

From: [Jill McLewis](#)
To: [Mary Gourley](#)
Subject: Fwd: Follow Up on Elderberry Commons Meetings
Date: Tuesday, October 05, 2021 1:50:05 PM
Attachments: [Screen Shot 2021-08-12 at 9.14.37 PM.png](#)
[Screen Shot 2021-08-12 at 9.12.13 PM.png](#)
[Screen Shot 2021-08-12 at 9.11.24 PM.png](#)
[Screen Shot 2021-08-12 at 9.10.56 PM.png](#)
[Screen Shot 2021-08-12 at 9.09.56 PM.png](#)
[Screen Shot 2021-08-12 at 9.08.26 PM.png](#)
[Screen Shot 2021-08-12 at 9.07.51 PM.png](#)

Hi Mary,

I'm forwarding an email I sent to the county in August regarding the issues at Elderberry Commons. Since that time, one of the residents, has taken to loitering at the outside tables due to the coffee shop being closed. She even dropped her pants in front of us and urinated and defecated right under the tree across from our business door while we were standing right there. The elderberry residents had a fire going in the parking lot to "grill" one evening, which resulted in the police being called. I'd like all this information to be placed on record and forwarded to the city council. The problem with the unhoused is reaching a breaking point and is unacceptable. Even with housing, crapping on the ground outside a business is still occurring. I've experienced more sane and cleaner environments in third world countries without plumbing.

At what point will our elected officials represent the citizens who elect them. The city of Sebastopol has one thing going for it right now, and that's The Barlow. How are they expected to draw in crowds of people when visitors have to side step the sidewalk because of all the junk piled up by those living in the illegal RV's and tip toe around the feces that is commonly found everywhere around the RV's. What happens when a pedestrian or biker gets hit by a car because of all the accommodations made for the illegal RV's and the residents breaking the law. What a liability that will be for the city. CVS will seem like small potatoes. When will our concerns be prioritized and when will the leaders open their eyes to a problem, they are making worse by supporting and advocating for people who do not contribute to our community, break laws and not held accountable, do not pay taxes nor will they be voting when next year rolls around.

That brings me to the sharrows. What a horrible idea. To solve a problem, the solution is to make a more dangerous environment for bikers? That's unconscionable. Why won't the city council deal with the real problem? The RV's are parked illegally and nothing is being done about it. So rather than fix a problem and enforce the current laws, the city proposes a more dangerous situation to alleviate their liability and the fact that current laws aren't being enforced. The chief of police even stated he knows it's a problem.

City council members have campaigned on their desire to make Sebastopol a more bike friendly city to reduce congestion and yet when it's convenient, that goes out the window and it's ok for bikers to be combined with cars. If it's that safe, why not do that on Petaluma Avenue and alleviate all the hassle from residents upset about the new bike lanes. I'm unhappy to see our city and city council living by a double standard and only being true to their word when it's convenient. I'd like to know our city council cares about the citizens who elected them. Many of us won't make the same mistake next year during election time.

Thank you,
Jill McLewis

Begin forwarded message:

From: Jill McLewis <jillbea3@mac.com>
Subject: Follow Up on Elderberry Commons Meetings
Date: August 12, 2021 at 10:50:24 PM PDT

To: Leo Chyi <Leo.Chyi@sonoma-county.org>
Cc: Lynda Hopkins <Lynda.Hopkins@sonoma-county.org>, Linda Low <Linda.Low@sonoma-county.org>, bos@sonoma-county.org, Gourley Mary <mgourley@cityofsebastopol.org>

Hi Leo,

I'm catching up on emails after being out of town. As a resident of Sebastopol, I too would like to see the data regarding the number of people staying at EC, the length of stay, what success looks like, such as how many people have accepted help and been able to find employment, how many have refused help. How many people have been moved from the streets of Sebastopol to EC. Are the residents in fact elderly who are considered at high risk for COVID? That is how it was explained in all the meetings, yet the photo op with Governor Newsom didn't reflect that. A resident from EC has been sitting on the wall by CVS every day for hours/months. What type of programs are in place at EC to help him recover and eventually find permanent housing. What are the financial numbers? Projected versus actuals. Why does the city of Sebastopol need to spend 70k/yr on a homeless advocate when the city has already lost money due to EC? Why isn't this an expense covered by the county? While some of this may be presented at the BOS regular meetings, Sebastopol residents deserve to hear from Supervisor Hopkins directly with a data presentation and have the opportunity to engage and discuss. Not 1-2 minutes at a BOS meeting where communication is one way. The report on the security/police calls. Is that a self reported number from DEMA, or actual data from the police department? Supervisor Hopkins talks about transparency a lot and the residents of Sebastopol would like to experience it as well.

As a business owner at Gravenstein Station, which is in front of EC, we've experienced a vast increase in trash, random items and shopping carts being left around the property. In the 5.5 years we've been there, this has never been a huge issue. On occasion, but not weekly like it has been since EC began. I've lost track of the number of shopping carts I've removed from the property and returned. A tent is set up for EC residents to sit under, which is to the right of the EC building. The issue is that the residents are now starting to "overflow" and rather than be in that area, they're sitting in parking spaces, sitting in chairs around the curbs, so that when you come around the corner with your car, or need to get to the dumpster, there they are. A gentleman in a wheel chair is often at that curb. Someone is going to get hurt by a car, nor work their way around people to get to the dumpster. Why do the residents need to be hanging out all over that area and some with their stuff? We've also had a vehicle sitting in the parking lot for at least 6 weeks with a flat tire and mirror hanging off of it. Gravenstein Station management said they dealt with it and it's owned by an EC resident. From what we can see, someone put air in the tire, which is slowly leaking out again. I've attached just a few pictures of the trash with alcohol bottles in them, smoking items, underwear found in the parking lot, etc... As business owners, it's frustrating to have to deal with this and would appreciate someone addressing it. Certainly our customers don't appreciate it and it makes the area look trashy. If the county feels it's appropriate to place homeless housing in a downtown business district, they should in turn be good neighbors and ensure their own house is in order just as all the business owners do. I know my neighbors wouldn't like it if I threw my trash in their yard each day when I come home.

Thank you,
Jill McLewis











On Aug 12, 2021, at 1:29 PM, Leo Chyi <Leo.Chyi@sonoma-county.org> wrote:

Thanks to everyone who responded to my last message on Elderberry Commons. It sounds like there is not the need for a regular repeating meeting, but people will reach out to me when they feel that a meeting is needed. Of course, if there is a major change or update, we will convene a meeting.

Some people were hoping for a bit more information like what we would typically include in our status update. I followed up with Michelle at DEMA to get some additional detail about the current status. The census as of last week was 28. I asked about whether there have been any public safety issues, and there have not been any recent police calls, and there was one EMS call.

Regarding the planned fence construction, CDC has informed me that it is waiting for the reviewed landscape design which will incorporate the plantings instead of fence in the segment that the community requested. The timeline moving forward is that CDC hopes to get to the Design Review Board in September. They would then plan to start the work on the fence and landscaping before the end of the year.

To address the signage issue that a few people raised, CDC will get a banner that says "Elderberry Commons" and get the sign taken down. This will be a temporary measure. CDC will work with a local signage designer to come up with a new logo and signage, and there will be a public process for that as well.

Finally, I received a request for a more global update on homelessness, which I passed on to CDC and Health Services. Currently, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors is planning to hear a homelessness related update on August 24, 2021. BOS agendas are posted here when finalized: <https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>.

Sincerely,
Leo

Leo Chyi
District Director to
Supervisor Lynda Hopkins

575 Administration Drive 100A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
707.565.2241

From: Leo Chyi
Sent: Wednesday, August 4, 2021 12:07 PM
To: Lynda Hopkins <Lynda.Hopkins@sonoma-county.org>; Linda Low <Linda.Low@sonoma-county.org>
Subject: Checking in on Elderberry Commons Meetings

Dear Community Members-

I have been working with CDC to schedule the next Elderberry Commons Meeting this month and have been finding it difficult to arrange a time that works for

everyone who would ideally be there from the County and City side of things. Things have continued to move forward smoothly from what I have heard, and rather than trying to convene everyone, I would like to propose that we have the next meeting when it is needed – when there is some kind of update or change in conditions that would merit a discussion, or if multiple community members think that it is necessary to have an update meeting.

I have heard from one community member asking that the signage saying “Sebastopol Inn” be removed, and I am also seeking updated information on the timeline for the fencing process as well as confirming a specific detail related to the design. If you have other specific questions or needs, please let me know, and I can try to answer your questions.

If you see it as important to have an Elderberry Commons Meeting at this time, please let me know. If that is the case, if you could include any agenda item you’d like to see addressed, let me know.

I hope that your August is going well. Do feel free to reach out on this or other 5th District County issues!

Sincerely,
Leo

Leo Chyi
District Director to
Supervisor Lynda Hopkins

575 Administration Drive 100A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
707.565.2241

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Aide: Jason Wilson
Field Representative: Elise VanDyne
District5@Sonoma-county.org