

From: Sophia Maloney Norton [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2026 11:56 AM
To: City Council <citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov>
Subject: Agenda Item 7

Dear Mayor McLewis, Vice Mayor Maurer, and City Council Members,

I am writing to you today as a concerned member of this community who has lived in Sebastopol my entire life. I am so proud to live in a city that has led the way within Sonoma County in being proactive about banning the use of facial recognition technology and regulating various forms of government surveillance. I am extremely concerned by the prospect of reducing city council oversight of any of these technologies, especially at a time in our country where the inherent risks of utilizing surveillance technologies seriously outweigh any supposed benefits.

As Tammy Krezner from the ACLU of Northern California wrote in a letter to then police chief Ron Nelson in 2024, “technology-specific surveillance use policies and surveillance impact reports, in addition to the citywide annual surveillance report, provide invaluable information to the citizens of Sebastopol and ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place to prevent the invasion of privacy. Use policies also require the City to seriously consider why it believes that surveillance devices are necessary in the first place. This is a key protection of the Surveillance Technology and Community Safety Ordinance that should not be circumvented”.

I vehemently disagree with the proposed amendments to the Ordinance, whereas “traditional video cameras”, such as Ring cameras, would be exempt from the oversight and protections the Ordinance provides. The current ordinance already allows law enforcement to temporarily acquire or use surveillance technology in emergency circumstances (Sec. 8.80.040) If “traditional” cameras become exempt, then I also fear that will set the stage for other surveillance technologies to become exempt from the ordinance, rendering it meaningless. I urge the city council to not approve the amendments, and to continue to uphold and protect its citizen’s civil liberties.

Yours truly,

Sophia Maloney Norton