

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Mary Gourley](#)
Subject: Rich's Questionable Online Integrity
Date: Tuesday, October 18, 2022 5:49:12 PM

Dear Council Members,

As Council Member Rich is campaigning regularly online for the candidates she has endorsed, I am wondering if you have any guidelines about seated Council people and their active campaigning.

On a 9/27 NextDoor post, Council Rich, using the headline "Newsflash," made a post full of erroneous information about 3 of the candidates. I will be happy to email the post directly to Council Members if they are interested and have not already seen it.

Later, another person confronted Rich regarding the post and she admitted she did not fact check her accusations before posting and in fact, it was completely false and a rumor.

Given the fact that she is an elected official, her word carries significant weight in the community. Thus you would think she would fact check before spreading false information, especially in an election.

It would seem such a simple thing to do, yet she didn't and only corrected it when called out by another citizen who actually did do the fact checking.

Diana Rich keeps posting to her personal website in regards to the election without any caveat on how there is a potential conflict of interest when she promotes and campaigns for certain candidates and strives to discredit others.

Voters might wonder if there is something they are missing, they might falsely believe that Diana Rich has insight that they might not have. Of course this is not true, Diana Rich has no special insight on the candidates except she wants some of them to win and wants others to lose. She wants to ensure her own political position by campaigning for the people she endorses; if they win, she will have more power.

Yet, this election is not about the expansion of Diana Rich's personal power, it's not about Diana Rich's slate of candidates winning, it's about a City in crisis - financial crisis, infrastructure crisis, staffing crisis.

At this moment, we need the best candidates for the job, not ones that are simply puppets of seated Council Members. We need the best candidates for the community, not the best ones for Diana Rich.

In this regard, I ask that Council look at best campaign practices for seated Council

Members and if elected officials can use the power and privilege of their office to distort facts on behalf of their endorsed candidates.

Thank you for your attention to this matter as this election has a significant impact on the future of Sebastopol. We have a failing City budget, an understaffed Police Department which will be recruiting a new chief, a fire department about to go undergo a major restructuring, commercial vacancy in our downtown and no emergency evacuation plan. In addition, the City Manager/City Attorney is retiring. The incoming Council has deep structural issues to address and we need people who are independent thinkers and not tied to the failings of the past.

Best,
Kate Haug