



City of Sebastopol

SEBASTOPOL COMMONS: BUILDING THE COMMONS COMMITTEE TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2025

MEETING MINUTES

As approved by the Committee at their meeting of: Tuesday, October 21, 2025

In Person Location: Sebastopol City Hall, City Hall Conference Room, 7120 Bodega Avenue, Sebastopol

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Zollman called the meeting to order at 9:00 am

ROLL CALL:

Attendees: **Committee:** Naomi Hupert, Sarah Glade Gurney, Kent Jenkins, Councilmember Phill Carter, RM Horrell, Mayor Stephen Zollman, Mary Lou Schmidt, Fred Engbarth, Ray Holley
Other: Interpreter – Jennifer
Absent: Kenyon Webste, Danny Foster, Community Foundation representative
City Staff: Erik Billing, Elissa Overton

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: The City of Sebastopol acknowledges that we live and work within the unceded ancestral homelands of the Southern Pomo and the Coast Miwok people. We pay our respect to the past, present, and future generations of these peoples, including the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria.

I. FORMATION OF SUBCOMMITTEES

- Discussion
 - Do we need a site review subcommittee?
 - Chairs for each subcommittee are vitally important.
 - Consider "Site Review Committee"
 - **NOTE:** TOO MANY ON SUBCOMMITTEE. NEED 4 or LESS WITH 10 MEMBERS. Split to a third committee?
- **Subcommittee #1: Community Needs Assessment**
 - **Chair:** Steve. **Members:** Mary Lou, Sarah, Kent, Fred
 - Community engagement, surveys
 - Include public relations and site review
- **Subcommittee #2: Funding Assessment**
 - **Chair:** RM. **Members:** Phill, Fred, Kent, Naomi
 - Funding, financial, grants
 - Collection of best practices. Examples and exploration of community based systems.

II. PUBLIC MESSAGING

- Preliminary message and intent of the Committee
 - Council empaneled this committee and its efforts for one year, will need quarterly updates so public and Council can see what's happening and progress.
 - Not locked into a library building.

- Open-minded process from ground zero.
- Reimagining what the vision is.
- Need marketing statement.
- Provide rationale for what the Committee is doing.
- No longer the Library AdHoc.
- Pitch can honor what the Library AdHoc has accomplished. Redescribe what has happened in the last committee and where we have redirected our efforts. Be clear on what stakeholders need and what they can afford.
- Be cautious in communication or going off script, i.e., delivering a message on behalf of the group vs. personal message.
- Avoid comments that may reflect on credibility of the group or a reputation.
- Encourage researching and discovery of information / and inquiring about community needs without offering an opinion. Bring back to Committee to be discussed.
- **OUTSTANDING QUESTION**: Will pitch change with every meeting, or one paragraph created? Who writes this paragraph?
- Answer: Where ideas are. Why a new building is needed? What uses? Find information rather than starting from scratch.
- Vague and aspirational. Can't start with library messaging.

III. ASSETS

- Existing community spaces. City/county owned lots.
 - See attached.
 - Need to see where each are located and what's in it. Who is in it. What are the opportunity sites. Not residential.
 - Public/private partnerships.
 - Banks or other businesses that may be leaving.
 - Reassess parks?
 - Swapping possible?
 - May need to rezone.
 - **ACTION**: Research properties and determine: lot size, building footprint, google map view, usability, septic, trees, cost. How long will this project take?

IV. DISCUSSION

- Tenant's main focus for use, but not integral part of the message.
- Mission creep is an issue. Need to be cautious of this.
- **ACTION**: City to discuss legality of Dropbox with Alex. If approved, PW will create prior to next meeting. Fred will add a well-established Community Handbook from Ohio State and Community Resource Handbook by Collective Impact.
- How big of a community would a community commons building serve?
 - **ACTION**: Create heat map to determine areas of dominant influence. Include Graton, Valley Ford, Guerneville, Forestville, Monte Rio, Rio Nido, Rohnert Park, West Cotati, West Petaluma, Bloomfield, etc.
 - **ACTION**: Locate deeper pockets for funding. Not just within City boundaries.
- Evaluate if the title "Sebastopol Commons" limits what the group is trying to achieve with extending boundaries. Consensus was it was still a good name because it is based in Sebastopol.
- Need assessment of needs. Discuss where money will come from.

V. PRESENTATION

- Roseland project

- *See attached.*
- *Look at underserved areas and concentrations of people.*
- *The community shrunk as jobs left.*
- *Area ignored by the county.*
- *Approached City Council that a library was needed. After new Mayor, City of Santa Rosa approved the search of locations and opportunities.*
- *Library was the main focus in the Press, not the fire department.*
- *Funding: Library Foundation donated \$3.6M for furniture and naming opportunity. Other donations: Native American Services, Graton, Council members.*
- *Large service area.*
- *Focus on the comment from the old site: "The community loved it!" It doesn't need to be extravagant or pretty to achieve the goal.*
- *What went wrong?*
 - *Needed clearer agreements. A lot of meetings. Decisions swapped back and forth. Due diligence with a City is not the same as with a private developer. Cost started with \$450 - \$600 per sqft. Advised it would be \$1,000 per sqft. Resulted in \$1,244 per sqft.*
 - *Need to think of higher tech equipment. The ingress and egress, especially in an emergency.*

VI. TIMELINE / SCHEDULE

- What needs to be accomplished:
 - *Subcommittee meeting times.*
 - *Establish more goals and timeline at next Committee meeting.*

VII. NEXT STEPS / FUTRE MEETINGS

- Next meeting date:
 - *Monday, November 10 @2:00*
 - *Second Tuesday of each month beginning Tuesday, December 9 @1:00.*
- Approval of meeting minutes from 10/7 and 10/21
- Subcommittee updates (each meeting)
 - *Funding Assessment Subcommittee*
 - *Communication Needs Assessment Subcommittee*
- New Business /Discussion
- Refine Project Description and Milestones
- Establish Next Agenda

VIII. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

Who adjourned the meeting at: 11:00 am

Submitted by:

Elissa Overton, City Staff Member

Roseland Regional Library: how did it happen?

A new \$24 million regional library in southwest Santa Rosa will open its doors in March 2027. The journey to this point is one of many years and many supporters.

History

For years, the City of Santa Rosa and the Sonoma County Library have recognized the need for enhanced library services and a dedicated space for the Roseland community.

The new library is very much rooted in community needs. Decades ago, community leaders began to call out the need for services in Roseland, a community that called Santa Rosa home, but was in County of Sonoma jurisdiction and not well supported with services. During this time, the library system was underfunded but recognized the need.

In 2015, more than 200 community volunteers and donors helped the library launch a temporary library in Roseland, housed in a county-owned dilapidated furniture store, sharing space with a Boys & Girls Club satellite facility. The community thoroughly embraced the library, and it became a busy and active place (it closed during the COVID-19 pandemic, so the space could be used for a vaccination center).

In 2016, voters approved a sales tax to augment library funding, and more resources were available to support Roseland, an area identified in the Portrait of Sonoma reports (2014 and 2021) as having the lowest human development index levels in the county, chronically underserved, and with one of the lowest community poverty indexes in the county. Roseland residents have lower life expectancies; four in 10 adults lack high school diplomas; school enrollment is below the country average; earnings average roughly \$22,000 annually. The need was evident to all.

The library began talks with the City of Santa Rosa in 2018-19 to discuss a permanent library, after the city annexed the Roseland community. At first, the city was lukewarm to the idea, but a district election model was put in place around that time, and Santa Rosa enjoyed elected councilmembers from the west side of Highway 101 (previously a rarity) who persuaded other city leaders to support the idea.

By 2020, there was strong support for a permanent library in Roseland. Another (still open) temporary branch opened in September 2021, but funding for a permanent facility was elusive. Over the next few years, about \$20 million in funding became available and the dream came to life.

Note that the city is building a campus on Hearn Avenue, that will house the new library, a new fire station and a future community center.

Funding

The largest source of funding for the project has been the City of Santa Rosa, which recognized its responsibility to lead an effort to build a library. More than \$7 million in PG&E settlement and ARPA funds are committed to the project (It should be noted that these two sources of one-time funds came available after a tragic firestorm and a worldwide pandemic).

Additional funds were the result of a years-long combined advocacy effort by the city and the library, which resulted in \$6 million in allocations from state legislators and a \$3.5 million grant from the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria. These funds were sufficient to construct a 10,315 square foot library, with no construction funding from the library system.

The Sonoma County Library Foundation, a separate 501(c)3 nonprofit, committed to raising \$3.6 million for “FF&E” (defined as furniture, fixtures and equipment, all the “stuff” that goes inside the building) and is another key partner.

Needs vs Funds

While Santa Rosa is building and will own the project, the library has been a close partner. For example, library staff helped choose the consultant firms who conducted two extensive community needs assessments, which involved town hall meetings, design workshops, online and in-person surveys, a block party, and other forms of extensive outreach. Later, the library also took part in the selection of the Design-Build Entity (DBE) that is designing and building the fire station/library campus.

Through the assessments, the community told the library what was wanted and needed, and after multiple attempts to fit those needs into the building the city was able to offer, a decision was made to look for funds to strategically “upsized” the building.

Our creative architects and determined staff developed a 12,475 square foot design, with an additional 3,000 square feet of programmable outdoor space. An additional \$4 million was needed to pivot to the new design, and after careful consideration and discussion, the Sonoma County Library Commission voted unanimously to allocate the \$4 million in property tax funds necessary to achieve the community needs assessment and design goals for the new library.

In summary, the City of Santa Rosa, with grant advocacy support from the library, was prepared to fully fund a new library in the Roseland community. Subsequently, the project budget was increased by \$4 million to achieve the goals of the library to provide modern, flexible library services for decades to come. The library share of construction funding is one-sixth of the project total, or about 16.6 percent. Library funding enhanced and expanded an existing project; it was not intended as seed funds or to supplant city or grant funding.

CITY-OWNED PARCELS INVENTORY

PRINTED: 10/15/2025

Source: Sonoma County Assessor's Roll

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER	OWNER NAME	STREET ADDRESS	APPROX. AREA (ACRES)	DESCRIPTION
004-011-042-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	Morris Street	5.98	LYP, South Parcel
004-011-043-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	Morris Street	2.75	LYP, North Parcel
004-011-044-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	Morris Street	0.72	Laguna Park
004-011-051-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	390 Morris Street	6.25	Community Center
004-011-052-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	275 Morris Street	3.8	Morris Street Pump Station
004-011-054-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	425 Morris Street	12.89	Youth Annex/Laguna Preserve
004-011-079-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	6700 Laguna Park Way	1.06	Laguna Skate Garden
004-021-004-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	Johnson St. at Eddie Lane	0.02	Right of Way
004-041-086-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	Flynn Street (Turnaround)	0.01	Right of Way
004-051-064-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	6950 Laguna Park Way	0.84	Public Safety Building
004-051-065-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	6950 Laguna Park Way	0.57	Public Safety Building
004-051-067-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	Between LPW and N Main	0.19	Old RR ROW behind McKinley Center
004-051-068-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	Ptn. Laguna Park Way	0.09	Right of Way
004-051-069-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	Ptn. Laguna Park Way	0.12	Right of Way
004-051-075-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	6898 McKinley Street	0.99	City Parking Lot (Movie Theater)
004-051-077-000	SEBASTOPOL COMM DEV AGENCY	Ptn. Laguna Park Way	0.01	Fronting Movie Theater Parcel
004-053-003-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	6901 McKinley Street	0.09	Downtown Plaza
004-053-028-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	6901 McKinley Street	0.79	Downtown Plaza
004-062-003-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	Ptn. Pet. Ave/Depot Street	0.06	Right of Way
004-063-033-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	Off Sebastopol Avenue	0.06	Railroad Forest Bike Path
004-063-017-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	6665 Sebastopol Avenue	0.51	Village Park MHP
004-071-025-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	6949 Burnett Street	0.67	Burnett Street Parking Lot
004-071-028-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	251 South Main Street	0.9	Museum and Chamber Parking Lot
004-072-007-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	6860 Fannen Avenue	0.06	Well 5
004-072-008-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	6848 Fannen Avenue	0.07	Well 5
004-072-014-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	off end of Abbott Avenue	8.09	Railroad Forest
004-103-001-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	6911 Palm Avenue	0.03	Portion Busse Parcel,
004-103-004-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	710 Petaluma Avenue	0.08	Well 4/Spooner Park
004-103-006-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	6901 Palm Avenue	0.25	Fmr. Body Shop
004-191-045-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	351 Jewell Avenue	0.18	Well 8 and Booster Pump Station
004-201-001-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	7425 Bodega Avenue	0.21	Fire Station
004-201-002-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	7410 Bodega Avenue	0.1	Applied Technology Center
004-201-003-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	7351 Bodega Avenue	0.9	Ives Park
004-201-004-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	105 Jewell Avenue	0.21	Ives Park

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ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER	OWNER NAME	STREET ADDRESS	APPROX. AREA (ACRES)	DESCRIPTION
004-201-023-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	7400 Willow Avenue	5.24	Ives Park/Swimming Pool
004-203-027-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	South High Street	0.12	High Street Parking Lot
004-203-028-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	South High Street	0.4	High Street Parking Lot
004-203-031-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	South High Street	0.16	High Street Parking Lot
004-243-003-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	167 North High Street	0.18	Sebastopol Area Senior Center
004-243-026-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	7120-7140 Bodega Avenue	1.18	City Hall/Library/Parking Lot
004-284-009-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	Ptn. Valentine Avenue	0.18	Right of Way (Valentine @ Springdale)
004-301-040-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	Ellis Court		Portion of Right of Way
004-301-042-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	Ellis Court		Portion of Right of Way
004-340-001-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	Off Mackey Court	1.42	First Street Reservoir
004-390-012-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	Off Grav. Hwy. South	0.17	Well 6
004-420-029-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	7985 Valentine Avenue	5.47	Libby Park
004-531-018-000	SEBASTOPOL COMM DEV AGENCY	7991 Covert Lane	0.23	City residual parcel - Sequoia Village
004-550-020-000	SEBASTOPOL COMM DEV AGENCY	6875 Walker Avenue	0.12	City residual parcel - Petaluma Avenue Homes
004-590-011-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	Frankel Lane	0.1	Right of Way Landscaping
004-590-012-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	Frankel Lane	0.11	Right of Way Landscaping
004-600-029-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	Valley View Drive	0.05	Green Valley Sewer Lift Station
004-600-030-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	Off Bodega Avenue	0.58	Adj. GVV Condos, along bank @ Atascadero Creek
060-010-033-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	Sebastopol Avenue	57.59	Meadowlark Field
060-060-001-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	6665 Sebastopol Avenue	12.6	Village Park MHP
060-120-015-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	off end of Abbott Avenue	1.57	Railroad Forest
060-222-029-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	7777 Bodega Avenue	3.22	Gold Ridge Farm
076-050-067-000	CITY OF SEBASTOPOL	1281 Pleasant Hill Road	3.44	Pleasant Hill Reservoirs