

Climate Action Committee,

We are returning to the board with a revised Rights of Nature Ordinance that is based on an ordinance adopted by the city of Santa Monica California. Sebastopol's former Planning Director, Kari Svanstrom, had asked for a California model ordinance with suggested revisions. A Rights of Nature Ordinance is on the Planning Commission future work plan and in the Sebastopol General Plan. http://sebastopol.generalplan.org/sites/default/files/Adopted_GeneralPlan_11-15-16.pdf p.5-2

“5. CONSERVATION AND OPEN SPACE Goals, Policies, and Actions

Goal COS 1: Make Proactive, Forward-Thinking Environmental Protection and Resource Management the Cornerstone of Sebastopol's Identity

Policy COS 1-1: Strive to establish Sebastopol as a leader in environmental protection, environmental stewardship, and sustainability .

Policy COS 1-2: Consider the effects of planning decisions on the overall health and wellbeing of the natural environment and regional ecosystems.

Policy COS 1-3: Consider the “Rights of Nature” as a key principle when making planning decisions and reviewing development and infrastructure project applications.

Policy COS 1-4: Recognize that all life within all ecosystems on our planet are deeply intertwined, and consider the inherent values of ecological goods and services as key principles when making planning decisions.

“Rights of Nature is the recognition and honoring that Nature has rights. It is the recognition that our ecosystems – including trees, oceans, animals, mountains – have rights just as human beings have rights. Rights of Nature is about balancing what is good for human beings against with what is good for other species, what is good for the planet as a whole. It is’ the holistic recognition that all life, all ecosystems on our planet are deeply intertwined”.

Actions in Support of Goal COS 1

Action COS 1b: Consider the establishment and adoption of a Rights of Nature Ordinance. Consideration should include legal, economic, and human implications of such an ordinance, a timeline for implementation, and standards to provide for robust environmental protection measures, while balancing the other social, economic, and community priorities established by the General Plan.”

The attached document includes the Santa Monica Ordinance, the redlined proposed Sebastopol ordinance and the proposed Sebastopol ordinance. We are asking the board to review these and provide feedback. If the board feels it's ready to be passed on to the Planning Commission for their review, we'd like your vote of approval to proceed.

Thank you,
Magick Altman, Sunali Sikand and Sandra Maurer
May 8, 2024