

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Neysa Hinton](#); [Diana Rich](#); [City Council](#); [Mary Gourley](#); [Lawrence McLaughlin](#)  
**Subject:** Restore Public Comment to the Beginning of Council meetings  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 17, 2023 4:29:56 PM

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Dt: January 17, 2023

To: Mayor Neysa Hinton, Vice-Mayor Diana Rich, Council members Sandi Maurer, Jill McLewis and Stephen Zollman

Fr: Angela Ford – [REDACTED]

Re: Restore Public Comment to Beginning of Council Meetings

Sebastopol can be proud of its long history of civic involvement. Part of this can be found in the public's active engagement in Sebastopol's City Council meetings.

Public comments have always begun council meetings. This has ensured robust participation of all of our community – from young working families to our elders.

At the beginning of the year, the Mayor and (I assume) Vice-mayor decided to move public comment from the beginning of City Council meetings to the end of our council meetings.

I consider this decision undemocratic. Council meetings often last well after the time most citizens have gone to bed . . . 10:30, 11:00 and beyond. So, this pointedly discourages and reduces citizen participation in the very workings of our community. It actively “silos” the Council from public sentiment and perspectives. And, importantly, discourages the sharing of differing views in a public arena.

I urge the Council to restore the Public Comment period to

where it has always been - at the beginning of every City Council meeting. Not the end.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Angela Ford