

**City Council**  
Mayor Patrick Slayter  
Vice Mayor Neysa Hinton  
Una Glass  
Sarah Glade Gurney  
Diana Rich



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## City of Sebastopol

### CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES MINUTES FOR Meeting of September 6, 2022

As Approved by the City Council at their regular meeting of September 20, 2022

The City Council Regular meeting was held via teleconference pursuant to AB 361. Pursuant to AB 361 (2021), Teleconference Restrictions of the Brown Act Have Been Suspended, as Well as the Requirement to Provide a Physical Location for Members of the Public to Participate in the Meeting. The City of Sebastopol City Council meeting will not be physically open to the public and all City Councilmembers will be teleconferencing into the meeting via Zoom.

#### COUNCIL PROTOCOLS FOR MEETING:

- This meeting is being conducted utilizing virtual settings for teleconferencing and electronic means consistent with State of California Executive Orders regarding the COVID 19 pandemic and AB 361.
- Live stream and zoom are being utilized for this meeting.
- Members of the public may view and listen to the meeting by use of Zoom and Live Stream as noted on the City's website and as noted on the agenda.
- Members of the public wishing to speak to the City Council may do so during public comment or may comment on agenda items during the discussion of each item and must be logged into Zoom. Live Stream is a viewing only format.
- Anyone using abusive, vulgar, offensive, threatening, or harassing language, personal attacks of any kind or offensive terms that target specific individuals or groups will be muted, will be asked to adhere to protocols and /or will be removed from the meeting.

Reminder please leave your microphones on mute until called upon and if you would like to provide your name during public comment you are welcome to do that but do not have to.

Please note that minutes are not meant to be verbatim minutes and are meant to be the City's record of Actions Taken (Approved Motion of Agenda Item(s)).

#### 6:00 pm **Convene City Council Regular Meeting (ZOOM VIRTUAL FORMAT)**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Slayter called the Regular meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

#### **ROLL CALL:**

**Present:** Mayor Patrick Slayter – By video teleconference  
Vice Mayor Neysa Hinton – By video teleconference  
Councilmember Una Glass – By video teleconference  
Councilmember Diana Gardner Rich – By video teleconference

**Absent:** Councilmember Sarah Gurney (excused) (Arrived 6:47 pm)

**Staff:** City Manager/Attorney/City Attorney Larry McLaughlin  
Assistant City Manager/Attorney/City Clerk Mary Gourley  
Administrative Services Director Ana Kwong  
City Engineer Mario Landeros  
Planning Director Svanstrom

**SALUTE TO THE FLAG:** Mayor Slayter led the Salute to the Flag.

#### **PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS:**

**The following were presented:**

- Proclamation - September is National Senior Center Month
- Proclamation - September 15 - October 15 Latin American/Latino Heritage Month
- Proclamation California Coastal Cleanup Day September 17, 2022
- Proclamation – September 19 – 25 Pollution Prevention Week and September 17 – 24 Creek Week

Reference Order Number: 2022-248

**PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEM NOT ON THE AGENDA:**

Speakers are allowed to speak for a maximum of three minutes so that all speakers have an opportunity to address the City Council. Power point or visual presentations for public comment shall not be permitted unless approved by the Agenda Review Committee two weeks prior to the requested meeting date.

Speakers may not "yield" a portion of their allotted time to others.

The Mayor has the authority to limit or extend the time allowed for speakers dependent on the number of speakers in attendance.

The Mayor can poll the members of the public for an indication of the number of people wishing to speak, then call on individuals to speak. It is the goal of the Council to conclude the public comments portion of the agenda within 20 minutes. If the public comment period exceeds twenty minutes, the presiding officer, typically the Mayor, reserves the right to reduce the time per speaker or carry over public comments to after all business items are completed.

The City Clerk will monitor the time for public comments and inform the speakers when the time limitation has been reached.

The Mayor could survey the members of the public, as appropriate, to move agenda item up or back to address the members of the public item of concern.

Public participation is encouraged on all public agenda items.

Council and staff will treat participants and each other with courtesy. Derogatory or sarcastic comments are inappropriate.

The public will likewise be encouraged by the Mayor to maintain meeting decorum.

In Council meetings when citizens are agitated, the Mayor may call a short recess to calm the situation.

If a member of the public is unable to attend the Council meeting, written communications may be sent to the City Clerk by e-mail or by regular mail. Communications received after distribution of the agenda packet will be made available to the Council at/or as soon after the meeting.

Dorothy Schwartzberg commented as follows:

- This is concerning the smart meters that PG&E wants to put up in Sebastopol.
- What I am going to do is speak on the health effects of EMF radio frequencies.
- Radio frequencies have been called harmless, yet these frequencies pass through walls and buildings and travel very long distances, as long as possibly a football field, with pulse radiations.
- The FCC has standards for measuring health effects of radio frequencies.
- They are very low. The only measure the health effects on astute illnesses.
- Whereas, there are peer-reviewed studies that show health impacts of smart meters. A peer-reviewed study is a published study about something that has doctors, and scientists, and so forth all reviewing it together and agreeing on the validity of the study.
- There are peer-reviewed studies that show the health impacts of smart meters. They include sleep problem, headaches, nausea, anxiety, heart palpitations, tiredness, concentration
- The heart has electrical impulses. This will affect the heart, and all of these things has been linked to carcinogens, like lead
- Vulnerable groups include people with sensitive immune system, medical implants, children, seniors, and nature.
- I would like to appeal to the Council to reinstate the ban on smart meters in Sebastopol, for the health of our people, especially including seniors, of which I am one.

Joanna C commented as follows:

- I also wanted to speak about smart meters.
- I wish the ban would be reinstated.

- I wanted to think about the fact that those who are electro sensitive are not affected by smart meters. But that is far from true. Now there is research that shows everyone can be affected, whether they have that or not.
- Dr. Clear heart, has found that smart meters changes blood tests, even though for some people it is absolutely devastating and they get illness in the system, there are other people including the partners, the wife gets sick, the husband gets tested, they do blood tests on both of them and both of them show elevated blood marker changes.
- Some of these blood marker changes are TCF data one, and then inflammation markers. Serum, chronic inflammation. The blood sugar increases after 30 minutes of exposure. There are hormone abnormalities that are perceived. Thyroid, among them. Serotonin goes down. Dopamine goes down. Adrenaline goes up good also, the professor of surgery, she says that adverse neurological effects were reported in people who sustained close proximity to wireless smart meters and even under 10 feet.
- They say that radiofrequency exposure for long periods, includes cancer, damaging the nerve system, and causes elevated levels of nitrate, which is a toxin that is found in the body and made to cause over 16 chronic illnesses.

Pam Gentry commented as follows:

- I too, am going to be talking about the health effects of smart meters.
- In order to help the Council and other residents understand some of our concerns about the installation, I wanted to read excerpts from a publication called "bio initiative report: a rationale for biologically-based exposure standards for low intensity electromagnetic radiation".
- It was completed in 2007, updated in 2012, and again in 2022. So it is current.
- This report was prepared by 29 authors from 10 countries, 10 holding medical degrees, 21 with PhD's, some of them had both, and three with masters.
- This bio initiative report looked at a total of 2018 studies through 2022, researching some aspect of the effect of radiofrequency radiation --that is RFR --and extremely wrote low-frequency electric frequency. That is what our smart meters emit.
- The effects on living things of these, 1655 studies showed a significant negative physical effect from exposure to EMF.
- In other words, 82% of the worldwide research into the effects of EMF on living things shows that they are harmful. If this statistic is not enough to persuade those in charge of regulating and distributing devices such as smart meters, then I don't know what is.
- Let me just say, human beings are bioelectrical system. Our hearts and brains are regulated by eternal bioelectric signals.
- Bio exposures to artificial EMF can interrupt the fundamental biological properties of the human body. In some cases, this causes discomfort and disease.
- Since World War II, the background level of EMF has risen exponentially, most recently by the soaring popularity of technologies like cell phones, cordless phones, wi-fi, et cetera.
- I have asked that these be included in the record of this meeting, and I ask that the City Councilmembers please read this. Because I think it is so important. It is not that much more to read.
- I ask that the City Council consider reinstating a moratorium, I know they did not officially call it a ban, but a moratorium on smart meters in Sebastopol, for the good of everybody and for our future generations.

Sandy Tate commented as follows:

- I was going to talk about smart meters, also, and read some of this wonderful research.
- But, why should I do that? You people here, who have voted for smart meters, have done all of this research.

- We know you are because you are intelligent. We know you are intelligent because we have voted for you, we put you there.
- We have the faith that you are going to do right by us, and to vote for smart meters, which, as far as I concern, is big brother in the worst way
- Big brother can go into your house when your house is unoccupied, so that people can enter it, or people can enter it, just clean you out.
- I think that is a real danger that can happen. It also just wants to crash through the walls and wreck through our bodies, through the Wi-Fi and radiation, that we can't possibly stand.
- I ask myself, why would you, intelligent people on the Council, fall for this crap?
- Why would you vote for something that you have researched, and you have read the same things that we are saying.
- You know they are dangerous.
- Is this because you are trading our bodies for revenues for the City of Sebastopol?
- Is that how easy it is to vote for this kind of danger?
- We don't want this.
- What you are doing is a Shonda. You ought to be ashamed of yourself.
- We need to reverse your vote because that is the right thing to do.

Kyle Falbo commented as follows:

- Over two years ago tonight, this Council, over multiple meetings, took the public's opinion, views, about policing.
- At the time, one was putting forth good efforts to making radical changes to the way that the policing is managed in Sebastopol.
- Unfortunately, that has not been the case.
- Instead, just in the last year alone, we have seen a 14% increase in the City's budget to policing.
- However, the promise, and agreed-upon mental health services under a CAHOOTS style model have yet to materialize.
- The last time that I made reference to this, our Police Chief, who now has abandoned us at the end of an 18 month probationary period, stated that he was waiting until the end of this year, December, when three of these Councilmembers are leaving, to find out how well such a model would be able to be implement it.
- Meanwhile, Cotati, an equally sized City with an equally sized budget has been using a CAHOOTS style model for almost a year
- What was that City not considered as a model for our own?
- Now with the abandonment of our Police Chief and our Interim Chief here tonight, it is really my hope that our City does the right thing, and actually explores a CAHOOTS model, as to actively divert funds, and time, and energy away from our department, toward the hands of medical professionals, mental health experts, and others, reducing the overtime, the massive amount of overtime, that we continue to pay with these services over the last five, six, seven years, to the point where you have a 47% of the entire City budget going to policing.
- Do the right thing. You only have a couple months left. Thank you.

Martha Glaser commented as follows:

- I really appreciated what each person, including Kyle, what everyone has said so far, it is really good to hear people speaking up.

- I had spoken with and heard from people who had attended Council meetings regularly, who have stated they feel impatient, not wanting to have to stop and listen to us all, and wanted us all to be in one voice, especially about the EMF issue.
- I am asking the City to enforce their adopted policies, regarding PG&E, the smart meter ban, or moratorium, telecommunication ordinance, and the General Plan.
- Please try to listen to what we are conveying to you. We are not just beating a drum beat.
- This is something going on. There is something going on with EMF radiation, that you may not observe for yourself but at least 3% of the general population does.
- There is a reason to not allow any additional electromagnetic radiation, no smart meters of any kind, under water, gas, or electric
- It is frustrating and annoying to have to keep thinking about the same thing. I understand the impatience.
- It is frustrating because I, and others, are speaking truth based in science.
- I do not want to be perceived as "the sky is falling, the sky is falling".
- Speaking of this, have you seen the movie "don't look up?" about the asteroid coming to earth? The movie is a metaphor for so much that is dangerous and concerning in our time, that the majority of Americans, Californians, Sonoma County, and Sebastopol City residents seem to not want to have to consider.
- Those who were not EMF sensitive, or EMF aware allies, it seems like we should just stop talking about this and let everyone carry on with their denial about the dangers.
- But, we want science to go ahead. EMF creates heart palpitations, elevated blood transfer, and glucose readings to name a few
- This is real. It is compromising the quality of life, these smart meters and other streaming cell devices, driven Wi-Fi devices, it is real. Thank you.

Linda Berg commented as follows:

- I just wanted to briefly respond to Kyle's comment. I appreciate everybody doing public opinion.
- But anyway, about our model, who can blame Chief Kevin Kilgore for leaving after the demonizing of our model Police Department?
- Who we should blame is actually Diana Rich. She needs to apologize for what has been done. The audit and all of the time and money that has been wasted on this.
- But aside from that, what I want to talk about, of course, is that we are living in a man-made microwave oven with the installation of those wireless badger meters.
- Also PG&E's wireless electric meters, going to be turning up the heat, which we do not need because it literally causes urban heat island.
- It makes everything hotter, which makes sense because it is 2.4 gigahertz, the same frequency that heats up a microwave oven.
- I would appreciate if you look up Badger meters, because you will find all kinds of interesting stuff. Like this one thing here from New Mexico, problems with the City's new smart meters, generating numerous resident complaints.
- I have numerous other ones. One from Ohio. This town goes to court to seek more than \$16 million from contractors who replaced badger meters.
- Then there is yet another one from a Water Authority. That is an \$18.4 million lawsuit.
- Again, against the badger meters
- I am asking you to slam the brakes. Slam the brakes on all of these wireless meters

Linda Collins commented as follows:

- I just want to make a quick comment, regarding the departure of Chief Kilgore.
- There were many reasons that Chief Kilgore left. I think unfortunately, we are losing a great man. He had a lot of insight to what needed to be done.
- We are fortunate that Ron Nelson has stepped in. He has the same foresight that Chief Kilgore had
- It really is a detriment that we lost him, because he was on the right track in doing a very good job.
- I just wanted to say that I don't believe we need to throw Diana under the bus. I think that what Diana did was what was required the City Council. That is to look at the audit that was done by Jerry Threet
- I think that was everybody's decision to have that done, to read it, to work it, and to make it happen.
- But I just do not want to see one of our Councilmembers, such as Diana Rich thrown under the bus for that.

Linda Rothman commented as follows:

- I wanted to talk about fire safety, and explosion safety, with the EMF meters.
- I have articles here and there are tons of them, talking through the fire hazards of the meters.
- We think that the evidence gets buried, the meters disappear when the utility companies come out.
- There are affidavits, there are witness testimony, I have read pages and pages of this today.
- But I am also going to say that from a personal point of view, because I am a person that has had multiple chemical sensitivity for almost 30 years which was denied by the medical establishment, the government, the pharmaceutical industries, every industry you could imagine.
- Now, we have something called MCS chemical sensitivity. They called it by just the name.
- I do not want radiation poisoning from EMF.
- I have suffered enough, like many people in this country have suffered enough.
- People have become homeless because they can't deal with their health because of everything we have to pay for at a time where not only financially, but emotionally, physically, and mentally, and I don't want another thing like this.
- It's bad enough we have to deal with everything like that.
- But everybody on this page right now, I am sure knows that we have had people who have had cancer and have died from cancer.
- We don't need them anymore.

Christina Hince commented as follows:

- I don't have a prepared statement.
- I just noticed when I got my notice that this was up for consideration again. I couldn't believe it. I felt completely betrayed
- We have already fought this battle, and we won. In our victory should stand. We shouldn't have to fight this battle again. We agreed we do not want smart meters.
- I, personally, could pay to stop it. But, my neighbors of 10, 15 feet on either side of me, I am surrounded by five other houses. They may or may not stop their meters
- I am already aware of what my Wi-Fi does. All of their different things, like these people have said.
- I just really support everyone and what they have said about we do not want smart meters.
- I feel like the Council is supposed to represent the people. I feel very betrayed by the Council allowing this to happen.
- Allowing this change to come into our community, after we said no, we don't want this.
- That's all I just wanted to add. Personally, how strongly this affects how I feel about the Council, and the fact that they are not living up to what they promised us, and what all of us, at least where we live, have already fought for and won.

- We shouldn't have to do this again. Thank you.

Mayor Slayter responded to public comments as follows:

- I will ask Chief Nelson if he can give us a brief update on the current status of staffing and the program that was referenced by the member of the public for the mental health position.
- I will note that the social worker that the City has provided funding for through West County Community Services has been functioning in the largely that role, supported by the Police Department, and supported by other mental health professionals.
- While it doesn't have a fancy name, it is, in fact, happening in a lot of ways.

Chief Nelson discussed staffing and mental health comment.

- I will start with the staffing, where we are in active recruitment for several positions within the Police Department, including our dispatch center.
- We actually have an individual in the background right now.
- Then we are going to be conducting some interviews for some police officer candidates just to fill the vacancy we have there.
- We have job descriptions for the police positions as we speak.
- We will be moving forward with a recruitment to fill that position here soon.
- We are a few months from being what I would call out of the woods, or starting to get out of the woods, as far as staffing.
- I have to commend my staff for stepping up, and doing what is necessary to keep the ship sailing in order to provide the level of service that our community deserves and respects.
- In regard to the CAHOOTS program, there is multiple reasons why it may be the end of the year.
- I have had conversations with Chief at City of Santa Rosa
- Due to their proximity and some cost considerations, that might be the most effective means for us to be able to incorporate it by simply piggybacking, so to speak, on their program.
- However, the Chief just got the program running a few months ago.
- He said they needed some time to evaluate their cost, and we are looking at expanding the program to a point where we would like to be able to provide that resource, depending on what kind of agreement we could reach with them.
- You are correct, that we do have a social worker that works directly with our unhoused population right now, and works in conjunction with us.
- That has been a very effective means to provide service to individuals with mental health concerns within the community.
- Additionally, we do have access to what is known as a mobile support team, a Countywide program, which is funded by the County Health Department.
- They are mobile, as well, and service similar needs to the CAHOOTS program.
- The difference between that program and the CAHOOTS model is simply that the desire for not having the Police initially respond is the main benefit from the CAHOOTS-style model program.
- Unfortunately, with the mobile support team, they will generally only respond when we call them.
- We have to respond first. Then, they respond. They assess the situation and if at all possible, if there are no safety concerns, then we leave the scene and they take over.
- Not unlike the CAHOOTS program, the difference being that in some circumstances with the CAHOOTS model, there is no initial police response.
- However, if there is any safety concern with the CAHOOTS model, there will be a Police response initiative provided by the safety of the commission, that they respond.

City Manager/City Attorney McLaughlin commented as follows:

- We did look initially into potentially joining with Cotati but we could not afford it because we were not in proximity to the city that they were joining with their model.
- They were able to do, as I understood at the time, similar to what Chief Nelson was just referring to, joining with an adjacent city. We are not adjacent to the city that they were joining with.
- Therefore, we could not afford to go forward with Cotati but we did explore that early on with Chief Kilgore

**STATEMENTS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:** Conflicts of interest may arise in situations where a public official deliberating towards a decision, has an actual or potential financial interest in the matter before the Council. In accordance with state law, an actual conflict of interest is one that would be to the private financial benefit of a public official, a relative or a business with which the Councilmember is associated. A potential conflict of interest is one that could be to the private financial benefit of a Councilmember, a relative or a business with which the Councilmember is associated. A Councilmember must publicly announce potential and actual conflicts of interest, and, in the case of actual conflict of interest, must refrain from participating in debate on the issue or from voting on the issue and must remove themselves from the dais.

Councilmember Glass commented as follows:

- Stated she would be abstaining from the County Tourism item number 8.
- She runs an organization that is in a County building and that organization is looking at applying for money through that agency, and I think it would look really weird while voting on it, and also asking for money through their program.
- It is not a conflict of interest now but it could potentially be a conflict of interest.
- Also stated that she would be abstaining from item number 5 as the Center for the Arts is the recipient of some of the funds

**CONSENT CALENDAR:** The consent agenda consists of Items that are routine in nature and do not require additional discussion by the City Council or have been reviewed by the City Council previously. These Items may be approved by one motion without discussion unless a member of the City Council requests that the item be taken off the consent calendar. The Mayor will read the consent calendar Items; ask if a Councilmember wishes to remove one or more Items from the consent calendar; and then open public comment to the members of the public in attendance. At this time, a member of the public may speak for up to three minutes on the entire consent calendar and request at that time that an agenda item or Items be removed for discussion. If an item or Items are removed from the consent calendar, the item shall be placed at the end of the regular agenda Items unless otherwise determined by the Mayor or Mayor Pro Tern. Councilmembers may comment on Consent Calendar Items or ask for minor clarifications without the need for pulling the item for separate consideration. Items requiring deliberation should be pulled for separate consideration and shall be placed at the end of the regular agenda Items unless otherwise determined by the Mayor or Mayor Pro Tern.

Mayor Slayter read the consent calendar.

Mayor Slayter asked if any Councilmember wanted to remove a consent calendar item.

Councilmember Gurney requested Item Number 6 be removed.

Councilmember Rich commented on Item Number 5 as follows:

- My comment is, for the record, that in the future, we are going to have musical entertainment for an event like this, I would prefer to see us relying on our local youth.
- Just a general observation. I love the symphony. But, let's try to stay local.

Mayor Slayter opened for public comment on the consent calendar.

Public Comment:

Linda Berg commented as follows:

- I would like a little clarification on Item 7



- Items on the agenda are typically made by the corporations that profit off of them.
- That said, they profit off them because a lot of us, including you all City Councilmembers, often times do not know what you are voting on. Neither do i.
- Number seven: If you could tell me what this is. I am a little bit suspicious of anything Interactive Resources.
- Can you clarify, again, what this GHD is doing. What is Interactive Resources
- You know I am one of the people that are suffering greatly from being assaulted by electromagnetic radiation. Thank you.

Mayor Slayter responded to public comment as follows:

- To answer the question from the public, GHD is the City's engineering company that we contract with to provide engineering services.
- Under the auspices of the Engineering Department, the need for architectural services, professional design services has been noted.
- It is often times most expedient to prequalify companies with the required likenesses and expertise.
- That is what this item is.
- Interactive Resources is the name of the architecture firm that is being proposed for on call architectural design services.
- That is what the names of those two things are.
- City staff does not need a staff architect. The contract service delivery model is an excellent way for the city to go.
- Interactive Resources is the architectural firm's name. That is the name of the company that is the architectural firm.

Mayor Slayter called for a motion.

**MOTION:**

Vice Mayor Hinton moved and Councilmember Gurney seconded the motion to approve Consent Calendar Item(s) Number(s) 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7 and Additional Item Not Numbered (1).  
Item(s) Number(s) 5 and 6 were pulled from the agenda.

Mayor Slayter called for a roll call vote. City staff conducted a roll call vote.

**VOTE:**

Ayes: Councilmembers Glass, Gurney, Rich, Vice Mayor Hinton and Mayor Slayter  
Noes: None  
Absent: None  
Abstain: None

**MOTION:**

Mayor Slayter moved and Councilmember Gurney seconded the motion to approve Consent Calendar Item(s) Number(s) 5.

Mayor Slayter called for a roll call vote. City staff conducted a roll call vote.

**VOTE:**

Ayes: Councilmembers Gurney, Rich, Vice Mayor Hinton and Mayor Slayter  
Noes: None  
Absent: None

Abstain: Councilmember Glass

1. Approval of Minutes of July 19, 2022 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes (Responsible Department: City Administration)

City Council Action: Approved Minutes of July 19, 2022 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes

Minute Order Number: 2022-249

2. Approval of Minutes of July 28, 2022 City Council Special Meeting Closed Session (Responsible Department: City Administration)

City Council Action: Approved Minutes of July 28, 2022 City Council Special Meeting Closed Session

Minute Order Number: 2022-250

3. Approval of Minutes of August 2, 2022 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes (Responsible Department: City Administration)

City Council Action: Approved Minutes of August 2, 2022 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes

Minute Order Number: 2022-251

4. Receipt of Information Scheduled for Voting (By Laws Amendments) Scheduled for Vote at the League of California Cities Annual Business Meeting on Friday September 9, 2022 (Responsible Department: City Administration)

City Council Action: Received Information Scheduled for Voting (By Laws Amendments) Scheduled for Vote at the League of California Cities Annual Business Meeting on Friday September 9, 2022

Minute Order Number: 2022-252

5. Approval of Stipends for Sebastopol Community Sculpture Garden artists and Event sponsors to include Approval of Resolution for Budget Amendment of \$3500.00 (Responsible Department: Planning Department)

City Council Action: Approved Stipends for Sebastopol Community Sculpture Garden artists and Event sponsors to include Approval of Resolution for Budget Amendment of \$3500.00

Minute Order Number: 2022-253

Resolution Number: 6473-2022

- ~~6. Receipt and Approval of Planning Commission Workplan Update (Responsible Department: Planning Department)~~

7. Approval of Master Agreement for Architectural Services with Interactive Resources (Engineering/GHD)

City Council Action: Approved Master Agreement for Architectural Services with Interactive Resources

Minute Order Number: 2022-255

\* Cal OES Request for Assignment Regarding Kincaide Fire (Responsible Department: Director of Emergency Services)

City Council Action: Approved Cal OES Request for Assignment Regarding Kincaide Fire

Minute Order Number: 2022-256

**INFORMATIONAL ITEM/PRESENTATIONS:** (Please Note: Although informational/presentations Items are routinely informational in nature, some informational Items may contain request for actions such as support, direction to staff, follow up, or receipt of item based on the presentation/information provided.) **NONE**

**PUBLIC HEARING(s):** NONE

**REGULAR CALENDAR AGENDA ITEM (DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION):**

8. Discussion and Consideration of Resolution of Consent to modify the Sonoma County Tourism (SCT) Business Improvement Area (BIA) assessment to remove the \$350,000 revenue threshold for establishments entirely. All lodging operators in the BIA would pay 2% of their collected rents, including vacation rental income, as an assessment to promote responsible tourism and marketing efforts by Sonoma County Tourism, the County's Destination Stewardship Organization. (City Administration)

City Manager McLaughlin presented the agenda item recommending the City Council discuss and consider the Resolution of Consent to modify the Sonoma County Tourism (SCT) Business Improvement Area (BIA) assessment to remove the \$350,000 revenue threshold for establishments entirely. All lodging operators in the BIA would pay 2% of their collected rents, including vacation rental income, as an assessment to promote responsible tourism and marketing efforts by Sonoma County Tourism, the County's Destination Stewardship Organization.

Kelly Bass Siebel, Keo Hornbostel, and Claudia Vecchio, SCT, made a presentation to the City Council.

Mayor Slayter opened for questions.

Councilmember Rich commented as follows:

- Thank you for the presentation. I really appreciate all of the information.
- I had a couple of factual questions that you could help me with here.
- The first is, I would like to get a sense, if you could, of how much money is being collected from within the City of Sebastopol, currently, as a result of the ordinance, and what you have projected would be collected, what additional amount you have projected would be collected with this amendment.
- I know that the additional amount to be collected is uncertain, but you are projecting \$2 million, total.
- Clearly, you have done some data analysis.

SCT commented as follows:

- What is a little bit challenging is that we have been doing with Covid and mental recovery.
- The landscape of properties in the City of Sebastopol has changed during that time.
- In fiscal year 2021, Sebastopol submitted about \$49,000 in BIA to the County.
- That is the most recent and updated number that we have.
- We have a number that would be stronger but since we don't have a good grip on how many vacation rentals are available at this time, it is very hard for us to predict that.
- What we are projecting is based off of the amounts that have been done by our CFO as to what has been received from the County and incorporated area and everything the industry has done.
- We know there are far more vacation rentals in the area as well

Councilmember Rich commented if SCT had an don't have an allocation? It is just a \$2 million lump sum amount that you expect to collect from all of Sonoma County with this amendment.

SCT commented as follows:

- We have the methodology that our CFO put together to get all of this information and we are happy to share that
- That is all completely transparent and available.
- It was just that the Sebastopol numbers that we have are the only numbers we have at the moment that answers your question.
- But we have the whole methodology for how she came up with that overall number.

Councilmember Rich commented as follows:

- I was looking for a number, but I understand that there is not one just floating out there.

- My second question is looking at your explanation of the amount that would be collected over and above what has been collected in the past, you talked about the benefits being targeted to increasing marketing and some of the higher returns communities and attracting direct flight vacationers, that kind of thing.
- That confused me. I understand how that would be beneficial in Sonoma County.
- But, can you help me understand how that would be beneficial to our smaller vacation rentals because I am having trouble kind of connecting the \$2 million more collected in Sonoma County.
- How does that benefit the vacation rental owners? Those who are producing less than \$350,000 and not expected to pay in the past.

Claudia commented as follows:

- The BIA is an assessment. They would pass this along to guests.
- If they are doing their business the way this business was handled, they don't actually pay it, they just pass it along and then back to the city.
- We don't believe this is an additional burden on these folks because we know how compelling Sonoma County is, that an additional vacation rental is \$200 a night. It is an additional four dollars per night.
- It is a very low amount, and just gets passed right along to the guests, that is how that works.
- Interestingly, when we look at not only the domestic market, but when we look at the international market, the appeal of vacation rentals is really high.
- As we elevate those folks on our website, we have a link to great vacation rentals in Sonoma County.
- Not only those in the direct flight markets, but international market, which is coming back and going to be back by the end of 2023, and into 2024.
- Those folks are also super interested in vacation rentals.
- It is a part of our market that is very appealing for the markets that we are going after, and even those that are still on the horizon, if you will, as we look at international limitations.

Mayor Slayter commented as follows:

- I am curious how much interface Sonoma County Tourism has with local vitality measures and initiatives
- The City of Sebastopol has a community vitality program in place and Chamber of Commerce, and of course, everybody is familiar with all of the different Chambers around the County
- How much outreach is done to those entities to streamline, to not double up, to most effectively use the limited revenues?

SCT commented as follows:

- Kelly is our VP of community engagement. So she works most closely with the Chambers.
- But, we have worked very closely with Chambers throughout the County on various initiatives, whether it is the crisis matters, because we have worked very closely with the fires and certainly with the pandemic and making sure that our messaging across the County is consistent.
- When we talk about the vitality programs specifically, Kelly will have to address this. This is not something I necessarily work closely with.
- But, it is an extraordinary program because economic vitality is certainly what we are all about as well
- We worked with her team at the Chamber of Commerce again on a number of initiatives.

Kelly commented as follows:

- My role was created in 2019. You can imagine with the last couple of years have looked like with tourism in Sonoma County.
- We are just coming into this new phase of the pandemic.
- We have started to re-energize our community and give them tourism.

- We really want to be part of conversations that may be traditionally have not been on the table.

Mayor Slayter commented as follows:

- It feels like a swing and a miss for me, given the not insignificant amount of money that the City of Sebastopol has devoted to our community vitality.
- Not just the vitality, it is important for community vitality because we all live here, this is all our community.
- That is a partnership that needs to be watered to blossom a little bit.
- Did the low-end threshold ever come into our conversation, rather than removing it altogether?
- It seems like there is probably a huge gap between removal altogether, and \$350,000 as a threshold.
- It would seem that mid-sized operators could easily be captured and leave the small operators with what could be perceived as a slight advantage in the marketplace.
- Was that considered?

SCT commented as follows:

- It definitely was considered.
- We looked at a number of different benchmarks --I think the lowest, probably, was \$100,000.
- But when we looked at how these owners and management groups might handle that, it leaves a lot of room for gaming the system.
- You could be on Airbnb, you could be on your own channel. There were a lot of ways you could figure that.
- You could play this game so that you have the opportunity to shift money around so that you never reach the \$350,000 threshold.
- We hope nobody does that, because there are great benefits for being a part of this marketing initiative that is Sonoma County Tourism.
- But, we did see that there was some opportunity for there to be some people who would play this a little bit differently than we hoped they would.
- At the end of the day the removal of the threshold is the greatest benefit for everybody.
- It really does allow us to do it in the purest, and most leveling the playing field way.

Mayor Slayter commented as follows:

- Thank you for your explanation.
- Another question is, large-scale beneficiaries of this type of marketing who are not paying into the system.
- There are individual business districts throughout the County, there are individual developments, certainly within the City of Sebastopol, but also in the County
- They are not lodging institutions, they do not offer lodging, so they are not paying into it. But they receive a tremendous financial benefit.
- Has there been conversations about ways to capture none of your new revenue from those businesses?

SCT commented as follows:

- There has, indeed a variety of marketing partnership opportunities so that there is some financial incentive for those folks to be part of an overall marketing piece.
- That would include benefits such as general marketing partnership, and a higher search option on the website, or more opportunities to get in front of people.
- But, that marketing partnership piece is sort of next in line here. Just in how we figure out the overall funding for Sonoma County Tourism.

- But, you are 100% right. We have BIAs, but they are tourism improvement districts.
- They are out in neighboring areas, but are those specific things? There are restaurant districts, retail districts, that do pay a portion of their revenue but we haven't developed that yet in Sonoma County.
- We are definitely looking at that, but this was kind of the first effort of this revision of all of this.
- Then those other types of partnerships, or other types of districts, potentially, might come up.
- I can tell you that those types of districts, like a restaurant district, has been looked at before.
- It really is finding the right way to do that in Sonoma County in 2022 and 2023.
- Most definitely looking at, but we really want to get this one done, first.

Mayor Slayter commented as follows:

- Are there any recipients directly of funds from Sonoma County Tourism within the County?
- Or, is all of the revenue spent on marketing in Sonoma County, and other areas

SCT commented as follows:

- The recipients of funding, that is not part of our current structure.
- If we are talking about other kinds of funds that go out specifically to entities through their business, to operate their business, we don't have that built into our structure at the moment.
- A couple of years ago, the Board of Supervisors required that we spend \$300,000 a year, and we went out with community investment funds.
- But, that program has since gone away, and that is not currently part of our structure.
- We do event sponsorships. It would have to go through our board to be approved by the Board of Supervisors.
- We have done event sponsorships for entities like Artisan Cheese, and Williams Sonoma, and other things that are really brand aligned.
- So those dollars are available but to go out to an individual business, that really isn't built in at the moment.
- Those are actually TOT dollars that are spent there, not BIA dollars, which is what we are talking about today.

Mayor Slayter commented you don't have an estimate of how much additional revenue this would bring in or do you?

SCT commented as follows:

- Countywide, we do. About \$2.1 million to \$2.3 million is the latest revenue estimate.
- We don't know specifically for the City of Sebastopol, the contributions for that.

Vice Mayor Hinton commented as follows:

- It sounded like the Board of Supervisors is asking you to come out to all the cities and get a buy-in before they take it up?
- Based on that, I am curious who has moved forward with removing the threshold?
- Who have you already got on your list?

SCT commented as follows:

- We are meeting with all of the Councils in the next three weeks but you are stop number one.
- We have met with numerous City Councilmembers individually, and also met with other City Managers.
- It is an action item on the Council Agendas.

Vice Mayor Hinton commented I would suspect that we are the smallest contributor with one hotel in town, correct?

SCT commented contributors would be the members of the BIA that currently has no customer lodging.

Mayor Slayter commented I assume the answer is yes but I just want to confirm that our one hotel owner is of course in favor of this proposal, correct?

SCT commented yes and he actually is part of the committee as well as on the Board and approved it.

Councilmember Gurney commented as follows:

- I just have a general question going back to going back to our economic vitality team here.
- I am just wondering what impact our economic vitality has on the message that you use for marketing.
- For instance, our Relaunch community uses its own words, the Chamber of Commerce has a global Local flavor, local vision, that slogan.
- How do we influence the message you put out in how you characterize Sebastopol in your overall marketing of the County?

SCT commented as follows:

- From a Sonoma County standpoint, we have an overarching arm of Life Opens Up
- We believe this really conveys the spirit and the vibe of Sonoma County.
- It sort of has that overarching message and then we draw upon the messaging of our partner businesses
- With the messaging that you have coming out of Sebastopol, we are taking very good care of those messages, trying to ensure that they are given the respect and the attention that they deserve.
- It comes up to the content that we deliver through that.
- I think if you were to go on through our website now, and look at a piece that we just did it is that spirit of Sebastopol, which is different from the other municipalities.
- The neighborhoods program that we are going to do, we are going to do that at an even more amplified level.
- That will really come down to telling the stories of each of these places, for your people, through folks in Sebastopol who have been there, and love it, and doing great things with the community that great visitors want to know because they want to learn this sense of place that is really important for visitors. Whether that is Denver, or Dubai, they want to come into Sonoma County, and learn what makes them tick.
- That is when these news messages become so critical, and really create that wonderful sense of place.
- Always a work in progress. We are not there.
- But I really hope, as you see the kinds of stories that are showcased, that you see that we are respectful, and celebrate what is best to have.

Councilmember Gurney commented as follows:

- I want to make sure that I understand
- In terms of that process, do we rely on your team to get in touch with our team?
- Do we have a different representative?

SCT commented as follows:

- It happens in a number of ways. There are a lot of different inputs into that.

- Yes, we were always watching for Sebastopol messages. We have a whole administrative side of our website and we convey that out to our partners.
- Give us the information, give us what is happening, let us know what is going on, input your information into our administrative side of our website.
- That is when the journalists are coming in. Everybody knows that what we call a hospitality pod is available there, and they can come in and input information. But, we always get those letters and the press releases, so we always know what is going on.
- It is a mutual kind of sharing situation.
- There are no mechanics, necessarily. It is a lot of things. Super passionate about what each of us are doing, and making sure we stay in touch with you together.
- One of the things we do, we have a lot of hospitality stars. So everybody from our marketing team to really understand what is happening for those businesses. And you don't get an opportunity. And I think last week or the week of four we had the meeting with businesses and really heard what is the latest and greatest, what is the hot button issue, what are they working on. And that was a better event space for Sebastopol to come together.

Councilmember Rich commented as follows:

- I understand you have a process there, but you are coming to the City of Sebastopol and we, predictably, are trying to determine what benefits our City gets from the money that is already being collected, and our expressing concern about, and curiosity about the request for additional funds.
- What I didn't hear was an explanation as to why, with those processes in place, that you detail for us, the review of our newsletters made aware as to what is going on in our town, there is apparently no connection that is currently in place between the County Tourism board, you, and our Relaunch efforts here, in Sebastopol.
- Relaunch has been an effort that has been in place to attract more attention to City of Sebastopol, and we are hearing that there is apparently no connection between your group and the Relaunch program.
- I think you have answered the question. But I think the answer is, no, there is no existing connection, but there is a process in place. Am I correct?

SCT commented as follows:

- You are correct. There is most definitely a process in place.
- Now that we are aware of it, we will get on that.

Councilmember Rich commented as follows:

- Thank you for clarifying that.
- My additional question is whether or not you have reached out to vacation rental owners to get their input on this plan, to inform them of this plan, and whether, as a result of that effort, or in any other way, you have a sense of whether they are receptive to this proposal ask

SCT commented as follows:

- We have a number of the vacation rental companies that we work with, and they manage vacation rentals. They are certainly well aware of what we are doing.
- There will be an enormous communication for this that comes. That comes next.
- The vacation rental communication, all by mail, will take place here in the next couple of weeks.
- There is definitely a process to make sure that everybody knows about this.



- Then what happens with the BIA on October 4th, this starts at the County level. With the BIA, there is a time when this will be an open meeting, the Board will open up this ordinance, this revision of the ordinance.
- Then there is a time span of no less than 15 days, that anyone impacted by this ordinance can suspend.
- There is not a vote for people to say, I want to be a part of this. There is a dissent.
- That happens with all programs, like BIA
- At the end of that, then, if there is not 61% or more of the revenue payers providing dissent to the BIA revision, it will become enacted at yet another public meeting.
- There is this letter of consent that comes through the municipality.
- It comes into the County, the County opens up this time period. There is an extension time period. Then, the County closes it.
- That is kind of that process and how that happens and how, then, we communicate with, which has stringently started already, and how then, those potential participants in this program have a chance to provide input.

Councilmember Rich commented have you gotten any input from vacation rental owners about their perspective on this proposal?

SCT commented as follows:

- We have. So far, so good. So far, it is a good thing.
- People recognize that additional marketing will do them good.
- We wouldn't continue along this process if we had a lot of naysayers. We want people to be happy.
- We want this to be a good thing, and we want people to benefit from the additional marketing dollars.
- The response has been favorable.

Councilmember Rich commented as follows:

- I really appreciate that.
- If the Municipal City Council does not support the amendment as you have requested we support it, what are the consequences for the amendment and for your process?

SCT commented as follows:

- They are great.
- The County Board of Supervisors wants to know that those cities are participating in this in the past, are continuing to participate in this.
- If it is shown that cities don't agree with this, want to continue on with the process, it would likely hold any proposed changes.

Mayor Slayter opened for public comment.

Kyle Falbo commented as follows:

- These agenda items really fascinate me with comments.
- Two glaring holes in this conversation so far.
- First, it was mentioned the owner of the Fairfield Inn, but no conversations in the fact that the Fairfield Inn is currently for sale.
- Surprising to hear that, and why is it that that is not a part of the conversation?
- Perhaps maybe conclusions as to why that hotel might be for sale, as it relates to tourism, and lodging, with no real progress on any new hotels in Sebastopol, and the loss of the hotel in the last five years.

- Secondly, Sebastopol has a moratorium on vacation rentals. Surprisingly, no conversation related to that has come up so far.
- How does this change essentially the taxation on vacation rentals?
- How does this engage with our kind of take on vacation rentals, in Sebastopol?
- Specifically, how it relates to housing, and the cost of housing within Sebastopol, specifically?
- It would be my hope that maybe that would be a part of the conversation.
- We made reference to growth, it has not been clear to me that Sebastopol has the increases
- I would love to hear what they have done in that regard.
- I would like to know, in terms of their outreach, in terms of diversity, inclusivity, of people of different economic classes, it is not clear from the materials that I have seen, that there is an actual outreach to deferent graphics.
- Finally, I would like to know what the operating overhead of administered costs are in terms of the revenue.
- That would be great to also hear from this.

Rick Coates commented as follows:

- I'm Executive Director of Eco Ring which supports most ecotourism and travel.
- We definitely support the shift of purpose on Sonoma County Tourism to the destination stewardship position.
- I would hope that revenues, tax revenues that are provided by this program to the City of Sebastopol could be used for leverage in such things as bicycle pathways, and even, perhaps, study the feasibility of a rail connection from Sebastopol to smart.
- If this were to happen I think it would go a long way to actualizing destination stewardship.
- The pathways would help citizens as well as tourists as well as the rail connection
- We are in favor of this change. Thank you.

Linda Collins commented as follows:

- I briefly wanted to mention a couple of things regarding the Sonoma County Tourism
- I have the pleasure of meeting Ms. Kelly in the last couple of weeks.
- We had a lengthy discussion about what this involves.
- We have been trying to figure out how we can work well with the Airbnb's
- This is a great idea to move forward.
- One of the participants in our forum here mentioned the homeless or unsheltered.
- I do not believe that this is something that falls under Sonoma County Tourism, although they are aware of it.
- As far as them helping out or having others structured items, just so you are aware, at the beginning of the holiday season, we have a box, a very large box that we collected women's personal items for.
- We had a great outpouring of support for that.
- They came and picked it up and distributed it. So while it is not really under their umbrella
- I have been very blessed in the last few years of working with Claudia.
- When she came on board, no Kelly, they are very wonderful groups, great resources.
- I believe that this amendment ordinance should move forward. Thank you.

Linda Berg commented as follows:

- Somebody there made the comment that they know what is going on with our do- gooder effort to house the homeless here

- It has allowed me to meet a lot of really interesting people
- I have learned a lot about the prison system and other things.
- We have five vacancies in the marketplace, immediately across the street from me.
- There were not five of them before there was the village.
- Aside from that, we are way understaffed because of the utilization of our wonderful Police Departments, which should have been held up as one of the great attractions of this County.
- When they were contracted with the sheriff's department, things escalate rather than simply de-escalate things.
- We have a traffic mess here that was created by our past planning director who also did a traffic study enabling it to be built.
- Sonoma County has a multi-hundred million dollar cancer treatment center near the airport,
- We have, according to what I've read, we have almost 5% of the entire population of Sonoma County diagnosed with cancer every year, and there are five or six particular kinds of cancer that we have

Mayor Slayter responded to public comment as follows:

Director Svanstrom commented as follows on vacation rentals:

- We have two different categories for posted rentals which we do allow.
- We have no moratorium on that. They are allowed.
- We issued four or five permits for those this year already.
- We have about 30 or so of those in town. And then we have about 18 or so not hosted rentals.
- We do utilize a monitoring company to make sure we have permits.
- We are currently working on an update to that ordinance.

SCT commented as follows:

- We have a concerted effort to have averaged a variety of demographics.
- I think if you look at our website right now, you would see that they are very interested in showcasing Sonoma County as a place that welcomes everyone.
- It is a place that is inclusive, and it is a place that is not meant to be elitist.
- This is real people enjoying an extraordinary destination. It is very much a part of what we do.
- We adopted diversity, equity, and inclusion statements this past year.
- It talks about how we are going to approach that internally as well as through our marketing efforts.
- Then how we will eventually work to help our partners also adopt a similar type of approach.
- So this marketing is aspirational, it always will be.
- We very definitely showcase Sonoma County in a way that reaches many demographics.
- We are a place that has lodging properties at a number of different levels.
- So it is important that we are attracting people here who will be going to all levels of lodging properties.
- If you look at the language we use around inclusivity with Sonoma County.
- It is very definitely an effort we are concertedly working towards.

Mayor Slayter commented as follows:

- There was a question but overhead costs.
- Prior to this meeting this evening, my preparation for this, I tend to find a budget and learn more about the nuts and bolts, behind the curtain of the organization.
- SCT is opaque. Can you describe your overhead costs are?

SCT commented as follows:

- Our reports are available to anyone who wants to see them.
- If you look at the administration and operational side of things the efforts that go towards marketing, we are under 30%.
- If you look at the straight and operational costs of the overall budget. 56% goes into marketing, and the development is about 20%.
- Outreach gets a little less than 20%.
- The Board of Supervisors pretty much mandated to the organization that we will not accept anything over 30% for administration costs.
- We want the bulk of the money going back to marketing and other public relations efforts.
- That has been the case since day one.

City Council Discussion and/or Deliberations:

Councilmember Rich commented as follows:

- I appreciate all of the information that has been shared.
- I am particularly reassured to hear that the feedback from vacation rental owners has been positive
- I think we can trust in the efforts of the group that is speaking here today to do that outreach.
- I am also reassured in an important way for me by the encouragement of Linda Collins, our Chamber president, that we support this effort. That is very meaningful to me.
- I'm not concerned about the Fairfield Inn being on the market. It is still operational. It is still taking in guests.
- My instinct, at the moment, is to support the amount that has been requested.

Vice Mayor Hinton commented as follows:

- I will start out with many people know, I do not hide it, I am licensed, permitted, and have an Airbnb within my own home. A one bedroom that I host out of County visitors.
- So I would be impacted by this change personally. This additional expense would be passed along to my guests as my other taxes are and collected for me, I suspect.
- With that said, I would say that I think that we should all contribute to improving our economy and the Tourism Bureau.
- I think they have done a really good job.
- I'm confident that they will really work hard to make sure that they connect with our vitality team to keep Sebastopol on the map.
- Not just the Barlow, although it has been an amazing destination for our city, but also everything that makes Sebastopol unique.
- I do recall that those community investment funds, we used to get a small part of that money, I believe, to help, because we are the last real destination before people had out to Bodega Bay or Russian River
- I would just add, the Tourism Bureau does get this passed and does get another \$2 million in their budget I would like to see some of that coming back to the smaller communities like ours, with some sort of reinvestment.
- Whether that is whether that is in brochures, or some support to manning Chambers
- I think it used to man our Saturday Chamber office, that is what those funds were used for.
- I will support tonight.
- I do not think passing this along to our visitors is going to hurt us. It can only help us to work on adding visibility to our community.

Councilmember Gurney commented as follows:

- We are so unique. I was get a little nervous when we are lumped into that big umbrella of all of Sonoma County.
- I think Claudia and others this evening have addressed that issue. The concept of connecting with our people and getting our message, so that the uniqueness will come through.
- The other concern is that we are so small, I feel like we are overlooked in the big scheme of things.
- A small town with a small budget and a small population.
- A big traffic problem. I think we have been somewhat reassured that we are a member city, if that is the right way to describe it.
- We are one of the cities who has joined and is being asked to continue. I think we can continue that.
- Linda Collins of the Chamber, I will go with faith with her experience and judgment.
- So it has my support, without a lot of excitement, but support.

Mayor Slayter commented as follows:

- If Councilmember Gurney's support is registering lukewarm on the thermometer, mine is below that.
- I need to take the long view on this one that includes looking in the rearview mirror.
- I think back to Measure B, which was on the March 2021 ballot, and that was the proposed TOT increase in West County to support local firefighters, local fire agencies and County schools, and education.
- That measure did not succeed. It was a special tax consulate needed 2/3+1. So it did not reach that level.
- An awful lot of the opposition, honestly, came from the tourism industry.
- I think that if we are not willing to come as a society and community to support our own agencies, our own fire and schools, I am not sure we need to spend that, basically what is within spitting distance of the same amount of money on promoting this area to tourists coming in from out of the area.
- Now I know that the economy is circular, and they will import, I get all that.
- But I think there are too many unanswered questions for me.
- Lack of nuance in this, it just does not feel like it is particularly well thought out in a broad sense and a community-wide sense.
- That is where I am on this.
- A supportive vote on my part, what we had before, what we have before us is this resolution. We cannot change the resolution. It is not our resolution.

Councilmember Gurney commented we can make known whether our concerns are, and we can ask for certain issues to be addressed in the future work. We could request that.

Mayor Slayter commented as follows:

- A request, straight off the bat come off the top of my head would be that I mentioned eight circular economy just a minute ago.
- It is the same thing with our Relaunch initiative and the lack of awareness of what we are doing here locally.
- The part of the Sonoma County Tourism that seems like a pretty basic thing to do a little research about before you come and ask us to do this.

Councilmember Rich commented as follows:

- It would be useful for me to get a staff's perspective on this topic.
- Do you have any direction for us?
- The question that I had is if we do not support this amendment, do you have any concerns about that you would like to share with us.
- By contrast, do you see benefits to supporting this amendment that perhaps we are not seeing here?

City staff commented as follows:

- Would only repeat that the support of the Chamber and so forth
- I think when we met with tourism folks, we had Kirk Lok on the meeting, our local hotel owner who was on the board. He was very supportive.
- I heard that this would be a useful effort that would benefit Sebastopol in the long run.
- I do agree that outreach in connection with the Relaunch efforts would be a very good idea, and useful to both sides in the future.
- Tourism impacts both ways. It brings a positive impact, but also impact our public services, such as firefighting, ambulance services, and so forth. We needed the broader view of the impacts the tourism brings.
- The support for the TOT measure the Mayor referenced I think is a good comment on that.
- Beyond that, I do not have anything to add from a staff's point of view.

Vice Mayor Hinton commented as follows:

- I think that the efforts with our Relaunch, that effort roles both ways.
- We have had vitality, and we have put money, serious money against that.
- Both with the first organization that was run by Craig Litwin who had a team
- But for our new contract, I think it is a huge error on our side as well, that they have not reached out to the Tourism Bureau.
- I feel bad for the people in the room that, yes, they could have done some more research or learned about our vitality team, but our vitality team should be reaching out as well.
- So I have to defend that a little bit. I do not think that one side bears all the burden.
- I go back to, really, our driver, which was the Chamber and Linda.
- Her recommendation goes a long way with me.

Councilmember Rich commented as follows:

- Discussed possible conditions. Procedurally at what point do we discuss those? Is that now or after?
- My suggestion would be that we consider the specific conditions that the Mayor feels is responsive to his concerns
- What conditions would make this a palatable but vote for you?

Mayor Slayter commented as follows:

- I think that a higher threshold above zero should be in place.
- What that is, I do not know, because they do not have that data in front of me.
- I think that the ability of Sonoma County Tourism to market Sonoma County, clearly, it has been pretty successful.
- We have a lot of visitors here. I do not know what that number would be. So a non-0 threshold would be one.
- Another request would be that a plan be put in place prior to the ordinance being opened up and changed, potentially, would be to capture revenue from those who are most benefiting from it. From the programs. It is a shell game here.
- It just does not sit well with me that private businesses are able to benefit from these tourism dollars in a way that is not in any way reciprocal.
- I do not know how we can put that in there tonight. It is not our ordinance.

**MOTION:**

Vice Mayor Hinton moved and Councilmember Rich seconded the motion to approve Resolution of Consent to modify the Sonoma County Tourism (SCT) Business Improvement Area (BIA) assessment to remove the \$350,000 revenue threshold for establishments entirely. All lodging operators in the BIA would pay 2% of their collected rents, including vacation rental income, as an assessment to promote responsible tourism and marketing efforts by Sonoma County Tourism, the County’s Destination Stewardship Organization.

Council Discussion:

Councilmember Gurney commented as follows:

- I am just wondering, procedurally, is there a way that we could explore the concerns that the Mayor has represented and expressed tonight? A number of those questions, and have it returned in a later agenda?
- It has to go to the board of supervisors, I think the date is October 4th.
- I am wondering if the tourism folks who are here tonight who will work on this more in order to satisfy our concerns, I do not know if that is possible if opening it would allow this further discussion.

Mayor Slayter commented as follows:

- We have agenda review tomorrow. With our August break, I think we are a little behind the 8 ball. I do not have that in front of me as far as the next agenda goes.
- But the October date that this would be to go before the board, honestly, I do not know how we could squeeze it in

Vice Mayor Hinton commented as follows:

- I want to add one mark comment here.
- I really think this is about pulling in dollars from the vacation rentals that have not been paying it.
- I heard what was said about lower threshold. I agree with that.
- I have a little tiny room in my house, I make under \$10,000 a year.
- You know, it seems like maybe I would have an advantage if I do not collect it and remit it.
- But this is really about, I think, a County-wide effort to pull in money and level the playing field with the Airbnb and vacation rentals.
- That is why I want to refer to the item tonight. I just want to remind Council, that is the way that I see it.
- I just think that everybody should pay their fair share. I just want to make that known.

Mayor Slayter called for a roll call vote. City staff conducted a roll call vote.

VOTE:

Ayes: Councilmembers Gurney, Rich, and Vice Mayor Hinton

Noes: Mayor Slayter

Absent: None

Abstain: Councilmember Glass

City Council Action: Approved Resolution of Consent to modify the Sonoma County Tourism (SCT) Business Improvement Area (BIA) assessment to remove the \$350,000 revenue threshold for establishments entirely. All lodging operators in the BIA would pay 2% of their collected rents, including vacation rental income, as an assessment to promote responsible tourism and marketing efforts by Sonoma County Tourism, the County’s Destination Stewardship Organization.

Minute Order Number: 2022-258

Resolution Number: 6474-2022

Mayor Slayter called for a break at 8:34 pm and reconvened the meeting at 8:44 pm.

Councilmember Glass returned to the meeting.

Vice Mayor Hinton commented as follows:

- I would like to address the Council and the public. I did hear a member of the public question my conflict of interest in my vote on the last item.
- I did not bring up a conflict, I do not believe I have a conflict.
- I have been fully transparent that I operate within my own home, a room for Airbnb.
- In fact, I hope to pass our City ordinance to collect TOT taxes when I was first elected in 2017.
- But I would like to hear the City Manager weigh in on this as well at this time.

City Manager/Attorney McLaughlin commented as follows:

- Vice Mayor Hinton situation is not unique. It is shared by numerous others.
- So there is an exception in the conflict of interest laws.
- For example, a common example allows Councilmembers to vote on such matters as raising water rates, even though they themselves will pay the increased water rate.
- That is called the public general exception.
- It simply references a situation where the Councilmembers are in a situation where the situation is not unique in a shared by members of the community.
- I do not think that Vice Mayor has a conflict of interest.

Mayor Slayter commented as follows:

- As somebody who from time to time is to present them at for a City board, and understand that there are those types of allowances within the Brown Act.
- Practitioners can those types of things but there are exceptions.
- It is not a hard and fast rule.
- Thank you both for clarifying that. Hopefully that answered the questions that were raised by the members of the public.

Vice Mayor Hinton commented as follows:

- I absolutely have no financial benefit.
- To charge people that stay in my Airbnb the extra little percentage, that would go to the Tourism Bureau.
- No financial benefit at all.

9. Discussion and Consideration of Submittal of City Response to Sonoma County Grand Jury Report (Responsible Department: Planning/City Administration)

Under California Penal Code Section 933(c), a response to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court regarding the Civil Grand Jury's Report is required 90 days after the submission of the Civil Grand Jury's final report. No later than 90 days after the grand jury submits a final report on the operations of any public agency subject to its reviewing authority, the governing body of the public agency shall comment to the presiding judge of the superior court on the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under the control of the governing body.

Grand Jury Final Reports:

- i. Affordable Housing: Monitoring and Compliance
- ii. Affordable Housing: Past, Present and Future



Planning Director Svanstrom presented the agenda item recommending the City Council discuss and consider the Submittal of City Response to Sonoma County Grand Jury Report.

Mayor Slayter opened for questions.

Mayor Slayter commented have you seen other cities responses?

Director Svanstrom commented as follows:

- I have had two meetings before, as we were developing this.
- Many of them had very similar thoughts about this.

Mayor Slayter commented I would think that the entitled cities would have a different response to a number of these items, versus the smaller cities that are not in that category.

Councilmember Rich commented as follows:

- That is all very interesting.
- The question I have is in regard to the Sonoma County housing land trust. Can you expand on that?
- I thought that we had units within Sebastopol already that are owned or controlled by Sonoma County Housing Land Trust

Director Svanstrom commented as follows:

- We do not. I have been working with them since I got here.
- We have some that are deed restricted.
- The Housing Land Trust does not deal with rent. It is not in their model.

Councilmember Rich commented is there an agreement or expectation that the point of which when those units are placed in the market, they will be owned in perpetuity by Sonoma County Housing Land Trust?

Director Svanstrom commented as follows:

- Yes. What happens then is the value, the cost will be evaluated for the land.
- The land is actually for those units. The land is deeded to the city because the deed restriction is in agreement with the Land Trust
- Discussed the process

Councilmember Rich commented and it ensures a variable that the individual, the new purchaser qualifies ?

Director Svanstrom commented as follows:

- The Housing Land Trust verifies the seller and can often find a buyer.
- They help educate what it all means as part of their mantra.

Councilmember Glass commented it would appear to me that we were actually given a table that we put in there that actually look like we are on track with our numbers.

Director Svanstrom commented that hat is correct. We have, for instance, very low 22.

Councilmember Glass commented as follows:

- I am just wanting to find that out for the public, but also to say that we exceeded our numbers in the last one also.
- In terms of low and very low. So we are on track. I did not see anything in the report that said this was on track.

Director Svanstrom commented as follows:

- I do not think they commented on the specific numbers.
- The finding which we disagree with pertains to the need for affordable housing.
- Discussed RHNA

Councilmember Glass commented as follows:

- It seems to me that we are on track.
- We exceeded during the last planning cycle and we are on track and will likely exceed our allocation of the current cycle.

Director Svanstrom commented as follows:

- We can say that we have. As of December, we had 123 unit.
- We are only required to do 120. We are already three over.

Councilmember Glass commented as follows:

- My question is, in my response, should we be a little more assertive?
- We exceeded last time, and we already have exceeded this time. Rather than responding to something that sounds negative, to me.

Director Svanstrom commented I would be happy to disagree with the finding.

Councilmember Glass commented as follows:

- It seemed to me the framing was a little odd.
- I am actually rather stunned to find out that our monitoring contract lapsed in 2017, or something like that.
- I do remember having some discussions having the Land Trust monitor our activities, because they have expertise. Somehow, that did not move forward.
- But now, I am finding out our contract lapsed.
- Did we vote to lapse that contract? Did we vote to lapse that?

Director Svanstrom commented as follows:

- I do not believe there was a City Council vote.
- They did acknowledge that it had lapsed and they were working on a huge turnover in staff.
- They have done a really good job
- I did talk with the executive director about some potential monitoring and will review that as an option.
- It is generally about \$1000 per year.

Councilmember Glass commented as follows:

- I guess what I am registering is my surprised and unhappiness that a contract like this was lapsed.
- Did we notice a contract expiring? Did we notice that we were no longer monitoring that?
- The fact that I did not know that disturbs me.
- Why did it lapse? What happened?

- It is something we should've been paying attention to.

Director Svanstrom stated it may be due to COVID.

Councilmember Gurney commented as follows:

- I think all of us understand that there was a tremendous amount of staff overturning
- I think your response is very well written. It is simple, direct, factual. It is really clean.
- There is not a necessary material in there. You just are saying what we can say.
- I am just checking with you, is there anything else that you wish you had not said that you think you could say that is a positive for us?

Director Svanstrom commented as follows:

- Questions about homelessness. The Council has done a lot there with the funding and other items
- If you do not have affordable housing, people can fall into homelessness.

Councilmember Gurney commented as follows:

- You may want to brag about those things, but I think the point is to answer the inquiry to give them just the hard crunch on it, what we have to say.
- I thought you did that. Especially since it was your first time answering.

Mayor Slayter opened for public comment.

Kyle Falbo commented as follows:

- I too am disturbed that the contract in the City had lapsed without any sort of notice or oversight by our Council regarding this.
- This speaks to what another member earlier said tonight.
- The contract service model that suits our small world community so well.
- Regularly, I have criticized this body for its continued reliance on contract services for work that could very well be done by City employees.
- The choice to outsource this type of work has caused, for example, a budgeting increase of 150% over the two year period.
- Once again, it is not without any sort of downside that can come along with it.
- I think is important to regularly recognize that our reliance on contracts is so heavy.
- Without any sort of oversight, for that matter, like we see again tonight.

Linda Berg commented as follows:

- I was going to a different direction. But Kyle brought up some very good points.
- I would like to also mention this, this Council is so bureaucratic.
- They need to relax and listen to us.
- We have got coming up now, I guess were trying to get rid of a wonderful fire department, who I understand they want to preserve their independence, and I want them to do whatever they want.
- But anyway, you've gone out and hired some consultant. They will probably come back with options. This option is costing thousands of thousands of dollars, I am sure.
- The obvious and easy thing to do is go who knows more about this than anybody, since he is, after all, the fire chief.
- Ask him what he thinks need to be done.

Mayor Slayter interjected and commented the City is talking about the response to the grand jury and this item is not discussing the fire department.

Linda Berg commented as follows:

- The first time I opened up the grand jury report and look at the composition there, staring me in the face is none other than on former planning director who is fully responsible for the traffic mess that we have today
- I take responsibility for some of that, because I knew the shenanigans.
- I was the one listing to other complaint about him. I did not speak up vehemently.
- So he just got away with that. He continued to screw us in the public for fun and buffets from business.
- He is making money off of this for himself and his business.

City Council Discussion and/or Deliberations:

Mayor Slayter commented as follows:

- I that we had one suggestion to change slightly disagree to disagree.
- Affordable housing, past, present, and figure acquisitions.
- f 3. Soma County and its nine cities will officially recognize the needs for affordable housing. But not all have fully endorsed the housing needs or met earlier goals?
- Change it from partially discrete to disagree.
- It was a disagree. If we could tout our successes, this might be a good place to insert our successes.

Councilmember Glass commented as follows:

- At least insert our last planning cycle numbers in our last cycle are on track
- We have incremented policies with the numbers.
- Therefore, we have complied in the last 16 years.

**MOTION:**

Mayor Slayter moved and Councilmember Rich seconded the motion to approve Submittal of City Response to Sonoma County Grand Jury Report as amended:

- Affordable Housing Past Present and Future Recommendations
- F3
- Disagree
- Insert successes of the City (last Planning Cycle RHNA numbers and current RHNA numbers)
- Complied in last 16 years

Mayor Slayter called for a roll call vote. City staff conducted a roll call vote.

**VOTE:**

Ayes: Councilmembers Glass, Gurney, Rich, Vice Mayor Hinton and Mayor Slayter  
Noes: None  
Absent: None  
Abstain: None

**City Council Action: Approved Submittal of City Response to Sonoma County Grand Jury Report as amended:**

- Affordable Housing Past Present and Future Recommendations
- F3
- Disagree
- Insert successes of the City (last Planning Cycle RHNA numbers and current RHNA numbers)
- Complied in last 16 years

Minute Order Number: 2022-258  
Resolution Number: 6475-2022

Councilmember Gurney departed the meeting at 9:30 pm.

9. Calder Creek Naturalization Final presentation, consideration of approval of concept and authorize work with California Urban Stream Preservation (CUSP) on grant applications (Responsible Department: Planning Dept)

Planning Director Svanstrom presented the agenda item recommending the City Council discuss and consider approval of concept and authorize work with California Urban Stream Preservation (CUSP) on grant applications.

The following made a presentation: Jessica Hall and Ann Riley.

Mayor Slayter opened for questions.

Councilmember Rich commented as follows:

- I want to make sure that I understand clearly what the expectation here is, in terms of phase two and phase three.
- I understand that is conceptual. But it is all new to me.
- I have many, many questions related to phase two and phase three.
- My first question is, are we being expected to give any input or make any decisions regarding phase two and three? What was the next step?
- My hope is that we are not being expected to give input on phase two and three, this is just a conceptual presentation.
- We will have opportunity later on to ask questions.
- Am I correct about that? Or is more expected of us?

Director Svanstrom commented as follows:

- We are requesting initial thoughts and authorizing us to pursue the next step for this which is to do a little bit more development and a lot more outreach.
- I believe we have been noticing any staffing reports that authorizing it to continue to work on it would get the portion of that to about 35%.

The consultant commented as follows:

- Applying for a new grant for the actual bill.
- We're actually pushing for 85% of the park naturalization.

Councilmember Rich commented as follows:

- My second question is, why was there nothing at the moment that addresses the upstream section of Calder Creek, which would be towards jewel and Leland ?
- Certainly within city limits. Was there any plans? Why was that not focused on here?

Director Svanstrom commented as follows:

- I think the reason it was not focused is it was always private ownership.
- One thing we talked about was getting the creek ordinance done

Councilmember Rich commented as follows:

- It sounds like it is in the process. The people are aware of it. It is at a point where it can be called an expansion.
- Can you tell us in this new plan which basis would be reduced in terms of their size? Does the event space that we currently have, does the plan that we are looking at for the Ives park section leave us with an equal gathering space for concerts or fundraisers?
- A greater gathering space or a smaller gathering space?

The consultant commented as follows:

- I did not compare square footage directly, but I would say that it is at least equal in size.
- Might possibly be larger. Really because of how we are configuring the space.
- Also, the playground is the same square footage. It is a different shape, but it is the same footage.
- There were two event spaces in the original plan, and I think part of it is trying to take advantage of it being reduced to the one. I do think that the space is larger. In some ways it would not be an uninterrupted amphitheater but it would be a larger gathering space.

Councilmember Glass commented as follows:

- I have a question about the intersection. Actually when you are sitting on a Council and you get these interrupted glimpses of a project, you kind of lose the thread sometimes.
- But I'm sure that you all are doing with this on a very regular basis. So the progression of the decisions and the design flows in your mind.
- For me, I remember endless discussions, and I seem to remember that we voted about that.
- I am really not convinced that that is what we actually voted on. So I would like to know, is this incorporating the decision that the Council made about this intersection way back whenever it was that we voted on this?
- Does the plan now reflect what our choices were? As I recall, we have three choices about how we were going to deal with the intersection.
- This looks good to me, but was it related to what we actually collected six months or a year ago?

Director Svanstrom commented as follows:

- We did end up selecting this type of alignment as a Council, however we also sort of said, well, we don't have money right now, and this, that and the other thing.
- We like this but we are not going to do it right now.

Councilmember Glass commented as follows:

- The reason why I bring it up is because I remember that it is really helpful to us in the Council to be able to tie back to decisions that were made in the past and show that there is continuity between decisions.
- Right now I am thinking that it looks good, but I am not sure how it fits in with what our decisions were in the past.

Director Svanstrom commented as follows:

- I will note that the Council adopted the master plan in 2016
- This is also a decision that can be revisited.

Councilmember Glass commented as follows:

- Just confirming that there was a lot of public comment at the time.

- Residents looked at the area shown, and that had an influence over the preferred configuration.

Vice Mayor Hinton commented as follows:

- I just want to add, I was new on the Council when we actually made that vote.
- The drawings say October 16th, but my recollection is similar that we went with the resurfacing plan because it was cost-effective at the time, and we pushed that yes, it would be nice to redesign that quarter, but we didn't have funding. We needed to resurface.
- I am fine moving forward with the Ives park plan. We already vetted that. The public came out.
- I think this is the next step. It sounds like you guys have funding possibility.
- The next drawings for me came out of the blue, and especially because we are talking about taking away parking spots.
- I want to make sure that we are not moving those forward tonight, because I feel like the community is not on this call. Those have not been vetted.
- I want to make it really clear that what we are doing tonight is applying for funds.
- This Council gets accused frequently of putting the cart before the horse and the public not hearing.
- I just want to make sure that that is not what we are doing on this agenda item.
- My understanding, and you can speak to this as well, is that the funding is mainly looking to go after Ives park.
- The funding that would relate to downtown would be to do the outreach to the community, to talk to people, to talk to the folks who would be impacted to look at parking. Is that appropriate assessment?

Director Svanstrom commented as follows:

- The purpose of those is to get the creative juices flowing for a public outreach program.
- So we would like to throw down a grant proposal. We are doing a very well-organized outreach.
- We have set up a partnership with someone who is interested in working with us on this.
- Has been part of this community for decades and has a lot of close contacts.
- So really Ives park is further along because we have had these meetings with stakeholders about Ives park.
- But it still needs to be vetted through a larger public. We want to start the conversation with the public, the planning commission members, the City Council members, a large number of stakeholders to take the step.
- What will the area look like? So there is nothing coming before the Council where we are asking for approval.
- I think the only thing that would get approval is that we could submit a grant application and we could continue the discussion with the community.

Councilmember Rich commented as follows:

- In looking, because we are talking about a proposal on phase two and phase three, focusing on our planning department and planning commission, was there consideration of whether the publicly-owned property that might be involved in phase two and phase three, was there an assessment or discussion about whether the Calder creek expansion would be the best use of the publicly-owned property
- Or whether other uses such as affordable housing or other purposes might be considered for this publicly owned property?

Director Svanstrom commented as follows:

- Because of the configuration is two or three spaces the creek is directly underneath in a culvert.
- Nothing can be built on that. This is why there is parking right now.

- Certainly these can be developed, or the investment parking lot can be developed, but the creek is in a big concrete culvert underneath them, and we can't reroute the creek.
- So it can never be built on without consideration for that

Councilmember Rich commented so what I am hearing here, I just want to make sure I am clear on this, is that really there would be no other appropriate use for these publicly-owned pieces of property other than Calder creek or parking?

Director Svanstrom commented yes, you can't go with building over a creek or over a culvert that you may potentially need to keep in place in case it fails.

Councilmember Rich commented as follows:

- Two questions about the phase, one portion.
- The first is if you could let us know what steps or considerations were taken or were considered for purposes of safety of children.
- Do you have any concerns about risks to children?
- The other question is about bike trails in this plan.

The consultant commented as follows:

- It is really a safety hazard. Particularly for children.
- If you look at the chain-link fence out there, kids figure out a way to get it, under it or over it. If they get into some area like that, that is when these areas are the most dangerous.
- What cities are doing, local governments, for public safety reasons, is taking out those features, taking out the trapezoidal concrete channels that make water go really fast.
- Naturalizing the creek so that the water goes at a lower velocity and doesn't have the type of super-critical slow hydraulics, which can just knock you off your feet and sweep you down the street.
- So the kind of design that we have is what has been the practice for the past couple decades to increase public safety in northern areas.

Director Svanstrom commented as follows:

- I can also give you an update on the main path, the path with the art sculptures through this area.
- I believe will also have a connection to the ADA parking access because of the agreement with the Art Center.
- The County will have space that connects in, and always through here is a bicycle path.
- There is a bit of a slope in this area and I am not sure if you would be able to ride a bicycle up to Willow Street on this.
- It comes over to the boardwalk and comes out that way. There is a little bit of a dogleg, but it does go out to the intersection.

Mayor Slayter commented as follows:

- That is all currently bicycle path and it will remain that.
- Up to this point we are working on a pathway replacement project. We have the funding to do that.
- We are working on having this new pathway design, which is the same as what we incorporated into it based on the February 2nd City Council meeting
- Maintenance people will be able to come all the way down here on this pathway.
- I know that was one of the public comment questions from last time. They will be able to bicycle throughout the park.



The consultant commented as follows:

- There are areas where the trails are deliberately wider to be able to accommodate bike lanes.
- Because of how the creek engages with the built environment, creating a really graceful bike trail through everything is a little awkward in one area
- You can see that that was partly why it is a wider pathway there.

Mayor Slayter opened for public comment.

Lynn Deedler commented as follows:

- I think this is a marvelous project. This is wonderful for the town of Sebastopol. This is going to bring new life, so while.
- I am glad that there is going to be a bike lane across this, and that it will connect with the trail. That will be wonderful as well.
- As far as the intersection goes, I have talked to six residents, and all of them really like that new intersection design.
- It is going to bring the park area alive and part of the neighborhood, and get rid of all that pavement to make it so much safer for all people that walk their dogs and kids and things through that area all day. So wonderful concept.
- One other thing is that there are many people who really have a great grasp of how that is used.
- Staff reports indicate that there will be areas where people can sit down and talk about moving resources to this plan. I am certainly glad to see that as well. Great, great change for this community.

Evert Fernandez commented as follows:

- First of all I wanted to thank Lynn Deedler. You got the ball rolling when you introduced us to the consultant. Thanked the Consultant and everyone involved
- We have talked about a lot of projects. The agendas that you guys looked at have a lot of different aspects that are complicated and difficult to achieve. This is something that is very achievable.
- It is not something that has been on the shelves for many years
- We now have connections to funding, and I would encourage the Council to try to move forward as fast as possible to support this.
- I think we have a real opportunity here for generations to come.
- The community is excited about it. Let's move forward on this and do what we can with it.

Sandi Maurer commented as follows:

- I love this project. I think it will greatly enhance the downtown, but it will also be a benefit for the entire town.
- I believe that there are funders who love this kind of project and I would urge you to approve this.
- This will be wonderful. Thank you so much.

Mr. Greenwood commented as follows:

- I enthusiastically support everything that the previous three speakers have said.
- I am one of those Jewell Avenue residents that has engaged with consultants previously, and I am an enthusiastic supporter of the naturalization of the creek.
- I would like to comment on the intersection. I have addressed the Council before about the lethal nature of the sweep that goes around the corner, and I have strongly advocated for taking that sweep out as this plan does.

- I was surprised to see that the way that Willow comes into Jewell in this plan is at a 90 degree angle.
- So that puts a little bit of a dogleg into willow.
- I suppose that is necessary for traffic safety purposes, to make that a 90 degree angle, rather than continuing willow in to the trajectory where it is closer to an 80 degree angle.
- Making it 90 degrees is what would increase the size of that property there on the south corner.
- I suppose that could be an issue for the city. If it is an issue, an alternative would be to continue the street going the way it is now.
- Either way, both are infinitely superior to having that lethal sweep that has almost gotten me killed as a walker through the park many times. Thank you.

Kyle Falbo commented as follows:

- One of the most inspiring things about the presentation were the sketches that were illustrating high density, mixed-use, high-density residential along that creek bed.
- My hope is that you can keep in mind the potential for high density residential, as opposed to uses in our downtown core previously. Thank you.

Linda Berg commented as follows:

- As usual, I would just like to remind you that we cannot continue to go on ignoring the effects of microwave radiation and magnetic fields on our health
- I am thinking that besides educating the public, there are also things you can do such as putting up signs
- There is this whole 'nother way of building. It is much safer, and it is called building biology
- How to build things safely in regard to reducing exposure to microwave radiation.
- We need to start recognizing this as a threat to our health. As our longevity goes south and cancer rates go up we are getting sick and dying early.

JT Martin commented as follows:

- I think this has the potential to be a wonderful project.
- I would not like to lose the event aspect of it, where a lot of people can come together in the park.
- I think it can be a wonderful project.
- Keep moving ahead please. Thank you.

#### City Council Discussion and/or Deliberations:

Mayor Slayter commented as follows:

- I have a few comments, and I will start off with phase one, which is the one that we are really trying to understand the design.
- The team is looking for some real firm input.
- Starting at the west end, squaring that off, that Willow/Jewell, which is an awful lot of pavement that we do not need in the City
- I would think that the neighbors on the south side of Willow, communication and outreach to those property owners is vital.
- I think that as noted by the one member of the public who commented just a few minutes ago, there could be a tremendous benefit to them to have a buffer to the street.
- Many of those houses are uphill from the roadway.
- To have a wider sidewalk with some sort of green space buffer, some sort of benefit to those folks, I think that that would go a long way.
- Who wouldn't want a wider sidewalk and more space?

- Moving east, the new entrance there at the corner and the way that leads into a more constrained and tight entry into a grander event space, I think that is a very successful design element that is a typical way to approach building entries.
- Why not use it at a park? I think it works very well.
- The event space is brought together in one space with a single focus towards the stage.
- I think that is very successful.
- It is much better than what we have now, which is where the creek culvert just runs across the middle of the space.
- You feel like you are either north of the creek or south of the creek, and it is not that great.
- This is a tremendous improvement.
- The meandering creek I think is a success.
- We talked about that last time we saw this item. It keeps the ball field.
- Obviously this is still schematic design.
- I would add to the outreach to the little league and see if there would be a way to integrate the field a little bit more into the park, and maybe remove --and they have done a great job over the past few years, now you can actually see into the ball field from the walking path, but I think that there would be a way to soften that word doesn't necessarily need to be a hard pack of plywood and chain-link fence look that we have now.
- So that would be a suggestion there.
- The way that it integrates heading easterly with the sculpture garden, it takes all the boxes that we have talked about is a community.
- Back when I was on the planning commission many years ago, part of what I did was we talked about the master plan.
- So then it came to counsel and there I was again. S
- this is an evolution of that original plan, and I think it will have a lot of success.
- Moving further east to the private, largely private property, the south main street component through the parking lot and then the private property that the planning director noted, I am not sure I understand correctly.
- If there were no former dry cleaner building in the middle of the lot, I do not understand why the channel, a naturalized creek could not be redirected to run down the center of that parcel basically in lieu of where the building is now.
- Is that not true?

The consultant commented as follows:

- It could be redirected.
- We were really kind of trying to work within the confines of the area that is an easement.

Mayor Slayter commented in a grand scale world, running it through the middle of that, and having the north side and south side with boardwalk access to buildings, housing above, cafes below, walking paths on both sides of what could be a naturalized creek through the center of those five parcels would be a possibility?

The consultant commented that would be a great subject for the community.

Mayor Slayter commented as follows:

- I have a lot of them. And not just about parks.
- So that would be my suggestion for additional design, knowing that this is just high-level input.

- That type of design element impacts what I will say about the south main Petaluma Avenue, and I don't think that's a winner.
- Honestly, I think that we have limited urban space, and this is an incredibly important part of our downtown grid.
- Discussed the General Plan circulation element
- When we have had other discussions about going back to a two-way traffic flow, there are a lot of benefits to that as well as adding block faces that could be higher density housing on both sides north and south.
- I do think that honestly the bang for the buck for that center park between Main and Petaluma, honestly I would rather see the money spent in other parts of the plan.
- I like the idea of letting the creek decide where it wants to be and just bridge over the top of it.
- I think that that could be a lot of fun to go through and walk or ride a bike along.

Councilmember Rich commented as follows:

- I just want to take this opportunity to say how absolutely impressed I am with this fabulous design.
- You have heard it from the public, and I know that you are deep into it, but just from a person looking at it for the first time in a long time, it is just, it is really incredible to see this come to fruition and to see the reality of it down the line and see the results of this creative and innovative group of minds.
- Knowing specifically to the plans here on the phase one section, I would also emphasize the need to reach out to the local nonprofit groups that use the event space in order to get their input.
- That would be the rotary club. We have two of them in town. Kiwanis club. But the two rotary clubs to use that space for fundraisers. So if there could be an effort to actually connect with them
- That would be very helpful in terms of refining some of the small details.
- The phase two section, I am going with the comment made in the first part of it that phase two has really two parts.
- We heard Mayor Slayter supportive of the first section of phase two and expressing concerns about the second section of phase two. I would agree with those observations.
- The first section is the portion I picked in response to a question I asked.
- The answer was that I think it is from the Planning Director. You couldn't build anything on that section anyways, so to me that seems like a no-brainer to explore that further.
- At this point it just seems like that is an area where we should be looking at other options rather than leaving it to the Calder creek plan here.
- In terms of phase three I am all for that in terms of exploring other options.
- I would emphasize on phase two and phase three that what I am willing to support his further inquiry and contact and outreach.
- I am concerned that in taking any action at all on phase two and phase three, the implication might be from our public that we have preapproved this plan.
- I have to say that I personally don't have enough information to preapprove this plan.
- So I'm cognizant of the comments that we may be moving too quickly on phase two and phase three
- We want the public to understand that we are not making a decision to approve without the process to engage members of the public in making this decision.
- That is something I could support, but I am cognizant of the possibility of it being misinterpreted, and I could be convinced to back off on that as a result of that.

Vice Mayor Hinton commented as follows:

- I don't exactly know how you guys got involved, but you guys are amazing.

- One of the very first things I did when I got elected six years ago was going to get that park plan, a copy of it from city hall. It is just a thick document, and nothing was happening.
- Then as was pointed out tonight, we kind of heard about the corner, and a lot of us liked it, but it just seems so unreachable.
- I have suggested adding an open space a couple of times, but it would be hard to qualify the vision that we have now. It is super impressive.
- I am so glad that we got the vetting out for phase one to the public and we can move forward on that.
- As Councilmember Rich and I stated earlier, we are the two Councilmembers that will be moving forward with the Council after election day. We definitely want the outreach to happen and for the whole community to get behind the project and see the vision.
- If we can get funding to do extensive outreach, that would be great for phase two, three. I personally love the whole plan. B
- But again, I just want to go through the appropriate motions so that we have the whole city on board. Because it really is all of our city.
- But thank you so much for all the work that you guys have done, because it is definitely a labor of love.

Councilmember Glass commented as follows:

- I love the plan. This is great. Let's do it. Move forward. This is wonderful.
- I appreciate the work of our consultant.
- I think that what staff reports say are that we have to receive the report and provide instruction to staff regarding the Calder creek naturalization project phase one, so that is the phase one part.
- I think we are in agreement about where we are going with that.
- Then authorize staff to execute the service agreement and authorize staff to work within the grant application.
- That is what we need to do to make this thing move forward.
- I think you have heard the input from phases two and three.
- We probably need more information. We need more community outreach. We need to know what the public thinks about the other phases.
- But that is not what is before us tonight. What is before us tonight is to make the commitment to move forward with phase one. I think we should do it.

**MOTION:**

Glass moved and Rich seconded the motion to approve concept Phase 1; authorize staff to enter into agreement with CUSP and authorize staff to work with California Urban Stream Preservation (CUSP) on grant applications.

Mayor Slayter called for a roll call vote. City staff conducted a roll call vote.

**VOTE:**

Ayes: Councilmembers Glass, Rich, Vice Mayor Hinton and Mayor Slayter  
 Noes: None  
 Absent: Councilmember Gurney  
 Abstain: None

**City Council Action:** Approved concept Phase 1; authorize staff to enter into agreement with CUSP and authorize staff to work with California Urban Stream Preservation (CUSP) on grant applications.

**Minute Order Number:** 2022-259

Item Pulled from Consent Calendar:

6. Receipt and Approval of Planning Commission Workplan Update (Responsible Department: Planning Department)

Director Svanstrom presented the agenda item recommending the City Council receive and approve the Planning Commission Workplan Update.

Councilmember Rich commented as follows:

- I am privy to the question by Councilmember Gurney.
- I will just relate, to Planning Director Svanstrom which is that there seems to be no mention in this work plan of the climate action framework, so it would be useful to have the framework as a reference and incorporated into the plan.

Director Svanstrom commented as follows:

- I would be happy to know that this is related to items within the General Plan.
- We are actually slated to do the same work plan with the Climate Action Committee so that the Climate Action Committee will be prioritizing the potential outline of the appendix.
- We are looking to do that in October.
- So that would then come to Council if there are adjustments that need to be made to this work plan. The bulk of it would be done by the climate action group.
- The climate action group would have that in their framework now.

Mayor Slayter opened for questions. There were no further questions.

Mayor Slayter opened for public comment. There was none.

City Council Discussion and/or Deliberations:

There was no discussion.

**MOTION:**

Mayor Slayter moved and Councilmember Glass seconded the motion to receive and approve the Planning Commission Workplan Update.

Mayor Slayter called for a roll call vote. City staff conducted a roll call vote.

**VOTE:**

Ayes: Councilmembers Glass, Rich, Vice Mayor Hinton and Mayor Slayter

Noes: None

Absent: Councilmember Gurney

Abstain: None

City Council Action: **Approved Planning Commission Workplan Update.**

Minute Order Number: **2022-254**

**CITY COUNCIL/CITY STAFF REPORTS/COMMUNICATIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/FUTURE MEETINGS:**

11. City Manager-Attorney/City Clerk Reports: (This will be either verbal or written reports provided at or prior to the meeting):

- Qualified Candidates for City Council November 8, 2022 City Municipal Election

Dennis Colthurst

Jill McLewis

Oliver Dick  
Sandra Maurer  
Stephen Zollman

- City Council Candidate Forum to be held Virtually Wednesday September 21, 2022 at 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm Hosted by the League of Women Voters of Sonoma County
  - City Council Closed Session, Wednesday, September 7<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 am
  - Agenda Review Committee Meeting at Wednesday September 7<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 am
12. City Council Reports/Committee/Sub-Committee Meeting Reports: (Reports by Mayor/City Councilmembers Regarding Various Agency Meetings/Committee Meetings/Sub-Committee Meeting /Conferences Attended and Possible Direction to its Representatives (If Needed) on Pending issues before such Boards)  
(This will be either verbal or written reports provided at the meeting)

Mayor Slayter reported as follows:

- I can report from fire committee that the consultant Matrix is hard at work.
- We do have a check-in meeting with them later this week
- We do know that they have been on the job and have hit the ground running on that one.

Councilmember Glass reported as follows:

- I want to do a quick update on the CoC. I attended the CoC board meeting and a subcommittee meeting over the past month.
- One of the items we had to do was a replacement for somebody who had left the CoC board.
- That was a provider, in other words a provider of services.
- So we did approve an individual movement on housing to join the board of the CoC.
- Both I and Councilmember Gurney put forward candidates that were actually from our own areas, and I nominated Arthur George who has been such a great provider in our town. He works with County homeless advocates.
- I thought that he would have been a tremendous candidate, because he is not part of the same bureaucracy that runs our approach to homelessness.
- He is a guy that gets boots on the ground and actually goes out there and deals with people on the street.
- I am sorry that we didn't get our own guy onto the board.
- One of the most important things that I will be noting is that our staff put together a great matrix on funding sources for homeless services.
- So it is beyond just what we looked at in the past, which is maybe five or six sources of funding.
- We now have a comprehensive matrix from the staff who have done a good job with this.
- I will send that on to everybody.
- We are continuing to work on trying to get a relationship between an overall strategy and what we actually can approve individually to make sure that we have goals and objectives about what we are trying to do, and that we are working on projects based on what those objectives are.

Vice Mayor Hinton reported as follows:

- We had a Russian River Watershed meeting on August 25th
- We are doing some information medication takeback day.
- We also had another presentation that was interesting that I might want to bring to the board about how PG&E is pulling out of the dam up north. That is going to impact on the watersheds downstream.

- Also to report, there is going to be some credits coming back to the city. The Russian River Watershed Association charges us if all the initiatives don't happen in the year, then we get a credit back off of our next year's dues.
- We are getting a pretty large credit, over \$5000 back, and we will start seeing that next year.

Councilmember Rich reported as follows:

- As the liaison to Map Your Neighborhood and the Sebastopol Neighborhood Communications Unit, I meet regularly with Skip Jirrell and Stan Green
- Both of those groups are moving forward with plans to set up emergency communications hubs throughout the City of Sebastopol and elsewhere, facing what looks to be an uneventful fire season.
- Stan green, who has been leading the Sebastopol neighborhood communications unit for a long long long time, is stepping back into an advisory role. Others within the group are ably stepping into the void in order to provide leadership.
- The Climate Action Committee continues to be very vibrant. This past weekend was a compost giveaway. The compost was given away very quickly. We have another one coming up in October.
- The Climate Action Committee also is continuing with a number of initiatives that we will be hearing about here at city council over the course of the next number of months. It continues to be a very vibrant group of engaged community members.
- Sebastopol service and action coalition, which is a nonprofit that serves service clubs in town, continues to meet and is continuing to work on combined efforts, including helping other people, which is a project to pull together volunteers from multiple service clubs in order to combine efforts to improve homes and yards in the area as overseen by the senior center, also.
- Zero Waste Sonoma put together and produced a really interesting food recovery capacity study on all of the jurisdictions.
- The idea is to determine whether we are going to be able to comply with requirements that edible foods be recovered and distributed to people who can eat them instead of putting them into our landfill.
- So that is an interesting study that will help to drive opportunities to expand services in our community and others.

13. Council Communications Received: None Received.

14. Future City Meeting Dates/Events (Informational Only): (See City Web Site for Up-to-Date Meeting Dates/Times)

#### **ADJOURNMENT OF CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

September 6, 2022 City Council Regular Meeting will be adjourned to the Special City Council Meeting, Closed Session, to be held September 7, 2022 at 9:30 am.

September 7, 2022 City Council Special Meeting, Closed Session, will be adjourned to the September 20, 2022 City Council Regular Meeting at 6:00 pm.

Mayor Slayter adjourned the September 6, 2022 City Council Regular Meeting at 11:08 p.m. to the Special City Council Meeting, to be held September 7, 2022 9:30 am.

Respectfully Submitted,



Mary Gourley  
Assistant City Manager/Attorney/City Clerk