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Subject: Public comment for November 30th City of Sebastopol Council meeting regarding parking permits & SAVS ESG-SV funded short term concept
Date: Monday, November 29, 2021 11:09:03 AM

Dear Council members,

I fully support and encourage voting in City of Sebastopol citywide RV Permit Parking to ameliorate the current intractable downtown transient parking situation, and urge the council to apply a lot more pressure on the county to provide appropriate scale facilities for the unhoused in urgent need of care on county owned land and infrastructure.

It is unconscionable for the county to expect a city with a \$10m budget to provide city land and resources to create high risk RV parking when the county has spent 92.4 million over the last 2 years on homeless projects and is budgeting even greater spending in 2022.

A City of Sebastopol state of emergency could include a clause that emphasizes the pressure being put on the city's budget, services and resources by an overly bureaucratic, disorganized and poorly staffed county, CoC & CDC. Where Marin County has a well organized Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and a sophisticated CAHOOTS (Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets) social worker and community policing case management model Sonoma County have destroyed past homeless data sets and purchased an expensive IBM AI system they have never successfully used. The county has one of the most severe homeless problems in the nation but is very poorly organized, resulting in undue pressure on small communities such as the city of Sebastopol and with the county relying on sometimes questionable outsourced 'non profit' partners.

If the county was providing sufficient shelter beds, campers could be triaged to appropriate resources, reducing 9th circuit and Boise vs Martin legal constraints and thus avoiding the encampments that are a huge problem across much of the county.

Regarding Sonoma Applied Village Services (SAVS) efforts to obtain the Sonoma County Continuum of Care grant of \$368k, these funds are a state supplied urgent care Covid 19 AB83 [CARES](#) act Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG-CV) taken from federal Covid19 relief funds, and not the more mainstream, longer term federal HUD CoC funding typically used to establish permanent housing solutions.

This is a short term third of a million dollar band aid which will enable setting up a small and crowded short term parking area, but it is very unclear, as is the case with the Sebastopol Inn, what will happen when funding runs out.

The proposed new 'safe parking' site at 845 Gravenstein North, if it is purchased by St Vincent DePaul and leased to SAVS, is safer geographically than the previous flood zone camp site idea next to the community center and green acre home but will have a very short shelf life and some potentially difficult long term ramifications as an 'urgency measure'. It is unclear how and by what terms St Vincent DePaul would use the land and infrastructure. It is also unclear how local neighbors will feel about the site's potential new use models.

Clearly mayor Glass and councillor Rich have put in a tremendous amount of work on this project with SAVS to try to obtain the short term grant funding. The agreement with the city of Sebastopol on how SAVS spend the money (or alternatively a SAVS agreement with somewhere else they would spend the CoC grant) has to be in place by December 8 2021, and the entire grant has to be completely consumed by 6-30-2022, so essentially funding for 180 days, and considerably less once the parking location is actually ready to be inhabitable.

My earlier comments about the county are pertinent here - why are they wasting time funding small one acre short term projects instead of organizing at scale to provide appropriate aid and shelter for the numerous issues homeless people are dealing with?

Regardless of this short term project, parking permitting will help blighted city neighborhoods - east Palm Avenue, Johnson Street, Laguna Parkway and of course Morris Street, plus the various local parks - to get cleaned up and back into use by the community, a huge step in the right direction.

Parking permit restrictions are not cutting edge or questionable civic logic unless clearly publicized housing outcomes are not made known. Parking programs are very effective when they are frequently evaluated and iterated to keep the flows into better services moving forward, but the County shows little progress in this type of organization and oversight. This needs to change.

Many California towns and cities have the case history and legislative groundwork that underpins their homeless triaging logic- in fact campers now tend to seek out localities with lax camping laws as more and more places constrain overnight camping. It should be easy to find the appropriate boilerplate and legal frameworks to emulate what other localities have in place. I will continue to pressure the county to take the stress off our cities and to organize more coherent strategies to help those in need more efficiently and cost effectively.

Thank you for all your hard work on these issues, particularly Mayor Glass and Councillor Rich.

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