

Dear Council members,

I attended the meeting on the Commons proposal last Tuesday evening, and I wanted to express my disappointment in the questions asked by Council members and the outcome.

I did not hear Council members express appreciation for the magnitude of the problems facing the library, Senior Center and Community Center, including not just the undersized buildings but also lack of sufficient parking for the library and Senior Center that causes them to be effectively unavailable to some potential users. I am less familiar with the problems of the City Hall, although it was apparent it does not have space for a meeting at which members of the public wish to participate.

The questions asked by Council members were either trivial compared to the magnitude and immediacy of the problem (Could there be a small addition to the existing library? What would City staff otherwise be doing in 40 hours of their time? - while meanwhile taking up many hours of the collective time of those assembled) or were questions that would be answered by a due-diligence review that the Council was not willing to approve. Meanwhile, the Council approved \$85K for a band aid to the library that allows short-term use without fixing the underlying problem.

In public testimony, as far as I could tell, people who are active users of the library and senior center were all enthusiastic about the idea of a Commons at the O'Reilly site. Those who testified against did not offer viable alternatives and did not appear to be among the many users of these facilities. You owe it to the people who would be most affected - the users - at least to give the proposal the serious attention it deserves, rather than wish for some unidentified miracle to come along. Then, if real problems are uncovered, you will at least have a good reason for failing to act on what currently appears to be the only viable solution.

I heard some comments that the Community Center, now located in the floodplain, could not be in the O'Reilly building because of noise associated with events there. As someone who will be a nearby neighbor if Community Center activities are relocated to O'Reilly, I am not convinced that this is a reason not to give it further serious consideration. To what extent are noisy, late-night events held there? How much noise would escape into the surrounding neighborhood?

The vitality of a City is tied to the power of community. Please give a hard look to the needs of residents now and in the future, and show leadership about what Sebastopol has to offer.

Sincerely,
Beth Blattenberger