

From: lynndeed [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 14, 2025 8:08 PM
To: Mary Gourley <mgourley@cityofsebastopol.gov>
Subject: Nine on agenda, combining DRB and Planning

Dear City Council,

Re: Combining Planning and Design Review Board,

The Quality of decisions will suffer and the long term effects on our town will not be justified. The City's financial woes will eventually be mitigated, but poor decisions of these groups will last decades.

The classic look of Sebastopol's town core and surrounding neighborhoods are very worth preserving. This character is appreciated by our community. Pictures representing Sebastopol nearly always show Main Street and surrounding homes. A quote from the First line of the San Louis Obispo DRB guidelines.

"If you do not work to preserve a town's character, soon it will look like everywhere else, and like nowhere."

Few architects/developers come before the DRB with projects that fit well within our town. More often their goal is to make a standout building, a show piece. Architects are can be good at architect talk for convincing others. Experienced Design Review Board members see through this.

The skills it takes to make good judgements in each area are many, as it includes things such as the Tree Board and Parks Board. It is a wide spread for an individual to address. Combining Planning/DRB into one group will be asking much of members, both in time and knowledge. Good decision makers will be harder to find. Plus, it takes years on a board to be an effective decision maker, even for the City Council.

If Planning meetings last as long as DRB meetings this will be taxing for board and commission members, and also for the public applicants. This also doubles the preparation time for members. This will make many people, and good people, less willing to serve.

In real life, developers seldom need a "one stop approval process." Planning compliance is a first step, way ahead of design approval.

While I am a long time member of the Design Review Board. I write as a member of our community. I do this for I have watched our town develop over many years and want to see it develop in the best possible way. I have been a commercial builder and developer and built several buildings in Sebastopol. I am only proud of two that are a fit for our town. I have had time to look back on what is fitting.

Lynn Deedler