

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Diana Rich; City Council](#)
Subject: Zoom Bombing - Asking for your opinion
Date: Monday, April 1, 2024 10:27:38 AM
Attachments: [1 E-News Zoom Bombing.png](#)
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[1 E-News SebWalks Group.png](#)

Dear Sebastopol Mayor Rich and City Councilmembers,

I am a fierce defender of the Constitution and in particular the 1st Amendment - Freedom of Speech.

Freedom of speech is foundational to the health and vitality of our democracy. No matter how ugly.

Democracy is not about stepping back and taking a break.

It's about facing such challenges and assaults with integrity and imagination.

We as a community - and you as a council - are able to do so.

I urge you to uphold and strengthen our democracy by continuing Zoom citizen involvement.

Sincerely,

Angela Ford

From: Diana Rich <dianagrigh@gmail.com>
Date: March 31, 2024 at 4:27:10 PM PDT
Subject: **Diana's E-News - Zoom Bombing - Asking for your opinion**

Hello All. I have a specific “ask” of you. I know your time is precious, but I’m hoping you can help with this issue.

As many of you know, our Council meeting on March 19th was disrupted by a truly ugly Zoom bombing. The Zoom bombers presented as a coordinated group. They did their best to use our meeting as a platform to deliver racist, hateful, derogatory statements. The entire experience was unsettling and

emotionally draining, but most importantly it was disruptive. And because it was disruptive it threatened our ability to do what you elected us to do: engage the public who cares about our town (you), and be effective at getting our core Council work done (for example, addressing our fiscal crisis!).

This is not the first time we have encountered Zoom bombing. It's happened on numerous occasions. We've done our best to limit its impact. March 19 showed us what we can expect to experience in the future, even with all the safeguards we've put in place.

Since the Zoom bombing on March 19, I've had a number of people tell me they will no longer attend our Council meetings. They are unwilling to subject themselves to the hateful and disruptive language they heard that night. They do not feel they can safely and comfortably share their views in our Council meetings any longer. These comments have come from people who were present in person as well as those participating via zoom. For them, Zoom has become a platform for disruptive conduct that has a chilling effect on free speech in our community. It reduces their willingness to share and engage.

The Big Question: What do we do about this situation?

Discontinue public comments via zoom? This would mean that those signing on remotely could view meetings in real time, but could not make public comments during the meetings. They would continue to have avenues for submitting their public comments to Council via email and phone messages (as is currently the case). Only those present in-person at the meetings could offer public comments during the meetings.

Continue to allow public comments via zoom? This would maintain the current policy, with public comment during a meeting available to those signing on remotely as well as those present in-person.

Discontinue public comments but only for a trial period, say 60 days? This would allow us to test the impact of discontinuing public comment via Zoom on our community before making any final decision. It would also allow a "cooling off period" that hopefully would interrupt the current Zoom attack that seems to be targeting Sebastopol.

This is my "ask:" If you have an opinion on this topic, please email the City Council at citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov.

if you attended the March 19 meeting, please mention that in your email. Comments from this group, who experienced the Zoom bombing themselves, would be particularly helpful.

Please send in your comments by no later than Tuesday afternoon April 2, so all on the Council have the opportunity to consider what you've submitted.

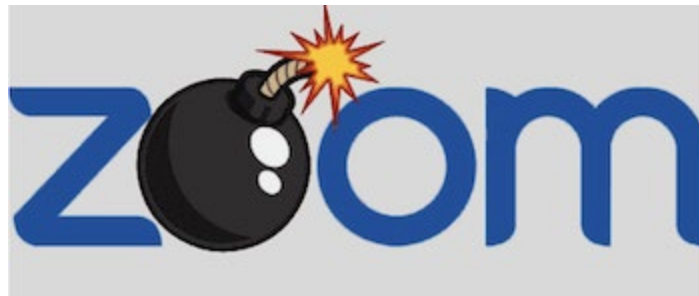
Thank you for taking the time to consider this request. As always, feel free to reach out to me about this or any other Sebastopol issues.

Thanks.

Diana Rich, Mayor
Sebastopol City Council
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Disclaimer: These are my personal notes. They do not represent the official opinions or positions of the City of Sebastopol or of the Sebastopol City Council.



Do we discontinue zoom completely, temporarily, or not at all? Send your input to citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov.



Tue April 2@6pm. City Council Meeting. Zoom topic as well as others. All info including zoom link is posted [here](#). Topics: Two housing projects (Canopy 80-Unit Market Rate & Gravenstein Commons 21-Unit Permanent Supportive Housing), Garbage Contract Next Steps, Latest Ugly Zoom Bombing (what to do?), Cease Fire Resolution, plus more... Public comments

welcome. Written comments can be sent to citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov.



Our Businesses Behind the Scenes Walk Today. Wow! 38 fabulous walkers and so many wonderful experiences visiting local businesses. Don't miss the next SebWalks outing, led by Paul Fritz, April 20. The theme is "Walkable Sebastopol." Meet at 9am at the Plaza. [Details of all walks through November here.](#)