

Dear Mayor and Council Members,

I am writing today to express my opinions and to inform you of how the smoke from A&M's smokers has affected myself and my family.

I live at Petaluma Avenue Homes, in what is probably the very closest building to A&M. I have experienced smelling smoke, and respiratory reactions to smoke almost every single day for the past year. I do have allergies and asthma and the constant smoke is irritating and does affect my comfort and breathing. This is true of my son who lives with me as well. He experiences runny, watery eyes, nasal congestion and irritated throat.

I am unable to keep my bedroom window open at night, as I would instinctively do all summer, due to smoke entering my home and my bedroom, literally smelling like smoke, if I open the windows. I have started to have to use allergy medications daily to control symptoms which are absolutely aggravated by the presence of smoke. I also run a HEPA filtered, air purifier in my home 24/7.

While I have no beef with the existence of A&M barbecue or the individuals who own and run that establishment, I do not feel it is fair to inflict an undue hardship upon the neighbors by running commercial smokers virtually constantly, day and night. I am aware that the neighborhood is NOT zoned for commercial barbecues and I am aware that the owners of A&M are fully aware of this as well. They have chosen to ignore the zoning laws, and quite frankly be extremely dismissive and inconsiderate of the neighbors comfort and health.

It would be far out of the "norm" to re-zone a residential neighborhood, for the sake of one business and to the detriment of many neighbors and long time residents of said neighborhood. Since when did Sebastopol become "industry trumps all else"? That is not reasonable or fair and ignores the fact that this business has only been in existence for a fairly short time, while some of us have lived here for many years, even decades.

If A&M were able to construct and effectively use some kind of filters or some mechanism that would actually eliminate or "burn up" the smoke before it exited the smokers, that might be a solution that would be equitable, but surely such a mechanism would need to be tested and proven to be effective prior to A&M being allowed to be "released" to continue using the industrial smokers in our residential neighborhood. If they were able to effectively filter the smoke away, I would still be loathe to have the neighborhood re-zoned as this will just open up A&M to continue constant meat smoking or other businesses to come in and create an "industrial zone" please DO NOT, re-zone our neighborhood, especially for a business that has disregarded the zoning laws already and doesn't have care or concern for the citizens in the "zone".

I feel that as the Mayor and City Council, you do have a responsibility to enforce the existing zoning laws and protect the citizens of Sebastopol. Quite honestly, if even one person is negatively affected by the use of industrial smokers, in a zone where they are not permitted, they should be 100% shut down and prevented from using these smokers here. It is not neighborly, safe, considerate or legal for them to be operating in the way they are, and I would appreciate if council would do the right thing and force a fix to this problem that takes into account the needs of ALL!

Kind Regards,
Megan Watt

Sent from my iPhone