in the mission statements of several corporations.

The last man standing of the late Occupy movement asked the City to install benches at the park where the tent was.

There was more show and tell as we were treated to another bottle of ticks and warned about them and EMF too. Wouldn't it be wonderful if someone could create a cell phone app that directed a beam of EMF that could kill ticks? If nothing else it would make the Council meeting shorter.

Consent Calendar:

All three items were approved.

- *Fireworks booths* for VFW Post 3919, Gravenstein Lions Club and Sebastopol Sea Serpents.
- *Weed abatement program.* (Those in the "Railroad Forest" should be left alone for the time being!)
- *Resurfacing of Ives pool.* (Cost: \$102,223.00)

Public Hearing:

Mandatory Photovoltaic Ordinance #1059 was passed. Roughly speaking, all new construction and remodels will be required to produce *2 watts per square foot* of the entire structure using photovoltaics if:

- *Residential additions* are increased by 75% or more
- *Commercial additions* are increased by 1800 square feet or a remodel of more than 50%.

Output of the array will be calculated by its stated rating. (Surely the manufacturers won't exaggerate that!) If your system can't make the 2 watts because of shading or whatever, the building is going to have to be "tightened up." Or you can pay the City a fine of 90% of a system that would have worked if you or your neighbor didn't have all of those messy trees hanging around.

The Council showed absolutely no interest in trying this as a voluntary program first. They

also avoided any contact with the idea of chopping down your trees, or your neighbor's, to find those 2 watts. **Public Comment** on this found the solar contractors and those living *OUTSIDE* the City limits very much in favor of the idea. Those having to live with it were a little more circumspect.

Kyes:

Mayor Kyes is disappointed [Lancaster](#), CA passed their photovoltaic ordinance before we did. They are a Republican town and we aren't, so that shows wide support for this ordinance. (Well, his random sample may be a little small.) Kyes dismissed the idea that verifying continuing operation was needed.

Jacob:

Vice Mayor Jacob considers the photovoltaic ordinance a cost saver. He believes it's the responsible thing to do and called it "A progressive lifestyle which we prefer."

Eder:

Council member Eder stated a photovoltaic ordinance will soon be coming down from the State level anyway. By passing it this early, we are out in front. Used to think that having to wear a seat belt should be voluntary.

Slayter:

Council member Slayter was more succinct saying, "we have to lookout for ourselves and others too."

Gurney:

Council member Gurney expressed some concern about enforcement and wording of the ordinance.

It passed 5:0

Discussion and Action Items:

This was the second presentation to the [City from Sonoma Clean Power](#). It proposes to provide green electricity at competitive prices to the residents and businesses of Sonoma County. SCP will be a public agency and not-for-profit electricity provider offering you the choice of having more electricity supplied from clean, renewable resources at stable and affordable rates. Please click on the link above for details. They claim to be able to provide real competition to PG&E with profits working for Sonoma County instead of PG&E stockholders. The Council is a long way from jumping in the deep end on this one but it does have some merit and risks to the City seem low. We shall see how it goes when the pressure to join up gets a little greater.

Vice Mayor Jacob requested financial support for [CittaslowSebastopol](#). Perhaps if you click on the link, you will discover just what concrete benefits they offer the City. If that doesn't help, try this one: [Cittaslow](#). If you still don't get it, that makes two of us. Jacob stated that it "represents the value system of our community" and helps make us an [Ecotourism](#) destination. ("The Railroad Forest" notwithstanding.) **Gurney** referred to it as an "umbrella" organization. **Eder** questioned the expenditure and **Slyter** wondered how many applicants failed to obtain the Cittaslow designation. Still, it passed 4:0 and will be considered for approval in the upcoming budget, with the requested amount expected to be \$20,000.

The City will look into creating an outreach position that "will promote awareness and understanding of city government policies...and promote marketing."

Note: The Council, and particularly **Vice Mayor Jacob**, seems to be making a real effort to speed the meetings up. They reduced public comment time on some items to two minutes and battled valiantly to keep speakers on subject and speak to matters grounded in this dimension only.

John Necker