

Senior Center not for sale

First, the Senior Center is probably the most effective and successful community support organization in the City. The users are fiercely loyal and frequently outspoken in support. Also, the Senior Center is financially quite successful. They have substantial revenues and a balance sheet that the City should aspire to. Their success is creating the need for more space and that is great. It is just not the City's biggest problem.

The Senior Center as a "tenant" is not in a position to request the City do an appraisal of the building in consideration for sale to benefit the Senior Center. The building is a City building and the City needs to consider all the options for the use of that space. It is adjacent to the City hall which is old and too small to house anything other than core staff. The Senior Center building might be a cost-effective opportunity to complete the long-awaited consolidation of city staff, at least in walking distance of each other. The Cultural Center is in a flood plain and one good rain away from extinction. Perhaps they can adapt to the Senior Center location.

Similarly, the Library is struggling with space limitations. Perhaps moving the public events space there to the Senior Center and expanding the computer center into that space would provide at least temporary relief. These are temporary relief options until longer term solutions can be identified.

The City has many needs and very little in the way of financial resources. On the other hand, the Senior center is wildly successful. It can raise funds in exchange for services. It runs a budget surplus each year. Part of its success is the ability to offer services and derive revenues to residents outside the City limits. Unfortunately, Sebastopol taxpayers provide services to those West County residents but cannot collect revenues.

It is time to let the Senior center know that the City has no plans to sell the building at this time. If the Senior center needs space, it would be best to consider other options and funding sources. If they no longer want to enjoy the low rent (\$1 per year) in the current City-owned facility, the City has many other needs that the building can meet.