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Sebastopol Commons Committee
Councilmember Stephen Zollman – Chair
RM Horrell – Vice Chair

SEBASTOPOL COMMONS: BUILDING THE COMMONS COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2026
1:00 pm

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES
(ABBREVIATED)

In Person Location: 1:00: Sebastopol City Hall, City Hall Conference Room, 7120 Bodega Avenue
Remote Teleconference Participation: 12125 Ramsey Road, Sebastopol

CALL TO ORDER: *Councilmember Zollman called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm*
ROLL CALL:

Attendees:	*Committee:*	*Councilmember Stephen Zollman, Councilmember Phill Carter, RM Horrell, Sarah Glade Gurney, Kent Jenkins, Mary Lou Schmidt, Deb Hoadley. Remote: Fred Engbarth*
	Absent:	*RM Horrell, Naomi Hupert*
	City Staff:	*Mary Gourley, Oriana Hart, 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.

AGENDA:
Consent Calendar Item(s):

1. Approval of Minutes of the July 14, 2026 Building the Commons Committee Meeting (Posted and included as ITEM 1 with meeting agenda)
    a. Motion for Approval, Kent. Second, Mary Lou: Yay's: 7, Nay's: 0, Absent: 2, Abstain: 0

Subcommittee Update(s):

2. Update from the Funding Assessment Subcommittee
    a. Phill to move ahead with grant prep.
    Motion for approval, Sarah, Second, Stephen: Yay's: 7, Nay's: 0, Absent: 2, Abstain: 0
3. Update from the Public Awareness & Philanthropy Subcommittee

Open House:

4. Review Draft Agenda
5. Review presentation pieces

Agenda and Presentation for City Council:

6. Review Draft Council Agenda
7. Discuss what the committee is proposing to Council?
8. Discuss who is doing the Council Presentations: 20 minutes requested.

Library Discussion:

9. Shared updates.

New Business:

10. Pending Questions
11. Zone Map

Subcommittee Composition (standing items):

12. Election of new Chair.
13. Discussion of restructuring/renaming of current Subcommittees or establishment of additional subcommittees (this is a standing agenda item and will only be discussed if new subcommittees are requested).
14. Identify focus topics of existing and newly created subcommittees.

Timelines/Milestones/Next Steps:

15. Committee Schedule
16. What is required to be accomplished at each of these future meetings

Adjournment:

17. Request for Future Agenda items (Members should make requests for topics/agenda items/information for next meeting)
18. Approval of Agenda items for next meeting (Committee is to approve the agenda items for the next Committee meeting. Urgent agenda items can be proposed to Committee Chair for addition.)
19. Meeting will be adjourned to the next committee meeting: September 8, 2026, 1:00 pm

Future Meetings:

1. Next Meeting Date: August 13, 2026 at 3:00 pm, O'Reilly Buildings
2. Meeting Agenda items for August 13, 2026, August 25, 2026, and September 8, 2026 (the committee process is to approve the agenda items for the next Committee meeting)
3. Request for Future Agenda items (this is an opportunity for members to make requests for topics/agenda items/information for next meeting)

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

- Meeting adjourned at: 3:02 pm

INFORMATION ONLY

- A list of resources in the drop box for this Committee can be found at the link below: https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/jukixk5i0u6qc6m6aopqm/AGhv7odAoAxAq1fG9gtkrU4?rlkey=kh83eobwmz20x0q915zpmrlfk&st=1i2plhoj&dl=0
- Brown Act: https://www.cacities.org/uploadedfiles/leagueinternet/0d/0dd433d2-29c5-410c-af4f-418e247e7af3.pdf
- Public Document Access: https://www.cityofsebastopol.gov/boards-commissions-committees/

Submitted by: Elissa Overton, City Staff Member

ATTACHED:

Attachment A – AI recap of meeting minutes

ATTACHMENT A

THE FOLLOWING DATA IS GENERATED BY AI AND CONTAINS INACCURATE REPRESENTATIONS OF THE DISCUSSIONS THAT TOOK PLACE. PLEASE LISTEN TO THE AUDIO RECORDING FOR CLARIFICATION AND FURTHER DETAILS.

Summary

This meeting focused on updates regarding the O'Reilly project and library operations in Sebastopol. The group discussed the current status of library remediation work, with ServPro contractors setting up containment and beginning demolition of affected walls, expected to be complete by the end of next week. The library has reopened in a limited "library to go" model offering hold pickup and Wi-Fi access, while working on a system migration that temporarily paused holds and reserves. A significant discussion emerged around funding requests for programming at the Sebastopol Community Cultural Center, with the library seeking $700 per month for 6 hours of weekly programming including children's and teen programs. The group also addressed missed opportunities for grant funding related to resiliency and community center planning, with discussions about whether to pursue a planning grant with a September 4th deadline despite the O'Reilly decision not being finalized until September 15th.

Next steps

Fred

- Send the grant application framework document to Phill via staff for the September 4th grant submission.

Mary

- Reach out to Alex (City Attorney) to interpret the Joint Powers Agreement regarding the city's responsibility for funding the Sebastopol Community Cultural Center for library programming.
- Work with staff to finalize the draft report for the September 15th City Council meeting, incorporating feedback from the September 8th committee meeting.
- Provide information to the public about the reasons for the delay in library programming and the steps being taken to address it.

Phill

- Lead the effort to submit the September 4th grant application, coordinating with staff and other committee members individually as needed.
- Present the "Comparisons of Financial Realities" section at the September 13th open house.

Collaboration

- Mary Lou and Sarah: Collaborate to present the community needs assessment summary at the September 13th open house.
- Staff (Elissa/Oriana): Add the library heat map to the September 13th open house materials and the September 15th Council packet.
- Staff (Elissa/Oriana): Include the summary of the needs assessment as a handout or large print for the September 13th open house.
- All Committee Members: Send individual feedback and thoughts on the draft staff report to staff (Elissa & Oriana) before the September 8th meeting.

Summary

Informal Discussion and Updates

The transcript appears to be a fragmented conversation with no clear meeting agenda or decisions made. The discussion included casual topics about travel experiences in Hawaii and London, as well as technical issues regarding library maps and equipment repairs. No specific action items, decisions, or next steps were clearly identified in the conversation.

O'Reilly Project and Library Updates

The meeting focused on updates regarding the O'Reilly project and library operations. Arianna provided an update on the remediation process, noting that ServPro had begun containing and repairing walls, with demolition expected to be complete by the end of next week. The group discussed plans to release a request for proposal (RFP) for repairs, aiming for award by September 15th. Deb reported that the library's "library to go" model had reopened, offering limited services including hold pickup and a small collection, with extended hours from Monday to Saturday. The library also underwent a system migration and upgrade to its internal catalog, which temporarily paused holds and reserves but was expected to be fully operational by August 25th.

Library Operations and Funding Updates

The meeting discussed operational updates at the library, including the return to regular hours at Forestville and current summer programming limited to baby and me time in the park and family story time. A significant discussion centered on the library's request for $700 per month for 5 months to fund classroom use at the Sebastopol Community Cultural Center, which needs to be brought to the city council for approval. The group also addressed a new request for using City Hall as a break room, though concerns were raised about ADA accessibility and scheduling conflicts.

Library Funding and Programming Discussion

The council discussed funding for library programs at a community center, with a proposed $700 monthly cost for 6 hours of programming per week. They agreed to consult with the city attorney Alex about whether the city should pay for the building costs under the Joint Powers Agreement, with the city manager offering to reallocate funds from their budget if appropriate. The group also addressed public frustration about delays in library services and discussed strategies for better communication, including reaching out to schools and posting program information on social media. Finally, they reviewed funding opportunities including a planning grant and EHDRP advanced infrastructure grant that needed immediate attention, particularly one with a September 25th deadline.

Community Resilience Grant Discussion

Fred discussed a grant opportunity with a September 4th deadline focused on community resilience and development centers, emphasizing that significant work would be required including identifying primary leaders, management plans, and floor plans. The group debated whether city council approval would be needed before submitting the grant application, with Fred clarifying that while council approval would be required to accept any funding, submitting the application itself doesn't require prior council approval. The discussion highlighted concerns about staffing time requirements and the need for clear role definitions between different committees working on the grant application.

Resiliency Grant Application Planning

The committee discussed a resiliency grant application with a September 4th deadline, though concerns were raised about applying too early since the City Council won't decide on the O'Reilly location until September 15th. Fred proposed creating a third ad-hoc committee to handle the grant application, but after discussion about Brown Act compliance and staff time constraints, it was decided that Phillwould lead the effort with staff support rather than forming a new committee. The group agreed that staff time should be limited to approximately 5 hours for data gathering and submission, with any questions from committee members needing to go through staff to avoid violating meeting rules.

O'Reilly Open House Planning Meeting

The committee discussed preparations for an upcoming open house meeting at O'Reilly on Thursday. They finalized the agenda structure, with Mary Lou handling the community needs assessment summary, Phill presenting financial comparisons, and Bill Carter speaking as an anchor tenant representative. The group agreed to add heat maps for both the library and senior center to the presentation materials, and decided to make available copies of the poster boards and floor plans for attendees. The committee also discussed the need for individual members to submit written feedback on the draft staff report before the September 15th meeting, with Kent suggesting the current committee should be disbanded after this work is completed.