sebastopol

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JANUARY
2016

New Mayor

In an annual ritual, at the December 1 meeting of the City Council, the Mayoral gavel was passed from Patrick Slayter to new Mayor Sarah Glade Gurney. Council members thanked Mayor Slayter for his service and dedication to civil, orderly and effective Council meetings.

Una Glass is the City's Vice-Mayor, who presides in the Mayor's absence.

It is the first time in the history of the City that both Mayor and Vice Mayor positions have been held by women during the same term.

We wish them both the best in leading the City forward.

Wood Smoke

Sebastopol is within the jurisdiction of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). The District has regulations controlling wood smoke.

Wood-burning is significantly more polluting than a number of other forms of heating. Smoke is made up of a complex mixture of gases and fine particles produced when wood and other organic matter burn.

The biggest health threat from smoke comes from fine particles (also called particulate matter or PM). These microscopic particles get into your eyes and respiratory system, where they can cause health problems such as burning eyes, runny nose, and illnesses such as bronchitis. Fine particles also can aggravate chronic heart and lung diseases and are linked to premature deaths in people with these chronic conditions.

The Air District's regulations make it illegal to burn wood or fire logs in fireplaces, wood stoves, pellet stoves, outdoor fire pits, or any other wood-burning devices when the Air District issues a Winter Spare the Air Alert. For more information or to sign up for an email Spare the Air alert, see the BAAQMD web site at www.baaqmd.gov

General Plan Milestone

The General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) has been working for many months to formulate proposed General Plan policies.

In mid-December the GPAC completed its 12th and final meeting and forwarded its draft General Plan to the Planning Commission and City Council. The GPAC did a terrific job working together, taking in public input, and formulating comprehensive policies in a range of areas.

In early 2016 the Planning Commission and City Council will hold a series of meetings (January 12, February 9, and March 8) to review the GPAC's work, after which the formal draft General Plan, along with an Environmental Impact Report, will be prepared for public comment.

All of this round of meetings will be at 7pm at the Youth Annex, 425 Morris Street. The current schedule calls for the General Plan to be completed by the end of 2016.

Christmas Tree Drop-off

As usual, after the Christmas holiday, there will be a bin provided off Morris Street for recycling of Christmas trees. The bin will be located on the north side of the gravel parking lot behind the Youth Annex, at 425 Morris Street.

Please do not place any artificial trees in the bin!

CalFresh News Flash

The Sebastopol Farmers Market will give $10 in free fruits and vegetables to every single Cal Fresh user who spends at least $10 in Cal Fresh money at the market.

That would be an extra $40 or $50 each month if you show up every week. Pretty nice addition to any food budget. This is good every single Sunday for the next two years, thanks to a grant from the federal government.

Stop by the Market Manager's table every Sunday from 10 until 1:30 for your free fresh, locally grown, healthy, delicious food!

Pedestrian Safety

Pedestrian safety is a serious issue. One in six traffic fatalities in California is a pedestrian. There are increasing concerns about pedestrian safety. Pedestrians have the right of way in crosswalks, even if the crosswalk is in the middle of the block.

Before turning a corner, watch for people about to cross the street.

Look for pedestrians and be prepared to stop. For a safer community, always stop for any pedestrian crossing at corners or other crosswalks, even if the crosswalk is in the middle of the block, and at corners with or without traffic lights, whether or not the crosswalks are marked by painted lines.

Wayfinding Sign Program Reactivated

The City's plan for a 'wayfinding' sign program to help guide motorists to key destinations in town has been reactivated. The plans had been shelved when the State terminated Sebastopol's redevelopment agency. The project will help persons who may be unfamiliar with the town (or its one-way street system) to navigate to key destinations. The project also has the potential to enhance the identity of the City, and reduce sign clutter. The City Council allocated funding for the project, which will also include a downtown, pedestrian-oriented wayfinding component, identity signs for major City facilities, and a design for new gateway signs.The current project is only for design; once that phase is completed, additional resources will be needed to fabricate and install the signs.

Hospital Reopens

Palm Drive Hospital has been reopened and rebranded as Sonoma West Medical Center. The hospital, located at 501 Petaluma Avenue offers a full range of medical services, including an emergency department, cardiopulmonary services, an intensive care unit, integrated health services, a surgery center, and stroke care services, among others. The emergency department has been structured to minimize wait time, which can be an issue with other area hospitals.

As part of the reopening process, Sonoma West upgraded diagnostic and medical equipment and remodeled facilities.

What Are They Building?

You might have noticed several construction projects on Gravenstein Highway South. At the old 'Foster Freeze' site, a new seafood restaurant is under construction. Meanwhile, right next door another project is underway that will include 8 apartments on the second floor, and 8 commercial spaces on the ground floor.

Report Water and Sewer Breaks

If you see what you suspect is a sewer or water leak in town, please report it immediately to either the Public Works Department (707) 823-5331 during regular business or to the Police Department (707) 829-4400 after hours and on holidays and weekends. City staff are always on call and your prompt report will enable us to evaluate the situation, and will help protect local waterways and conserve water. Any suspected emergency, any time of the day or night, should be reported promptly to the City for evaluation and action! Thank you!

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