From: Lee Mathias [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, October 18, 2026 5:10 PM
To: Public Comment Received For City Council <citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov>; Mary Gourley <mgourley@cityofsebastopol.gov>; Jill McLewis <jmclewis@cityofsebastopol.gov>; Stephen Zollman <szollman@cityofsebastopol.gov>; Sandra Maurer <smaurer@cityofsebastopol.gov>; Phill Carter <pcarter@cityofsebastopol.gov>; Neysa Hinton <NHinton@cityofsebastopol.gov>
Subject: Public Comment: Development Gone Wild

Hi again,

Done for now.

Lee

[redacted]

Development Gone Wild

The city has priorities to increase transparency and restore trust. For the Valentine project Sebastopol city government gets an 'F'.

Not providing the neighbors with timely information about what is being planned suggests a plan by city staff to avoid dealing with complaints. **Telling residents, it is too early to come to a public meeting to discuss the project was absolutely disingenuous** and practically confirms a conspiracy to limit public input (complaints) until the last minute. Who exactly provided that advice?

Is the city aware that state laws limit the city to requiring the developer to attend no more than five hearings once the project satisfies the applicable objective general-plan and zoning standards? This means that discouraging the public to participate early in the process limits any influence they can have on the project.

The power our State Legislators have given rich developers over the city is amazing. If only residents had this ability to get their way. Big bucks get to do what they want.

Now we know the planning commission had been meeting with Grupe for some time. **Grupe says they picked Sebastopol because the city committed to adopting AB1033 (condo ADU's).** Is it possible that someone briefed the council ahead of time about the Grupe proposal and the dependence on immediate approval of the ADU Condo ordinance? That would explain why the topic appeared within two weeks of Grupe filing their paperwork with the city.

Many were surprised when the city council approved condo ADU's with almost no discussion and a firm decision by Councilmember Mauer to not want any design requirements. Perhaps Grupe already had the designs they wanted locked in?

Councilmember Carter more than once has said the council sometimes appears to make decisions without a lot of discussion because there were discussions prior to the meeting and many questions were answered. Was the council privately pre-briefed on the Grupe development and the importance of the Condo ordinance**? Isn't that a Brown Act Violation?**

Of our local candidates, Jill McLewis voted against the Condo ADU ordinance. Sandra Mauer voted for the ordinance and argued that the city did not need design requirements like setbacks other than what is in the building code.

Setbacks for normal ADUs can be as little as 4 feet and the city can't change that. It's the law. But, for Condo ADUs legislators left design criteria like setback to the discretion of the city. A majority of our current city council is ok with developers putting ADUs 4 feet from your property line.

The staff report is misleading, why?

The first section makes it seem like a normal little development, 20 units and well within that allowed based on the zoning. "Nothing to see here". The **top two sections of the staff report does not mention the fact that 20 lots equal 39 housing units. What is the point of still trying to hide what everyone already knows?**

Finally, a bit of jujitsu and an area zoned for 20 units grows to 39 homes because "it is permitted for the owner to add an ADU to their lot" under the city's own ordinance. Why is that? Because 4 out of five city council members voted for the ordinance.

Approval came over the objections of Mayor Jill McLewis. She repeatedly asked to consider ideas for design criteria.

Council members, Hinton, Carter, Zollman and Maurer were not curious or interested in considering public comments or Mayor McLewis' serious-minded arguments for design requirements and the unintended consequences of the hasty decision. They just wanted to vote and move on.

Nine months later, Sebastopol is still the only city in the county to adopt the ordinance. Supervisor Hopkins is on record saying they would wait to see what the impact is on the few cities in California that have adopted it. **Why was Sebastopol in such a hurry? Obviously, they want more housing, but did anyone consider the impact it would have on housing density?**

Sebastopol residents are seeing first-hand exactly what happens when an area thoughtfully zoned for moderate density jumps from 20 units to double what zoning intended at 39 units.

The Valentine neighbors actually caught a break on this project. It is zoned for only medium density**. The Catholic Church property down the street is zoned R7 – High density. That property could have 62 housing units. Add an ADU for each and welcome another 120 new families to the neighborhood!**

Many great public comments detailing time-lines and issues this project creates. I hope the appeal of the application will have an impact. **Given that most of the issues with this development were made possible by laws passed by our State Legislators and our local city council everyone might consider asking candidates what their position is on these crazy housing laws.**