

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Mary Gourley](#)  
**Subject:** The City of Sebastopol needs its Senior Center  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 6, 2024 2:18:08 PM

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Dear Ms. Gourley

I have to say that I am shocked and angry to learn that the Sebastopol City Council is considering defunding the Sebastopol Senior Center. As a tax payer who pays thousands and thousands of dollars locally in property taxes; as someone who supports local businesses including paying those those increasingly higher and higher pesky sales taxes; and as a senior who uses the services of the Senior Center, I understand and highly value the classes, ongoing supports community building and community services that the Senior Center offers to me, my wife and my sister and brother elders. I cannot envision a vibrant Sebastopol without our beloved Senior Center.

The Senior Center offers so much to me, my family and our community. As a lesbian I so appreciate the opportunities to dance, commiserate and have meaningful conversations with my community.

As an aging elder, the Speaking of Death Cafes have helped inform and support me as I face the life and death realities of being in my late 70's.

Several of my friends who have come across hard times avail themselves of the reduced cost meals. The social benefit of sharing a meal with friends is not measurable in dollars. The classes- especially the balance and health ones help seniors stay healthier and safer and keep them out of the hospitals and care facilities because people learn how NOT to fall by improving their balance. The classes not only help forge relationships but teach life skills building connections, friendships all the while reducing isolation and loneliness that often impact seniors who no longer work, have jobs and have lost family and friends.

The senior center is fun - dances, games, opportunities to just talk and connect. It's a hub - a vibrant lifeline to so many.

And let me be clear, the Senior Center is not only about receiving the services and offerings. By supporting a vibrant senior community we are building an even stronger network of elders who take our vibrancy out into the world. We volunteer in the libraries and schools. We bring food to the shut ins. We are peer counselors, radio show hosts, servers at food banks and delivers of food to the sick. We teach about the Holocaust, do restorative justice work and volunteer to ensure that we have safe and secure elections. We work tirelessly trying to save our democracy.

Shutting down the Senior Center would have a disastrous impact on our community as a whole. It would not only destroy our vibrant network among our fellow seniors, it would trickle down into every crevice of our greater Sebastopol community. This can not happen. You must do everything you can to save this wonderful asset and gift to Sebastopol.

Thank you,  
Roberta Teller