

Sebastopol

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VISION

JANUARY
2017



New Sebastopol City Council

New City Council Members Seated, New Mayor Elected

At the December 6, 2016 City Council meeting, there was a changing of the guard.

Outgoing Council Members John Eder and Robert Jacob were thanked for their service to the City. Mayor Gurney noted the Council's many initiatives over the last year.

New Council Members Michael Carnacchi and Neysa Hinton were seated, and began their four-year terms.

At the same meeting, the Council unanimously selected Una Glass as Mayor, and Patrick Slayter as Vice Mayor.

The City looks forward to a productive year!

Housing Issues to the Forefront

Sebastopol, along with many California communities, faces significant housing issues. There are substantial housing affordability and availability concerns throughout California, and locally in Sonoma County including Sebastopol.

Housing production in California has not matched housing needs, and the recent recession had a substantial negative impact on housing production, exacerbating a gap between needs, availability, and production. Limited availability has resulted in higher rents and home prices. The effects of extremely high housing prices and the concentration of high-income households in the inner Bay Area are being felt in Sonoma County. Long-standing issues with mental health services contribute to some aspects of the problem.

Renters are concerned that they may not be able to remain in Sebastopol due to rising rents, stagnant incomes and limited rental availability; those seeking homeownership face steep prices; families are worried that their children might not be able to live in the community in which they grew up; special needs populations face affordability and suitability challenges; aging residents lack local housing suitable to their changing needs; and there are continuing issues with chronic homelessness.

Sebastopol cannot solve regional housing issues by itself. However, if each community in the region contributes, meaningful progress can be made.

Along with a number of housing initiatives identified in the new General Plan, the issue of rent control is one of the policies that will be reviewed. On December 6, the Council extended a temporary moratorium on certain types of rent increases for a six month period. In early 2017, the City expects to begin a fast-paced community process to identify actions that should be considered to address housing issues. Please contact the Planning Department to get added to an email notification list for this initiative.



Cittaslow International officials visit Sebastopol in December

Cittaslow Sebastopol opens for volunteers in January

Want to keep Sebastopol green, local, friendly and artistic? Join Cittaslow Sebastopol (CittaslowSebastopol.org). Partnering with the City, Cittaslow sponsors projects such as the Rainwater Harvesting Workshop, the Sebastopol Ped Line, Favorite Walks, and the Sebastopol Area Time Bank. Cittaslow Sebastopol opens up to new volunteers once a year. Current openings include:

- Slow City Ambassador: Staffing the Farmers Market booth, or distributing brochures to local businesses;
- Facebook Contributor: Posting/sharing fun community events;
- Walking Advocate: Gluing markers on the sidewalk for the new Sebastopol Ped Line (4 color-coded, "Park Once and Walk" self-guided walking tours);
- Events Assistant: Posting flyers, picking up food donations, decorating the room, setting up chairs.

Cittaslow Sebastopol is a fun way to engage with others and help Sebastopol retain its unique small town spirit. For more information, email:

info@cittaslowsebastopol.org

Community Contributions

Volunteers contribute significantly to our City government. Did you know that City Council members, Planning Commissioners, Design Review Board Members, and Public Arts Committee members are all volunteers, who have stepped forward to serve their communities? These responsibilities involve many hours of work, in sometimes difficult and contentious situations. In performing their duties, they represent the community in carrying out City policy in the context of City, State, and Federal laws. If you are interested in serving, monitor the home page of our web site for openings.

Beautify our Town

Sebastopol is a special community, set in a unique environment, and with its own character. What can you do to make Sebastopol a more beautiful and interesting place? An artistic sign for your business? Flowers in your front yard? Bright new colors for your house? Or just sweeping your sidewalk? Let's all see what we can do!

New City Website!

The City has implemented a new website.

New features include the ability to pay water and sewer bills online.

While the look and navigation are different, the new web site is now mobile-responsive, for better viewing on smartphones and tablets. It also has multiple channels to provide feedback and ask questions.

Please check it out and let us know what you think!

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