

From: Katie Davis <katie@sebastopolseniorcenter.org>
Sent: Thursday, September 10, 2026 12:01 PM
To: BobBeauchamp [REDACTED]; City Council
<citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: O'Reilly building

Hi Bob,

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts, particularly given your professional background.

I think we agree on quite a bit. I completely agree that healthy communities need “magnets”, the places that create opportunities for connection. That is what excites me most about the possibility of a Commons. I see tremendous value in creating a true community hub where someone might visit the library, participate in a Senior Center program, access another community service, attend an event, have lunch, or simply encounter neighbors they otherwise might not see.

Where I may see things differently is how we weigh some of the items you describe as superficial. From my perspective running the Senior Center, things like parking, accessibility, adequate program space, safe and accessible drop-off areas, and the ability to serve people with different mobility levels are anything but superficial. Those things determine whether a senior is able to participate at all.

Our current Senior Center is approximately 5,000 square feet, and we have simply outgrown it. We pack people into rooms, and even host classes and tutoring sessions in the hallways. We regularly make choices about which programs we can offer and where we can physically put people. As our community ages, I don't see that demand decreasing. From my perspective, this isn't about whether the Senior Center should remain where it is or move to O'Reilly. In actuality, if O'Reilly doesn't move forward the Board and staff will continue working on Plan B- where can the senior center go that allows the above. The board has invested numerous hours over the last two years investigating this exact thing.

I also come to this conversation as a Sebastopol resident and brand new homeowner in this City who intends to be here for a very long time. My parents recently moved across the country to be here, in part because this is such a wonderful community to age.

Yes, there are unanswered questions about O'Reilly: we still need to understand what space would actually be available to the Senior Center, what it would cost, whether it is

financially sustainable, and how the overall project would function. In respect to downtown businesses, I find it compelling that the CEO of Copperfield's is on the Commons Committee and is in strong support of O'Reilly. This signals to me that downtown businesses may actually benefit. This is why I will be asking and advocating that the Council vote yes to invest staff time to investigate this further.

Thank you again for sharing your thoughts with me.

See you soon at Retrograde or at the Center for meditation 😊

Katie Davis (she/her)

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From: BobBeauchamp [REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, September 10, 2026 11:28 AM

To: citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov <citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov>

Cc: [REDACTED]; Katie Davis

[<katie@sebastopolseniorcenter.org>](mailto:katie@sebastopolseniorcenter.org)

Subject: O'Reilly building

Greetings: As a retired architect, general contractor, urban planner and instructor of design and construction, I have resided here for 20 years and long appreciated Sebastopol's unique charm. The current issue that proposes the relocation of our city hall, our library, and our senior center to the O'Reilly bldg. gives me great concern.

Such a proposal, with each facility in similar states of obsolescence, can certainly seem legitimate. The new location is immediately available, relatively affordable, and integrated within a pleasing architectural context. Beyond that, certainly of a high priority, is its "adequate" parking.

Unfortunately, essentially all of this proposal's qualities are superficial. They address issues that are pragmatic, expedient and overlook most considerations that are of a deeper, more subtle level and despite their possibility of having significant purpose and meaning. Issues that support true "community," the "vitality" that we all cherish when it is allowed to exist, the heart-felt ambience that can occur whenever we step out of our vehicles, become pedestrians, and lovingly engage in the fundamentally humane, connected activities that bring the highest levels of meaning to our lives.

Sebastopol's current "vitality," while still meaningful, certainly suffers from historic mishandling of this fragile issue: our community "center," our Youth Annex each has been removed to our outer fringes and denies the rich social contribution that it could bring to our downtown populace. Our oversized Barlow project, despite its promises of community contribution, now reveals a complete detachment and caters exclusively to the inhumane profit and revenue of a completely indifferent tourism.

A truly successful community needs "magnets," those primary facilities that comprise the primary appeal to its populace; secondarily, it needs the supportive services that fill in the blanks of remaining community needs. This quickly transcends the trendy stuff (restaurants, bars, boutiques, etc.) and incorporates the wide variety of household needs (groceries, offices, hardware, etc.)

Losing these three important facilities—all magnets—will clearly bring some degree of harm to our remaining ambience. Secondary shops will struggle to survive, but many, without a primary appeal, will fail. Other magnets (Whole Foods, Safeway perhaps, the Plaza, etc.) will certainly continue, but in a reduced capacity. The risk of community demise will loom ever closer.

I watched San Luis Obispo, CA suffer just such a circumstance, beginning around 1965. Originally a small, agricultural, academic economy, the downtown was the only place for any services, and was an easy, natural place for an abundance of spontaneous social

interaction. It was exceptionally delightful.

Over time, however, the well-known lure of profit and revenue from a growing student body (Fall, Winter, Spring) and a tourist one (Summer) saw the common evolution of policy changes that transformed downtown. While the very same buildings, streets etc. exist to this day, they are now occupied by businesses that cater exclusively to these two groups. The locals are no longer welcome and are relegated to shopping in several small shopping malls encircling downtown, each with their own “convenient” parking and the inconvenient “hop” from one mall to the next. Pedestrians no longer exist.

Choosing to remove these important facilities, giving excessive priority to poorly considered, tantalizing superficialities, will be a tragic mistake. The problem here is not simple and its true resolution will call for a patient, multi-faceted, broad-based complex resolution. It may very well become evident that those currently in charge of such decision-making will not be sufficiently qualified to be so; that it may be appropriate to seek and employ specialists in the field. There’s so much to lose here; for the sake of our future, surely we can slow down and explore broader, deeper, more creative options.

Robert Beauchamp