

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Public Comment period allotment in City Council meetings
Date: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 7:29:32 AM

To The Council,

I am writing out of great concern about the dwindling democratic process in this country, and even in Sebastopol, though WE CAN FIX THIS!!!! Together, we can do this!

Citizen interest in speaking and accessing the fullest attention of the council, and of our fellow citizens, is something that should be invited and lauded, and never feared, if one values the principle of inclusivity. Moving public comment to the meeting's end, or even ceding 10 minutes at the beginning before moving public comment to the end, implies a dismissiveness towards the information citizens may want to share and have Council hear and hear well. It implies that Council doesn't really want to have to be bothered with answering questions that may be challenging or difficult to answer or address.

We all know that the majority of citizens in Sebastopol are one of these:

- a) Adults who work jobs by day for whom sleep is necessary for safe fulfillment of their professional duties, who cannot stay up to participate in our City to speak at a Council meeting well past 9pm;
- b) Parents who have younger children who need sleep and who must wake up early and able to provide nourishment and care for the children, and cannot stay up to participate in our City to speak at a Council meeting past 9pm;
- c) Elders who cannot take good care of their health while remaining actively participating as vital Citizens in the meeting past 9pm.

Who does that leave for you to listen to after 9, or 9:30, or even 10:30?

No one. Is that the desired effect? If not, that **is** the impression you are giving out by minimizing early public comment.

This doesn't even address the problems with citizens who have no computer access for attending the zoom meeting, and no printed local newspaper that could convey city matters well to said people without computers in our city. Not everyone is able to get to the library or sit in the library at the public computers for many reasons.

The ongoing erosion to the multiplicity of our voices in a heterogenous, independent, thoughtful citizenry must be called out for what it is: A further cultural assault on our democratic values. It is crucial that you in your power stop the silencing of our Citizens' vital voices.

yours,
Martha Glaser

Sent from my ethernet-internet-connected, wired computer