



City of Sebastopol

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM REPORT FOR MEETING OF: April 21, 2026

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To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
From: Victoria Henkel, Permit Technician
Subject: Climate Action Committee Interviews

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council conduct interviews for one opening on the Climate Action Committee and consider making appointments later in the agenda.

PROCESS OF AGENDA ITEM:

- a. Introduction of agenda item by Interim City Manager, Mary Gourley
- b. Interview the applicant
- c. Questions and discussion from Councilmembers
- d. Close item after interview

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

CLIMATE ACTION COMMITTEE – 2 YEAR TERM

The Climate Action Committee promotes initiatives related to climate change issues and makes recommendations to Council. There is currently one opening on the committee. Vacancies are available under the variety of experiences and/or characteristics approved for the Committee makeup at the March 18, 2025, Council meeting.

BACKGROUND:

The Climate Action Committee is regularly scheduled to meet on the second Tuesday of each month from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the Sebastopol City Hall Conference Room at 7120 Bodega Avenue, Sebastopol, CA. Terms of office are two-year terms, and the opening term will last until December 31st, 2027.

On March 18, 2025, the City Council reviewed a proposal to reconfigure the makeup of the Committee and directed staff to update the Committee composition to include 7 members from the following backgrounds:

1. One City Councilmember Liaison (at large)
2. Six members with one or more of the following experiences/characteristics:
 - Youth Representative
 - Climate Change
 - Sebastopol Business Owner
 - Local Climate Action Group
 - Environmental Justice and Equity
 - Rights of Nature
 - Energy
 - Transportation
 - Zero Waste

Current Climate Action Committee terms/categories are listed below (vacancies are highlighted)

MEMBERS	CATEGORY	TERM ENDING DATE
Phill Carter	City Council Liaison at large	As assigned
Steven Pierce, Chair	Sebastopol Business Owner, Energy, Transportation, Local Climate Action Group	December 31, 2026
Emily Ocon	Transportation, Climate Change, Local Climate Action Group	December 31, 2026
Lila Newton	Youth Representative, Climate Change	December 31, 2026
Sunny Galbraith	Zero Waste	December 31, 2026
Kenna Lee	Climate Change	December 31, 2027
Vacant	One or more of the listed experiences/characteristics	December 31, 2027

DISCUSSION:

The City conducted recruitment for the open position. The City received the application from the following individual for the one opening on the Climate Action Committee who met the criteria for eligibility.

APPLICANTS	EXPERIENCE/CHARACTERISTICS:
Mark Szatmari	Climate Change, Energy, Environmental Justice, and Equity

An interview for the applicant is scheduled as follows, beginning at 6:00 pm:

<i>Applicant Name</i>	<i>Experience/Characteristics</i>
1. Mark Szatmari	Climate Change, Energy, Environmental Justice, and Equity

STAFF ANALYSIS:

The City received three applications within the recruitment time period. The other two applicants did not meet the age requirement to be considered for appointments. This item is for the Council to consider this application for the one available seat. If the seat is unfilled, City staff will re-advertise the vacancy.

CITY COUNCIL GOALS / PRIORITIES / GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY:

Goal 4: High-Performance Organization

Restoring public trust through transparent and inclusive processes

Improving public communications and community engagement

General Plan Consistency:

Goal COS 1: Make Proactive, Forward-Thinking Environmental Protection and Resource Management the Cornerstone of Sebastopol’s Identity.

Policy COS 1-1: Strive to establish Sebastopol as a leader in environmental protection, environmental stewardship, and sustainability.

Policy COS 1-2: Consider the effects of planning decisions on the overall health and well-being of the natural environment and regional ecosystems.

Policy COS 1-3: Consider the “Rights of Nature” as a key principle when making planning decisions and reviewing development and infrastructure project applications.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

As of the writing of this staff report, the City has not received any public comment on this item. However, if staff receives public comment from interested parties following the publication and distribution of this staff report, such comments will be provided to the City Council as supplemental materials before or at the meeting. In addition, public comments may be offered during the public comment portion of this item.

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 the scheduled meeting date.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct fiscal impact associated with the recommended action tonight.

RESTATED RECOMMENDATION:

Interview the applicant and consider appointment based on the interview, later in the agenda.

OPTIONS:

None. Consideration of appointments will be considered later in the agenda

ATTACHMENTS:

Applications (redacted)

APPROVALS:

Department Head Approval: Approval Date: 4/13/2026

CEQA Determination (Planning): Approval Date: 4/13/2026

The proposed action is not a project under 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: N/A

City Manager Approval: Approval Date: 4/13/2026

The Climate Action Committee will consist of seven (7) members from the following backgrounds:

Appointed Roles

- One City Councilmember

Six (6) members with one or more of the following experience/characteristics:

- Youth Representative (17-23)
- Climate Change
- Sebastopol Business Owner
- Local Climate Action Group
- Environmental Justice & Equity
- Rights of Nature
- Energy
- Transportation

Which category is being applied for? (Fill out all that apply)

Climate change

Energy

Environmental justice and equity

Name: Mark Szatmari

Home Address, City, State and Zip Code:

[Redacted Address]

Home Phone Number: [Redacted]

If appointed, do you want this number to be visible to the public?
 Yes No

Work Phone Number: [Redacted]

If appointed, do you want this number to be visible to the public?
 No Yes

Facsimile Number: _____

If appointed, do you want this number to be visible to the public?
 Yes No

E-Mail Address: [Redacted]

If appointed, do you want this address to be visible to the

public?
 Yes No

Are you a registered voter in Sebastopol?

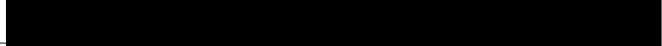
Yes No
If so, for how long? 6 months

Do you hold a current business license from the City of Sebastopol?
 Yes No
If so, for how long? _____

Have you attended a meeting of this body? When?
Yes, March 10th, 2026

Have you served on, interviewed for, or applied for this body previously?
 Yes No

If so, when? _____

Present Employer: 

Job Title: Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

Have you previously served on any governmental bodies or held elected office? If so please list position held and dates:

None. I have not held elected office or ran for it.

Please list civic or charitable organization to which you belong or have belonged:

I volunteered for California Homemakers Association.
I also volunteered to clean papers for the Paper Department when I lived in San Luis Obispo County.

Have you been an officer in any of these organizations? If so, please list position held and dates:

I have not.

What special interests, skills and talents would you bring to this board, commission, or committee?

I am versed in using research programs such as SPSS and I have conducted research in my undergraduate and graduate training. I am also a state worker and have been for 5 years. I have experience interpreting and implementing policy and procedures.

Please list any college, professional or vocational schools you have attended with major subject studied, dates and any earned degrees:

CSU - Sacramento, B.A. in Sociology 12013
USC - Masters in Social Work, graduated 2024
I am an associate clinical social worker.
CSUS - Undergraduate degree - Summa Cum Laude

Please list any special awards or recognition you have received:

I made the Dean's honor list every semester at CSUS.
I was nominated most outstanding senior at CSUS by the
Dean of the sociology department. I graduated TOP 1% of
my class. I graduated with M+ MSW from USC with a 3.8
GPA.

Please state why you would like to become a member of this board, commission or Committee,
including what specific objectives you would be working toward as a member of this body:

I would like to assist the city of Sebastopol any
way I can and volunteer hours of service. I would like to
contribute my ideas about climate change and mitigating the
effects of climate change on the city of Sebastopol while
humbly learning how local government committees work.

Are you associated with any organization/employment that might be deemed a conflict of interest in
performing your duties if appointed to this position?

Yes No

If yes, please state name of organization/employment: _____

City policy directs all appointed, advisory body members not to vote on matters where there exists a
potential conflict of interest such as property ownership near a project, or a financial relationship with the
applicant. Would you be willing to abstain from voting if such a conflict arises?

Yes No

How did you hear about this opening?

City website

Is there any other information that you feel would be useful to the City Council in reviewing your application and materials provided with the application?

I am passionate about the environment and took environmental sociology in my undergraduate studies, I have volunteered my time to clean and beautify cities I have lived in, I would like to become involved in local government and take an active role in my community.

What do you think qualifies you to be appointed to this board/committee/commission?

I took environmental sociology in undergraduate school and I understand the relationship and dynamics with government and the population of large areas. I understand the environmental impacts of these entities and I know how to develop a cost-benefit analysis. I was a procurement analyst for Napa state hospital and a staffing analyst at Atascadero State hospital. I am also an ACSW and I am willing to communicate/interact with the general public.

Are there particular issues you think the board/committee/commission should concentrate on?

- Mitigating the effects of climate change on Sebastopol
- protecting the wild life/natural environment.
- mitigating traffic in Sebastopol proper
- generating revenue for climate change awareness/mitigation.

How should community comments be integrated into the board/committee/commission decision-making process?

community comments should be welcomed as varying perspectives and dialog are democratic and input from community member and stakeholder's is beneficial for democratic decision making

If appointed, how would you handle it if another board/committee/commission member vehemently disagrees with your comments on a regular basis?

I would listen to the other committee members perspective and build a bridge of understanding and mutual respect. I would not take their disagreement personally and communicate professionally and respectfully to this committee member. Disagreements are natural when it comes to governance and policy making. Maintaining professional boundaries and building mutual respect while maintaining decorum is beneficial to my personal development and growth.

How would you handle a situation where a proposal comes before your board/committee/commission that the City staff finds consistent with City policies and standards, but that you personally do not support?

I would listen to hear all the positives of this proposal and add my ideas or perspective on the short coming or possible negative impacts that this might have on the city. If I cannot build consensus or agreement with my viewpoint I would respect the decision of the committee and its members.

What is your involvement with the climate crisis, including ways you have educated yourself and worked to model and promote climate action?

I took environmental sociology in college and I have a degree in sociology which is the study of society as a whole and the social psychological processes that occur in large groups and popular culture. I also educated myself by obtaining a masters of social work from USC. I took public policy and learned how to draft proposals to state legislatures and advocate for the disenfranchised.

What is your understanding of the current obstacles to implementing action on Climate Change? How would you suggest overcoming those obstacles?

My current understanding of obstacles to implementing climate action is building awareness navigating the interest of the community regarding climate action and stakeholders. I would suggest overcoming these obstacles by implementing public outreach and building a rapport and working relationship with community members with varying/competing interests.

What should be the City's role in addressing climate mitigation, adaptation, drawdown, and environmental justice? Give examples of policies you think the City should enact to address the climate crisis.

I believe the city should maintain and expand it's already existing bike paths. I think complete streets is an option the city can consider. I think the city should reach out to community stakeholders and welcome them / get them excited about environmental justice and impacting the city in a positive way.

I certify that I have thoroughly read and understand all material in this application.

Applicant's Signature: 

Applicant's Name (PLEASE PRINT): Marie Szatmari

Date: 3-15-2026