



City of Sebastopol

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM REPORT FOR MEETING OF: September 2, 2025

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To: Honorable City Councilmembers
From: Mayor Zollman
Responsible Department: Public Works
Subject: Approval of Resolution establishing the Sebastopol Commons: Committee for Building the Commons as a standing committee and approving the proposed structure, membership, and responsibilities.

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RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council approve the Resolution establishing the *Sebastopol Commons: Committee for Building the Commons* as a standing committee and approving the proposed structure, membership, and responsibilities

PROCESS OF AGENDA ITEM:

1. If the item remains on the Consent Calendar, no presentation is required, and the item will be approved with the consent items.
2. If the item is removed from the Consent Calendar, it will be placed at the end of the regular agenda items for discussion following this process:
 - a) Presentation of agenda item by Mayor Zollman
 - b) Questions and discussion from Councilmembers
 - c) Public comment period
 - d) Council deliberation and motion

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Sebastopol Commons: Committee for Building the Commons is proposed as a standing committee to advance the vision of a multi-use civic hub anchored by the Sebastopol Regional Library and enriched by partnerships with local organizations, service providers, businesses and institutions. The committee will focus on project concept development, partnership building, and funding strategies, with quarterly reporting to the City Council.

BACKGROUND:

In 2023, the City Council formed the Library Staffing and Facilities Ad Hoc Committee to explore the feasibility of a modern library facility to serve Sebastopol and the broader West County region. As the committee's work progressed, the scope expanded in response to stakeholder engagement, community feedback, and opportunities for shared-use spaces.

This broader vision became known as the Sebastopol Commons concept — a dynamic, shared civic space intended to enhance educational, cultural, health, and community resources. The former Ad Hoc Committee has now completed its original charge and recommends the formation and appointment of the new standing committee to advance the expanded vision.

DISCUSSION:

The proposed resolution will formally establish the *Sebastopol Commons: Committee for Building the Commons* as a standing committee.



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Proposed Structure Highlights:

- **Composition:** Up to 14 members, including two City Council members, representatives from key community organizations, one business community representative, and two members of the public.
- **Initial Appointments:** Drawn from the existing Ad Hoc Committee and recommended community members for continuity.
- **Duties:** Develop a project concept and funding plan for the proposed Sebastopol Commons, pursue grants and partnerships, and report quarterly to the City Council.
- **Term:** Committee established through June 30, 2026, unless terminated earlier by Council action. Members of the Committee have no term length, and serve until the Committee is terminated or the member is removed by the Council.
- **Meetings:** Monthly, with additional meetings as needed; subject to the Brown Act.

The proposed composition and duties of the Committee are based on the recommendations of the former Ad Hoc Committee, but may be modified if desired by the City Council.

The recommended initial appointments of the Committee are as follows:

a. Two Members of the City Council

- Mayor Zollman
- Councilmember Carter

b. One Representative from Each of the Following Organizations:

- Sebastopol Center for the Arts
- Senior Center
- Community Center
- Gravenstein Health Action Coalition
- Faith Community
- Sonoma County Library
- Sonoma County Library Foundation
- Community Foundation
- Gold Ridge Fire Protection District

c. Member of the Business Community

- Recommended: RM Horrell, Copperfields

d. City of Sebastopol Library Commissioner Fred Engbarth

e. Representative from Measure W Oversight Committee Sarah Glade Gurney

Each entity identified in section (b) above shall be responsible for appointing an eligible individual to serve on the Committee.

STAFF (RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT) ANALYSIS:

The formation of the Sebastopol Commons: Committee for Building the Commons is consistent with City goals of fostering regional cooperation, increasing community engagement, and promoting innovative approaches to civic space planning. The structure ensures representation from key community stakeholders while maintaining Council oversight.

CITY COUNCIL GOALS/PRIORITIES; AND/OR GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY:

This agenda item represents the City Council goals/priorities as follows:

COMMUNITY VITALITY: Enhance Sebastopol as a great place to live that values community health and well-being. Preserve Sebastopol's unique character.



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INFRASTRUCTURE: Maintaining High Quality Infrastructure, Facilities and Services includes repairing/replacing outdated city facilities, improving streets, stormwater and wastewater infrastructure.

HIGH PERFORMANCE ORGANIZATION

- *Restoring public trust*
- *Improve Public Communications*

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

City of Sebastopol General Plan:

Action CSF 6c: Work collaboratively with the County library system and community volunteers to identify opportunities to expand and provide library services that meet the educational and social needs of all residents, including possible replacement or expansion of the Sebastopol branch library

Action CSF 6d: Identify partnership opportunities between municipalities, other agencies and library support organizations to expand library facilities, resources and services.

Action CSF 6j: After conducting comprehensive needs assessments, establish priorities and funding mechanisms for projects and improvements to public and community facilities and buildings. The priority-setting process should include an extensive public outreach and participation program, and should assess needs and opportunities associated with the following types of buildings and facilities: Library, Community Cultural Center, City Hall/City offices, and other community buildings/needs identified by the public and the City Council.

Action CSF 6e: Establish an innovative approach to funding cultural, community, and library facilities and/or services, in addition to State and Federal grants and loans. The City should establish mechanisms to allow gifts and dedication of land and facilities by individuals, local businesses, and national corporations.

The item also represents the Sonoma County Mayors and Councilmembers Association Cities and County Critical Areas Coordination Ad Hoc Committee will bring together County and city leaders to work on three shared priorities—mental health and homelessness services, emergency preparedness, and shared facilities.

The goal is to improve communication and collaboration, find practical solutions, and strengthen cooperation across local governments so that all the residents of the nine jurisdictions and the unincorporated areas of our County can all receive the same level of service, have access, be prepared and understand emergency responses and have access to community gathering spaces and assets.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

This item has been noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to schedule meeting date. The City has also used social media to promote and advertise the City Council Meeting Agenda Items.

As of the writing of this agenda item report, the City has not received public comment. If staff receives public comments following the publication and distribution of this agenda item report, such comments will be provided to the City Council as supplemental materials before or at the meeting and will be posted to the city website.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No immediate direct costs beyond staff time to support the committee.



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RESTATED RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council approve the Resolution establishing the *Sebastopol Commons: Committee for Building the Commons* as a standing committee and approving the proposed structure, membership, and responsibilities. Each entity identified in section (b) above shall be responsible for appointing an eligible individual to serve on the Committee.

OPTIONS:

The Council can deny the recommendations and provide direction to staff. One option is to conduct a full recruitment for vacancies (recruitment, receipt of applications, City Council interviews and appointments).

ATTACHMENTS:

Resolution

APPROVALS:

Department Head Approval:

Approval Date: 08/26/2025

CEQA Determination (Planning):

Approval Date: N/A

The proposed action is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Administrative Services (Financial):

Approval Date: N/A

Costs authorized in City Approved Budget: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A

Account Code (if applicable) _____

City Attorney Approval:

Approval Date: 08/26/2026

City Manager Approval:

Approval Date: 08/26/2026

RESOLUTION NUMBER XXXX-2025

A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Sebastopol Establishing a Standing Committee
Titled: Sebastopol Commons: Committee for Building the Commons.

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WHEREAS, the City of Sebastopol City Council formed the former Library Staffing and Facilities Ad Hoc Committee to explore the feasibility of a modern library facility to serve both the Sebastopol community and the broader West County region; and

WHEREAS, the former committee engaged in research, stakeholder engagement, and visioning work that led to a broader proposal: the development of the Sebastopol Commons: Committee for Building the Commons—a shared civic space anchored by the Sebastopol Regional Library and enhanced through partnerships with community-based organizations, service providers, businesses, and local institutions; and

WHEREAS, the former committee recommends transitioning its work toward this expanded vision through the formation of a new Committee: Sebastopol Commons: Committee for Building the Commons; and

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to create a standing committee titled: Sebastopol Commons: Committee for Building the Commons—a multi-use civic space envisioned as a dynamic hub for education, arts, health, senior services, and community engagement; and

WHEREAS, the concept aligns with emerging best practices in community development and addresses key Council goals, including equity, resilience, and innovation in service delivery. It also supports the mission of the Sonoma County Mayors and Councilmembers Association to promote shared services and regional cooperation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Sebastopol that the Sebastopol Commons: Committee for Building the Commons is hereby established as a standing committee, with the following structure and responsibilities:

1. **Establishment.** There is hereby established the Sebastopol Commons: Committee for Building the Commons.
2. **Composition and Qualifications.** The Committee shall be composed of no more than fourteen (14) members who are at least 18 years of age, reside or have a business in Sebastopol, or work for one of the organizations as listed below:
 - a) Two members of the City Council
 - b) One representative from each of the organizations listed below:
 - Sebastopol Center for the Arts;
 - Senior Center;
 - Community Center;
 - Gravenstein Health Action Coalition;

- Faith Community;
 - Sonoma County Library
 - Sonoma County Library Foundation
 - Community Foundation
 - Gold Ridge Fire Protection District
- c) Member of the Business Community
- d) City of Sebastopol Library Commissioner
- e) Representative from Measure W Oversight Committee

3. Initial Appointments: For this newly created meeting, the former ad hoc committee is recommending the following appointments:

- a) Two members of the City Council
- Mayor Zollman
 - Councilmember Carter
- b) One representative from each of the organizations listed below:
- Sebastopol Center for the Arts;
 - Senior Center;
 - Community Center;
 - Gravenstein Health Action Coalition;
 - Faith Community;
 - Sonoma County Library
 - Sonoma County Library Foundation
 - Community Foundation
 - Gold Ridge Fire Protection District
- c) Member of the Business Community
- Recommended RM Horrell, Copperfields
- d) City of Sebastopol Library Commissioner Fred Engbarth
- e) Representative from Measure W Oversight Committee Sarah Glade Gurney

Each entity identified in section (b) above shall be responsible for appointing an eligible individual to serve on the Committee. All members of the Committee shall serve at the pleasure of the City Council.

4. Application/Recruitment Process (after initial appointments as recommended above):

Whenever there are vacancies on the Sebastopol Commons: Building the Commons Committee, the Lead Staff Department shall advertise an invitation for individuals to apply to serve on the committee for the business and members of the public vacancies. Notice of any vacancies will be advertised in the Press Democrat and on the City's website and social media outlets. The applications received shall be reviewed for selection criteria and shall be submitted to the full City Council for interviews and selection by the full City Council.

5. Duties. The Committee shall act in an advisory capacity to the City Council and no express authority or power to act on behalf of the City is hereby delegated. To carry out its stated purpose, the Committee shall perform the following duties:

- Developing a detailed project concept and funding plan for the Proposed Sebastopol Commons;

- Exploring grant, foundation, and public-private funding partnerships; and
 - Quarterly reporting to Council on progress. The committee will develop and provide the council with quarterly reports on the status of our work in the following areas: Identify and secure membership; Develop a list of needs and a list of shared needs; Compile research on similar projects; Explore and define the project concept; and determine the scope of work of a feasibility study
 - Performing such other related duties as assigned by the City Council.
6. **Staff Liaison:** The Public Works Director, or other appropriate individual designated by the City Manager, will be the lead staff department and will provide staffing support for the committee. Documents shall be provided by staff to the Committee a minimum of two weeks prior to the Committee meeting.
7. The Committee meetings shall be in compliance with the Ralph M. Brown Act. All members may be required to complete financial disclosure forms (Form 700) Statements of Economic Interest.
8. The Terms shall be no more than one year; expiring on June 30, 2026 or termination of committee whichever is earlier. Members shall serve at the pleasure of the City Council.
9. Vacancies after the initial appointments, other than by the expiration of a term, shall be filled by appointment for the unexpired portion of said term, in the same manner as original appointments are made.
10. Regular meetings shall be held monthly. Additional meetings may be held as necessary.
11. A quorum of the Committee shall consist of a minimum of eight (8) members. A quorum must be present in order for the Committee to hold a meeting.
12. The Officers of the Committee shall be a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, who shall be selected by the membership for the duration of the committee or until June 30, 2026 whichever comes first. The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings.

The above and foregoing Resolution was duly passed, approved and adopted at a meeting by the City Council on the 2nd day of September, 2025.

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly adopted by the City of Sebastopol City Council by the following vote:

VOTE:

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Abstain:

APPROVED: _____
Mayor Stephen Zollman

ATTEST: _____
Mary Gourley, Interim City Manager/City Clerk, MMC

Approved as to Form: _____
Alex Mog, City Attorney