SEBASTOPOL COMMONS: BUILDING THE COMMONS COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2025

MEETING MINUTES

As approved by the Committee at their meeting of: *Tuesday, October 7, 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 10:00 am*
ROLL CALL:

Attendees:	*Committee*:	*Sarah Glade Gurney, Ray Holley, Mary Lou Schmidt, RM Horrell, Councilmember Phill Carter, Mayor Stephen Zollman, Danny Foster, Fred Engbarth, Kent Jenkins. Partial meeting: Kenyon Webster*
	Other:	*Serafina Palandech, Katie Davis*
	Absent:	*Naomi Hupert, Representative from Community Foundation*
	City Staff:	*Mary Gourley, 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. INTRODUCTIONS AND PURPOSE OF MEETING

- City staff:
  - *Mary Gourley, Erik Billing, Elissa Overton*
- Round-table introductions: name, role, interest in the Commons project
  - *Committee: Sarah Glade Gurney, Ray Holley, Mary Lou Schmidt, RM Horrell, Phill Carter, Stephen Zollman, Danny Foster, Fred Engbarth, Kent Jenkins, Partial: Kenyon Webster*
  - *Other: Serafina Palandech, Katie Davis*
- Meeting purpose
  - *Create a vision, action plan.*
  - *Prepare a concept statement. This will evolve*
  - *Determine ways to establish community needs, wants, and constraints.*
  - *Establish goals and how to monitor progress.*

II. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

- *Group expressed interest in appointing someone with experience in running a meeting. Would like a voice from both the non-profit and business sectors.*
- *New Chair or Vice Chair can be elected at any point.*
- *Fred's experience and knowledge will be valuable as part of a subcommittee.*
- *RM brings value as an active community member with not as much vested interest.*
- *Does not need to be a Council member .*

- Role of Chair
  - *Facilitate discussions, manage the room, keep meeting on schedule, present updates, meet with staff to prepare the agenda.*
- Vote to appoint Chair and Vice Chair
  - *Chair: All in favor, Stephen Zollan*
  - *Vice Chair: All in favor, RM Horrell*

III. OVERVIEW OF SEBASTOPOL COMMONS VISION

- Background of the project and Council direction
  - *Share old project description.*
  - *The direction of this committee is not set. It will be molded by the Committee.*
  - *Determine the needs of the people vs. needs of the group to move their agenda forward.*
- Relationship to Library Staffing & Facilities Ad Hoc Committee
  - *Library is not subordinate to Library Foundation.*
  - *Work Ad Hoc Committee has done thus far is valuable, but need to change to fit the needs of the community.*
  - *Librarians have become social workers, not okay.*
  - *Need to establish Library needs. Library is too small to hold everything.*
  - *Define who and what the library serves. What economy.*
- Goals for the Commons as a shared civic space
  - *Need to tap into surveys on public spaces.*
  - *Find fund sources, grants.*
  - *A place to celebrate diversity and the mix of culture throughout our community*

IV. COMMITTEE ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Scope of work and limits of authority
  - Direct all questions to entire committee.
- Brown Act
  - *Currently 12 members in the Committee. Need 7 members to attend each meeting to prevent a quorum.*

- *Ask Erik questions, he can respond to all.*
- *Public Records Requests (PRA's): Text messages and emails open to be requested by the public.*
- Additional Brown Act information: https://www.cacities.org/uploadedfiles/leagueinternet/0d/0dd433d2-29c5-410c-af4f-418e247e7af3.pdf

V. MEETING LOGISTICS

- Proposed meeting schedule (frequency, time, location)
  - *Schedule meeting in two weeks to establish subcommittees. Discuss reoccurring meetings during that time.*
- Process for agenda setting, minutes, and public participation
  - *Committee will establish the agenda for the next meeting at the end of each meeting. Minutes will be prepared by staff and posted to the website with the audio recording for public viewing and listening.*
- Roles (chair, staff)
  - *Chair roles are as discussed above.*
  - *Staff will schedule and facilitate meetings.*

VI. DISCUSSION

- *Look at Sister City in Japan. Focus on community support.*
- *Ray to share what was done at Roseland Reginal Library at the next meeting.*
- *Envision a new library space and establish what pieces would be a shared vision for all non-profits and community organizations. Equal contribution.*
- *Establish invested interests of pool, art, parks, and Barlow.*
- *Center for the Arts is struggling to see how they fit into this structure. Current message does not align with their strategies and goals.*
- *Need to squash rumor that they are building or buying a structure. Plans are not known yet.*
- *Work on restructuring goals and responding to rumors. Need a unanimous message.*
- *Monitor progress by creating milestones, highlighting accomplishments, quarterly reporting to Mary to publish.*
- *Need to establish subcommittee's at next meeting. Subcommittee's will report out at each Committee meeting.*
- *Potential subcommittees:*
  - *<u>Survey</u>: Community Needs, Data/Green Building/Empower/Volunteers*
  - *<u>Funding</u>: Understanding of funding needs, grants*
  - *<u>Concept</u>: Create a vision/concept to share with public.*
- *Prepare a list of physical assets, but need to focus on human assets and cultures. Create a place with a connection to the community. Provides with people.*

- *Thrilled with all the sectors in the room that have come together to develop a plan.*
- *Bring in non-profits without a home; gives hope for future to hold events.*
- *Focus on wellbeing and unification. Walkability. Accessibility.*
- *Design plan to fit within budget, image.*
- *Too soon to market a message.*

VII. NEXT STEPS

- Next meeting date
  - *October 21, 2025 9:00 am – 10:00 pm*
- Review of Existing Information
  - Current site and facilities overview
    - *Create list of City owned properties.*
  - Preliminary concepts
  - Previous community feedback or relevant reports
- Establish Subcommittees
  - *Establish at net meeting.*
  - *Can have members of the public, but could create a quorum.*
- Identify Near-Term Priorities
  - What needs to be accomplished in the next 3–6 months
  - Opportunities for early community engagement or input
  - Key data and resources needed
- Other Agenda Items:
  - *History of Roseland Library.*
  - *Is there a way we can share research information? Dropbox?*
  - *Discussion of needs*
    - *Engagement/survey/community needs assessment*
    - *Money/grants/write narrative*
    - *Project description/concept*
  - *What assets do we have?*
    - *City/County lots, buildings*

VIII. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

Who adjourned the meeting at: 12:00 pm

Submitted by:

Elissa Overton, City Staff Member