


Agenda Report Reviewed by:
City Manager: 

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM

Meeting Date: January 19, 2022
To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
From: City Administration
Subject: Relaunch Sebastopol Interviews
Recommendation: That the Mayor and City Council Interview Applicants for the Relaunch Sebastopol Contract
Funding: Currently Budgeted: Yes No N/A

Net General Fund:
Contract Services
Amount: \$86,000
Net General Fund Cost:

Account Code Number: 124-11-01-4210/Costs \$86,000 authorized in City Approved Budget (if applicable) AK (verified by Administrative Services Department)

INTRODUCTION: This item is to request City Council Interview Applicants for the Relaunch Sebastopol Contract.

BACKGROUND:

On October 19, 2021 the City Council approved a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a Relaunch Sebastopol contract to manage and coordinate a variety of organizations and interests towards a common goal of increased community vitality. The Council authorized \$86,000 towards hiring of a contract employee or consultant to not only identify steps the City can take to promote the creation of a robust retail environment in the City, work with cross-promoting events, but also create City events to showcase Sebastopol and enhance community engagement and cross-promoting of events.

DISCUSSION:

City staff released the Request for Proposals with the goal to hire professional consultant or contract employee to develop and sustain a strong local economy to provide business and residents with, among other things, the necessary municipal services to maintain the community's high quality of life. The awardee would carry out the tasks in the RFP to enhance community and economic vitality for Sebastopol and coordinate a variety of organizations and interests towards a common goal of increased community vitality.

The goal of the RFP is to enhance Sebastopol as the welcoming and safe destination with a rich history, abundance of culture and attractions, and a beautiful City to see by foot or bike.

Of importance with this RFP was the fact that the City has limited funding for Relaunch Sebastopol. Sebastopol is a lean City in terms of staffing. We do not have staff dedicated to Community or Economic Vitality, but rather include these responsibilities with staff who have significant other roles. The proposal's approach and recommendations were to reflect the limited staff time that would be able to be dedicated to this contract.

As of the deadline the City received three verified proposals. The item tonight is for City Council to conduct the second interview with the proposers.

City Council will consider award of contract later in the agenda

The interviews have been scheduled as follows:

9:00 am Deborah Burnes
10:00 am Peacetown
11:00 am Townie Media

CITY COUNCIL AND/OR GENERAL PLAN GOALS:

- 4.1 Create a Safe, Healthy and Attractive Environment for Residents and Visitors
 - 4.1.1 Improve and beautify the downtown plaza to create a people centric space for community events and gatherings
 - 4.2.2 Foster a Sense of Community by Providing and Encouraging Participation in Community Events, Volunteering, and working with Non Profits to Support Local Events
- 8.1 Promote the City of Sebastopol as the destination for slow travel, eco-tourism and supporting of bike activities
 - 8.1.2 Support a Vibrant, Attractive and Accessible Downtown That Attracts Residents and Visitors thereby creating a Viable Sales Tax Base
 - 8.1.3 Promotion of Experience Sebastopol.com to increase visitors to the City
 - 8.1.4 Identify Businesses wanted in Sebastopol - (Use of City Committees to conduct survey of the community)
 - 8.1.5 Encourage new and existing businesses to offer living wage to employees

PUBLIC COMMENT:

As of the writing of this staff report, the City has not received any public comment. However, if staff receives public comment from interested parties following the publication and distribution of this staff report such comments will be provided to the City Council as supplemental materials before or at the meeting. In addition, public comments may be offered during the public comment portion of this item.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

This item was noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to schedule meeting date.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The City Council has authorized \$86,000 in the FY 21-22 Fiscal Year Budget.

RECOMMENDATION: That the City Council conduct the second interview with the proposers.

Attachment(s):

- Attachment 1: Deborah Burnes Relaunch Proposal
- Attachment 2: Peacetown Relaunch Proposal
- Attachment 3: Townie Media Relaunch Proposal

RELAUNCH SEBASTOPOL

Community / Economic Vitality

Deborah Burnes
350 Morris St Suite C Sebastopol ca
Deborah Burnes 707 [REDACTED]
November 9th

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Introduction

K.I.S.S - I remember my professor writing this on the chalkboard my first day at college in speech class. This 'Keep It Simple Stupid' rule has lived with me ever since. The concept of this proposal is to make sure the items listed can be executed simply and effectively. While there are lots of options of how to promote and increase business, I was mindful to keep at the forefront a tight budget and limited staffing. Better to walk slow with strength and be able to take ideas from concept to execution, then have a proposal were we lack the financial or physical support to bring to fruition.

A strong marketing strategy unites and engages the community. To lift Sebastopol's foot traffic, sales, visibility and devotion, it will take full participation from the entire community. A plan to expand beauty, boost sales, lift downtown merchants, reach the masses with how and why Sebastopol is unique and exceptional, is more profound and authentic when achieved by gathering, talking and bringing the community together. It is not only about sales events, social media and raising funds - it is also about connection, a chance to strengthen our shared humanity. We are social creatures, who connect and bond with others looking for engagement, companionship, purpose and shared experiences. Without this we can become lonely, depressed and feel unsupported. Research has shown we have more ways to stay connected, yet we are lonelier than ever. Expanding our community connections is not only a healthy foundation for a small community, but also lifts everything from foot traffic and sales to joy and happiness. A thriving community is an emotionally supportive, happy community. When we feel a deeper connection, when we care, we give. Enhancing the love for Sebastopol amongst our community members enhances their outreach, sales, and success of our events. Some of the events I detail are just about coming together, meeting new people, connecting and sharing. A community that plays together stays together.

The first steps in any robust marketing plan are to go back to basics, use the assets you have, bring in funds and utilize successful grassroots tools. This project is not about beautiful graphs and Excel spreadsheets, it needs a hands-on, get the job done, show results and move the needle approach. While I provide more event ideas than we will do the first year, it is my intention to get you excited about the type of things we can do, how we parlay them to building a customer base and how they have the "give me" needed to attract people. From the list we can choose the top ones to execute. Once we have the basics in place, execution will both easier and more effective.

How to connect, engage and get the conversation going

It's important to get the buzz going, start the conversation and get people talking, engaged and interested. In the body of this proposal I detail ways in which we can engage people through social media, contests, prizes, education, outreach and other methods to encourage community participation. This is priority number one. No matter what we do, if we don't have an audience it won't be successful. Nobody will hear if we are shouting alone in the middle of the woods, but if we were speaking at a lecture hall, we reach a large crowd. Right now, we are in the woods.

I was at a meeting with a CAC working group and someone mentioned a calendar on SoCalnews.com. As both a merchant and a resident I had no idea this existed, so I checked it out and to my surprise I saw listed events for the month of November and December for "Throwback Thursdays", with a take a senior out to dinner and walk Sebastopol with a neighbor. These are fun ideas, but all they are is a suggestion of what to do. Basic marketing is if you want someone to come, give them a reason. It can be anything from a prize to a discount. These can be flipped to bring a senior to dinner and get half off your meal or stroll the stores with a neighbor and get a BOGO; something has to be in it for them. There was also a meet and greet with local merchants at the tree lighting. We had no idea about any of these. After polling customers, friends and other businesses I could not find anyone who knew about these events. We can come up with the greatest ideas for amazing events but if we don't have an audience that cares, we have no impact. Before we speak, we need to build our listeners.

Listeners don't just appear! We need to reach people where they're looking and be current in our community outreach efforts. From social media and the local farmers market to our businesses and publications we need a cohesive, diversified approach.

At the same meeting I was made aware of a table the CAC (climate action committee) will be having at the farmers market, this is an opportunity for us to expand beyond the CAC and support all of our events, committees and outreach.

My theme is about interconnectivity - where are we overlapping, and where can we help each other. In my years as a downtown merchant I have witnessed many events come and go, groups of merchants trying to put their own independent things together within their own bubbles, the Chamber and Downtown Association launch events, but nothing ever fully gets off the ground, boosts sales and captures our audience for future marketing.

The important thing for anybody doing this work is they must know how and where to start. It takes a very different person to continue on success once the framework and design is in place, then someone who can effectively build that from scratch. That is not a task most people can do. We need someone who will lay the groundwork for future success.

Ideas and spending vs. implementing and grassroots

Ideas are a dime a dozen and anybody can spend money. The most difficult thing about building a sustainable plan on a limited budget is to be able to take an idea from concept to completion within the confines of your budget limitations. Spending money is easy, but getting the job done without over spending is where the skill comes in. Additionally knowing what to spend money on and what doesn't buy success is key. The ideas outlined in the body of this proposal are grassroots marketing techniques that I've successfully implemented with limited to no budget. I'm extremely skilled at running a business, turning profit, reducing spending, overhead and identifying where the best usage of funds are.

Knowledge & Background

My varied experiences have made me well rounded and provided the knowledge base and skill set to create success with these ideas.

Born in NY, I started modeling at a young age, making me very comfortable in public situations. I continued in the industry earning my cosmetology degree, while also attending College. I taught kindergarten for several years enabling me to manage freeform situation.

My career shifted when I moved to Sonoma County (by way of LA) in 1987 and started working in the wine industry. I spent 4 years at Windsor Vineyards in sales marketing, management and training. My success there resulted in being recruited by Topolos winery to reduce their insurmountable debt. In my two years at Topolos I was able to not only get them solvent but also profitable. After completing my contract at Topolos and enabling them to successful sell, I started my own wine brokerage, The Wine Selection, with my husband. 25 years later my husband still runs our successful brokerage.

In 1999 I started Sumbody in Sebastopol, blending my scenting skills from years in the wine industry, PR skills from years in the industry, chemistry skills, herbal studies, marketing, management and entrepreneurship. For over 23 years I have run every aspect of the

company from formulating all the products, sourcing ingredients and packaging, overseeing retail stores/spas to growing sales, opening wholesale accounts, PR, social media, training - list goes on. Being a small business owner with a company that includes everything from brick and mortar, spas, manufacturing, shipping to PR and social media I have the background to guide all tasks.

Additionally, being able to move the needle for success without a large budget is something that takes a lot of skill. I started both of my companies with zero capital, just old-fashioned sweat equity and hard work. I have continually maintained a profit even during the great recession and the struggles of running a business throughout the pandemic.

Experience

- 1992 fundraising for the Super Playground in Sebastopol that included both the idea for a chili cook off and implementing the entire event. This was one of the most successful fundraisers for the Super Playground.
- 1993 fundraising for Polly Klass foundation. This included the idea for a celebrity item and wine auction as well as implementing the entire event. This was highest net event at that time
- 1994-1998 Willow Wood School fundraising that included both the idea and implementing profitable business to bring in continued revenue streams. I handled all aspects to bring them to fruition including recruiting volunteers. I created an apple cider business by harvesting unused apples turning them into cider. I also created the annual Magic Pumpkin Fair that was open to the public. Both of these businesses were our largest revenue drives.
- 1997 I raised money for Lyme Disease Foundation by implementing hugely successful wine auction. I also raised awareness around Lyme disease as in 1997 there was not much known about it. I had many local news stations and the television show 2020 Cover my families Story.
- 1999 I started what is now called REACH school at the teen center in Sebastopol. It was then named Mariposa and we moved to the Brookhaven campus. I ran every aspect of the school with everything from overseeing hiring, funds, to working with the school district to create a new school and recruiting volunteers. The school was so successful when my board and I left we had a

surplus of finances to pass onto the new team. 23 years later the school is still a success.

- 2003 I founded Roustabout Theater for kids in Santa Rosa. With the lack of theater groups for children in Santa Rosa I recruited a local director/voice teacher to start the successful theater company.
- 2017 coordinated food donations for Sonoma West hospital during the Tubbs fire including getting all food donated. I also suggested and coordinated community thank you to Firefighters and frontline workers as well as donated all the items.
- 2020 acquired PPE during shortage for hospitals including hand sanitizer and N95 masks. I reached out and worked with Google to acquire and distribute N95 masks, nationally and locally to supply the front line hand sanitizer.

I am comfortable reaching out and asking for donations, being in public, teaching, recruiting volunteers, project oversight and management as well as managing teams. My years at Sumbody have enabled me to build relationships with hotels, PR contacts, local merchants and wineries.

I have built successful marketing strategies; email campaigns, contests, in store events, and social media platforms. I implemented creative ways to build our companies email list enabling us to increase sales and visibility. This proposal is so diverse in skill needs; the project lead must be an organized project manager able to juggle many different components.

Where do we start? - From the beginning

This is a bottom up project. One thing I've learned in my short time as a city Planning Commissioner and on the Climate Action Committee, is that there is a lack of resources, answers and communication between different entities. We want to achieve a guidepost that anyone can use moving forward. "From the beginning" does not mean we don't currently have valuable assets in place it means we need to assess current assets, gather, add to and create a comprehensive manual. Step one is evaluating what we have and what we need.

We have two issues with downtown businesses. One is to increase foot traffic and the other is to get people going from one location to another. The addition of The Barlow has only increased downtown division. We need work hand in hand with Main St and The Barlow on

all of our events. Encouraging our shoppers to visit additional stores is the best way we have to keep the revenue dollars in Sebastopol. We have found over the years as merchants that people generally go to their favorite store or stores and do the rest of their shopping elsewhere. We can increase cross-pollination between businesses with the events that are outlined here.

We also want to include our committee events such as the Climate Action Committees free compost give away. We want to support these other events to be accessible and make sure we're getting press, social presence and email grabs of those who attend.

During this process it will be important to involve The Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Association, Business Councils local community groups and nonprofits we currently work with. Once this step is completed we will prioritize and jump in, starting with a yearly marketing calendar that will include not only events, emails, newsletters and contests but also social media themes and posting outline. This holistic approach will be telling the same story through all our channels.

It's important to also include any school events, town events and other local happenings. We want to make sure we both don't compete with their dates and help promote.

Building a Framework - Needs

We need to reach out to local businesses creating a comprehensive master list of all necessary information that can be accessed and implemented when needed. The master list will include all businesses, their social handles, email, contact, phone number, type of business as well as what each business will participate in such as promoting with signs, handing out flyers, contests, donating prizes, posting to their social media and volunteering.

Building an email list of local shoppers. This is a large asset that we need to actively build. This is a basic foundation for success. We need to be able to communicate with people to get them shopping in the downtown. We will cultivate this list with everything from a call to action on the city/chamber websites to sign up to handouts with our local merchants.

We need to entice people with a bonus for them if they sign up and once they are there we need to keep interest with current, relevant

and exciting material. This includes everything from events, highlighting local businesses, and community leaders to educational pieces and contests. It is important to keep them coming back for more, get the conversation started and provide ways people can be involved. For example, take a picture of your favorite house in Sebastopol for our 'Home Sweet Home' Social media day. If you spot your house, you win XXX, or tell us how long you have lived in Sebastopol and how you came here. Each month we will highlight a resident's story. Or 'what is your favorite place in Sebastopol' that we post on our share your secret day. Or on 'Good gossip Day', tell us about a resident how they inspired, helped you or made your day a little better. Tell us about your favorite teacher... the list goes on and on but we need to get people engaged with both reasons a want to talk to us, reasons other people want to read about it and include deals, discounts, contest and events they can be involved in.

Helping new business create a customer base and elevating sales for current merchants is essential. Having an up to date list of local shoppers is a much-needed asset. This is a list we would not share; we would send the emails out for businesses. For example when a new business comes to town they would design an email meeting our criteria and we would send it out to our entire email list. This booster of recognition to our local shoppers will help garner foot traffic.

We will also make a packet for new business including: What the criteria is for emails, PR, how to get involved (volunteering options), the yearly calendar, along with a questionnaire of how they would like to participate so we can add them to our master list.

For our seasoned merchants building this list will help cross pollinate with other local businesses as well as promote events and expand their reach.

To leverage existing mailing lists in Sebastopol we will ask local merchants if they would send out email asking their client base to join the bigger Sebastopol city email list.

Spread the word about what a great place Sebastopol is to live, work, and visit. Beyond national PR reach, we have an opportunity to reach people all over the world via social media. It enables us to highlight voices from the community, events, things to do... and reach a broader audience.

Both the city of Sebastopol's and the Chamber of Commerce websites can be a valuable tool for building our email list by creating proper call to action. Additionally, analyzing our website to know what pages

people are going to, how long they are staying, what our traffic is among and other details is valuable information we need to make the website more effective. This provides us with information on what people are gravitating to.

Creating manuals that everyone can access such as a PR manual with outreach protocol for both merchants and city committees. We want to make sure to not only include print, radio and influencers but also online services such as NextDoor, Townsy, Facebook, Instagram, Sebastopol Area Time Bank, WACCO and Craigslist free events. This document can be shared with and utilized by all committees and merchants.

To get the robust movement we are pushing for we will need to both build a volunteer base through schools (mentoring students to gain experiences in their field of interest), education and out reach committees, time bank participation, and community members.

Fundraising

I am working under the assumption will have a limited budget and will need to raise funds beyond what are available for the scope of the work. My belief is that raising third-party funds has to be something that somebody would already purchase, not just a "charitable spend" - for example, traditional auctions go to the same groups asking them to spend money. We need to go beyond that and spark interest in the general public. In order to do this we need to create a sustainable income stream that is a purchase somebody would make regardless of where the proceeds go.

The previously mentioned apple cider project I initiated is one I can see Sebastopol getting behind since it speaks to our local harvest and identity as well as our desire to be eco friendly. Every year apples are going to waste! This project includes our entire community by engaging schools and local artists in a contest for the label, getting glass for the cider, pressing and filling donated if possible and approaching local stores such as Oliver's, Andy's, Community Market and Bills Farm Basket to carry it.

A simple yet effective strategy to raise funds is a Sebastopol T-shirt. Locals and visitors love commemorative T-shirts. For the design we would run a contest with local artists and schools. These are not only cost saving measures but when ever possible we want to engage and utilize a community member with a connection to Sebastopol. We also

have several custom T-shirt printing businesses Sebastopol. This also has the potential to be a much bigger event by appointing a panel of judges to choose the final design and having a celebration when we announce the winner either virtually or in person with an unveiling of the T-shirts. T-shirts can be available at any local business willing to support the city by selling them, as well as on our website and at local events such as the 3rd of July fire works, the Apple Blossom Parade and Peacetown events.

There is no lack of amazing wines produced in Sonoma County. Highlighting our bounty by having a wine walk would be a wonderful way to promote our local wineries, business and restaurants while raising funds and having a unique and creative event. We would pair a winery with a local food merchant (coffee, ice cream, tacos, pizza...), stores will provide a space for them to set up at their location (anyone from hairstylist, gift stores or dentist can be included). Tickets are sold and all proceeds go to continued marketing campaigns. At our Alameda location we do a whisky walk that is a huge success and sells out every year. The restaurants love it, the stores love it, the distillers love it and the public loves it! It brings an entirely different crowd to the downtown; walking in and out of shops and helping them gain new recognition and customers.

Documentation and images are key to the success of the building the social landscape. All the projects that we are implementing will be asking volunteers to take pictures videos etc. We will not only use them for our website, social media and PR outreach, but also accumulate for a book. This book will be sold to raise funds. Not only will it raise funds it will raise awareness, tell the story of our community and inspire by showing when a small town comes together the big changes we can make.

*Please note some of the events (such as the wine walk and customer appreciation day (see below for details) may need to be placed on the back burner until we feel comfortable to move forward from pandemic standpoint. We don't want to move them outdoors as we are trying to encourage new customers to go into new shops.

Target Goals & How To Achieve Them

Make Sebastopol more attractive

The aesthetic of the downtown does not tell the story of who we are accurately. Sebastopol residents are diverse, creative, and filled with ingenuity. Leveraging the assets we have to tell the story of our city is

the way in which we can enhance the beauty without spending or bringing in outside vendors who don't understand Sebastopol as well as our residents. This is a perfect opportunity for us to reach out to schools giving young artists an advantage of having a high visibility project, local artists who get a billboard for their work in return, and run contests for both beautification ideas as well as for artists to do the work.

There is also an opportunity for us to reach out to the local schools about forming committees to help "clean up" Sebastopol. Students are looking for ways to build their resumes in an effort to get into college and we can make this enticing for them with both the volunteer activity on their resume as well as having them take pictures, videos, reels and other documentation that we post on our social media. This also allows us to get the youth involved with a "tag a friend" campaign, asking our involved youth to tag a friend and tell us what they want to see in Sebastopol. Sebastopol has limited options for youth activity and their voices are just as valuable in the landscape of our town.

Supporting local business

When opening a business in Sebastopol it can be quite difficult to get started our foot traffic is not that of a larger city, while our expenses to operate are high. We need to help small businesses get off the ground to retain them. Generating revenue is the bottom line when it comes to a business success. By creating and maintaining a large email list which I detail in the proposal we can offer email blasts for new businesses letting the local customers know they are here.

Cross-pollinating is extremely important allowing some of our anchor businesses to support new businesses. We also need to be bringing customers to Sebastopol through hotels, wineries and other tourist attractions and by creating events that increase sales, foot traffic and excitement.

Initiating a Sebastopol employee discount as an ongoing promotion we would instill where participating companies could offer exclusive discounts to the employees of other businesses within Sebastopol, effectively widening their customer base and increasing word-of-mouth promotion. This also gives our local workers a savings increasing their financial benefit and desire to work downtown.

The other issue that's been extremely difficult in Sebastopol to run a

business has been maintaining staffing. To increase retention we need to increase sales and staffing options. Many businesses are struggling to keep their doors open and competing to hire without full-time positions, benefits and high paid can be prohibitive. Looking at creative solutions such as job sharing between companies can potentially help people retain workers downtown - working together to provide employee recommendations/hiring business leads to those job seeking.

Marketing Sebastopol to the masses

Sebastopol is still the best kept secret, we need to tell editors why living, working, playing and visiting is something their readers want to know about. Editors do not have time to come up with the story. We must reach out to diverse publications that will highlight everything from our eco friendly aspects, outdoor adventures, attractions nearby to our unique shopping and local artists. The most successful PR pitches get the editor excited and give them a turnkey story.

Currently the Chamber of Commerce has been doing national outreach but I am not sure of the scope, the depth or how often. We can work with them so this can be expanded. In order to build productive PR outreach we need to continually be pitching, evolving, sending materials and meeting editors. We can implement PR outreach campaigns such as a 'Sebastopol's hidden treasures' with a box that is sent every other month to editors highlighting our local businesses, giving them editorial ideas as to why people would want to travel here. We need to work with the chamber on building a PR list and reaching out to our local vendors to donate products to send. Once we get the PR and drive traffic to our website, email list and social platforms, we will need updated video and images - from events, volunteer activities and local residents.

Get social

Instagram is such a valuable tool to increase awareness. We are under utilizing our opportunity here. Static images are not as popular on Instagram as they once were, so we want to make sure we are doing more videos, reels and scrolling posts. For example we highlight a business with a picture of the owner and/or manager then some of their products.... Four or five slides they send us that people can scroll through. 'Stories' and Instagram live also need to be utilized as they get a lot more views than regular posts.

We will implement and leverage social interactions by creating content

that is both current and speaks to the ethos of Sebastopol. Besides contests we will take advantage of Instagram Lives – by either having a local personality go to businesses and interview, or a ‘better together’ series where we bring 2 or more local business together for a live. Think 2 local chiefs cooking something together, a class on DIY skin care with a local herbalist using ingredients from Rosemary’s, DIY crafts with local school teachers (from kindergarten to high school) using supplies from Art and Soul, soap making video with discard from The Crooked Goat beer making process and Sumbody, tea and massage with Bliss Spa and East West Cafe...the possibilities are endless.

With using Facebook, Instagram and potentially Twitter accounts, we want to be mindful to keep it consistent an enticing voice.

Following a theme such as:

- Mindful Monday - inspiration from a Sebastopol business this both promotes the business and creates an introduction people will look forward to. Everybody wants to know about a new find.
- Talk of the town Tuesday - anything from what is new, events, deals to what our committees are up to.
- Wellness Wednesday - highlight local doctors, chiropractors, dentists and other wellness practitioners.
- Thirsty Thursday - cocktails, beer wine bars images, reviews recipes, events
- Feed me Friday - Images of food from local restaurants, reviews of food, recipes from local restaurants
- Small town Saturday - voices from residents, family life, our history - who was here, what was planted what was life like before and after we were founded in 1850, contests
- Sing it Sunday - shout out for what you love about Sebastopol, sing it we will post the video or shout it with words, let us see Sebastopol through your eyes and experience

Contests are key to building on Social media. Group contests help lift everyone involved. This will help our small businesses well as boost followers to our social media. Not only will we gain followers for everyone but it will also allow us another way to highlight local businesses. We will also do contests that foster engagement by asking

our followers to participate. For example post below and tell us what year you moved to Sebastopol and tag 3 Sebastopol friends for a chance to win XXX. The concept is engaging people and giving them a reason to follow and comment such as a prize. It's amazing how many people join Instagram contests! Our contests will have donated prizes from local businesses. Our master list will provide us with the businesses that are willing to donate.

We need to build a community so when we want participation we have an active audience to speak to.

Emails & Cross Pollination

All events must have a call to action for us to garner emails. Building our email list also means we need to revamp our newsletter and make it more engaging.

We will design and produce a business card size handout that we distribute through local businesses to hand out to customers. It will have a call to action such as join us on Facebook, check us out on Instagram get our email verbiage on one side plus a place to fill out their personal info. The other side will have facts about who we are as a town and what we do, and a changing trivia question about Sebastopol. They can either fill it out and leave it at any store with the trivia answer or email us the answer to be entered to win XXX.

In addition to this card we will design a hand out that has special discounts offered by our participating local vendors. All of these handouts would also be offered digitally. The special "coupon events" will happen periodically throughout the year.

Sebastopol work discount is an ongoing promotion both giving our local workers a discount on all Sebastopol businesses that participate, increasing their financial benefits and desire to work downtown, as well as exposing them to business they may not have entered before. This enables them to be excited about and refer customers the other locations.

Three times a year we host an online event with a contest (the prize would be a donation from each participating business) and a discount. This would be hosted through the Downtown Association utilizing our website and social media venues. We would request a logo from each participating business, donation for a giveaway and a special deal or discount for the promotional days. All the logos and deals will be on

our website (with a link to their website), we will design posts for social media and an email blast. We will send a calendar to each participating business indicating when to send out the email and post the social media. We will email to our list and require all participating businesses to email to their lists as well and post on social. This will not only increase each individuals social media following and traffic to our website but it will also expose business to new local Sebastopol shoppers.

Currently the Downtown Association is doing a contest for the store that does the best holiday window. This is a creative way to get people involved and motivated to change out their window, however our store didn't know about it. While they might have dropped off information, it did not make it into the right hands. This is the disconnection we have sometimes between the merchants, Downtown Association, Chamber of Commerce and even individual businesses trying to start promotions. Having a cohesive calendar as well as a master list of who to contact and a liaison making sure every business is both included and aware will make these events more successful.

Getting the public involved creates even more engagement such as having them vote for their favorite window. Using these opportunities to holistically engage the customer and the merchants is important we want them to be excited to shop our local stores, and we want their email. I would work with the Downtown Association and of Chamber of Commerce to not only help promote their window contest but expanded to include the public and enable us future success.

We need to build a sense of community amongst the business downtown. There is so much division; it is not inclusive which is not productive to building more foot traffic, sense of community and sales. For example currently a merchant asked a doughnut truck to come to Sebastopol for Black Friday. She reached out to some merchants on Inatagram. I was amazed by the positive feed back and willingness to jump in from other merchants when she asked for money. She asked 2 weeks before Black Friday and gave us a flyer the Monday of Black Friday week. In essence 2 business days before the event. While I commend her and the idea is wonderful, we need a professional to step in and help, as there are so many missed opportunities.

1. It continues to create division as not all merchants were invited. I understand if this is difficult when there's not a master list.
2. There was no promotion besides everybody emailing their own list and posting on Instagram two days before the event. This is only getting current customers to come and there's no reason to cross-

pollinate. Reaching to our own customer base offering Black Friday deals is something everyone should already be doing.

3. It did not give a reason to shop Sebastopol on Black Friday. We need a cohesive plan where all of our local sales are listed and we have the bonus draws like a food truck, music.... We want to draw a crowd.

4. There's no capture of the people coming so we can reach out to them in the future.

I greatly appreciate the effort, but we could work smarter not harder to reach our goals. With this event we are not drawing new customers, getting press, encouraging people to shop more than one location, giving people a reason to come to Sebastopol, and harvesting their data for future events. Seeing the willingness of the merchants I know they want to have productive events and with a few tweaks we can garner the results we need for success. The energy is there it just needs to be guided in the right direction.

Merchant Participation & Town Events

- During holidays we could give each participating business a tiny little package that they could hide in their window display and have a 'spot it' contest. For every package they found they get an entry to win a prize. Additionally, contestants would have to take a picture of the business and tag us on Instagram to create excitement on our social platforms. This type of holistic marketing is the way to bring together the individual things we're currently doing.
- Ace hardware has made a huge success of their Super Saturday sales. Discount days are a way to encourage people to shop locally and come to town. Also parlaying on others success it is beneficial for us all. I would plan and activate such events for the entire community. In the past we have some very successful annual event the downtown Association put on such as a pajama sale at midnight madness sale. These are the type of the annual events we need to consistently stick to, to build a loyal following, email list and increase revenue for local merchants.
- "Get some give some" days to increase new customer awareness. Participating businesses will give a discount to their customers purchasing on that day and give them Sebastopol Bucks (to be only used in their store) that we design and make in increments of 1.00. They can choose how many they would

like to offer for what size purchase they receive. The Sebastopol Bucks are to give to a friend. While we can't control that they really give it to a friend we do included to and from encouraging the gifting. We also offer double the bucks if the friend is with you and has not purchased in that store before.

- Friend and family nights are a wonderful way to introduce new customers downtown and have a night out on the town. We will have special hours, deals, the more friends you bring the better the deal! Let our locals who love us spread the word and reap the benefits.
- Shop Sebastopol and try a new store day is a great way to encourage cross-pollination. When you make a purchase in Sebastopol and bring your receipt to another store on same day you get XXX discount or xxx gift. Merchants will decide what their business gives.
- The wine industry has a huge success with their passports events. Utilizing local traditions and making them beneficial for our town is a fun way to engage shoppers. Creating a passport and having each merchant have a stamp will encourage shoppers to go from one store to the next to get their passport stamped. Once the passport completed they will be doubled entered to win a prize and if not completed one entry per stamp.
- Customer Appreciation Day is a wonderful annual event. We do one at Sumbody and invite other business to take part. We have had other local stores offer everything from free ice cream, gift bags and Kombucha to having nail artists and hair stylists on site, raffles and so much more. This is always a huge event and should be expanded to include the entire business community. We also invite artists and other local crafters to set up tables and sell their wares. We would approach the local landlords to see if we could have a pop-up in some of the empty retail stores. Pop-ups are something we should expand upon allowing local artists to have a place to sell their wares. We would invite food trucks as they are a big draw.
- Food truck Day is something that we can get a lot of press on and draw a lot of customers. Whether it's every other month or 4 times a year, the key is to be consistent.

- The Art Trails events are a wonderful way to garner visibility for our local artist, but not all artists have locations that are accessible. Art Trails is also spread out, making it difficult to see all the places you'd like to visit. Our town walk would enable people to see more artists and allow artists and enthusiasts who can't participate in the trails to engage with their community. By hosting varied events we are building a diverse and new customer base reaching those who many not normally shop in Sebastopol by capturing them with their interests.
- Using our local ethos and harvest to create events such as an apple cider stroll where each store has a different apple cider either provided by one of our local restaurants, caterers or the store itself. Customers get to try and evaluate different ciders. This event can also have a 'Find the Apple' in which each store will have a hidden apple. The person who finds it takes an image with the store, post it on Instagram, tag us and we will repost. Then they re-hide it for the next person to find. Everyone who finds the apple is entered to win a prize.

We are fabulous foodie town and have lots of talented caterers who don't have opportunities to showcase their food. One of the things we are encouraging with all of our events is to bring in business beyond those with storefronts.

- Black Friday and Small Business Sunday are opportunities that we are not capitalizing on. We need to have a cohesive guide with what every store will be offering and promoted on our email list, social media, flyers and other avenues. This kick off to the holiday season is important for local merchants. We miss the opportunity here as our shoppers are not being given a reason to shop Sebastopol and are bombarded with national campaigns for larger stores advertising their deals.
- Game night - Summer time, summer fun! From cards and bingo to backgammon and giant Jenga come have fun in the town square. In other cultures everyone from grandmas to teens come to the square to socialize. We are culturally missing this, as well as the connection, fun and community spirit it brings. During the summer we would host game nights, with a buy in to cover cost of staff to run it. In the winter we can move to an inside location. Meeting new friends and neighbors strengthens our community bonds.
- A community Book Club is another way to build connections between local residents and support local bookstores and the

library.

- Connecting and welcoming is the best way we can create sustainable relationships and endearment for the community. When somebody moves to Sebastopol we should have a welcoming package for them with coupons for our local merchants, gifts, calendar of events, ways to get involved and fun things to do. This also allows new community members to find ways they can get involved and be an active participant. People want to help whether it's an hour, a year, or every day they just need to be guided on what the needs are.
- Hometown heroes - Being thankful and grateful as a community is important. Those who go above and beyond to make our lives better such as teachers, firefighters, nurses, Council members... should be acknowledged. It does not need to be a pandemic to show gratitude. An annual gifting day, with local merchants having images and stories of our local heroes shows we care. We would have an Instagram contest as well as through other PR to have our citizens nominate locals and tell us their story. Every entry will be interviewed and combination of the interview, nomination text and image will be used to post on Instagram and with a hero walk spread out in our local businesses with a map for the community to enjoy introducing them to the unsung heroes. Before I was appointed to the Planning Commission, I had no idea how many volunteers work so hard to run our town. We all need to know!
- Our rich history is missing throughout the town. A story telling month detailing the story of Sebastopol so we are more connected to our past is a missing element to our culture. This can be a walk throughout the business or at the local museum. It is a great project for the high school to take on. From the Pomo Indians, to the formation of the town in 1850, our history and story is rich and diverse.
- Support a local artist. Business will host a local artist with their wares. This can be everything from pottery, paintings to jewelry and soap. The list of talent in our community is endless. Our artists and entrepreneurial spirit is one of the wonderful aspects of Sebastopol. Additionally our ability to support each other shows the warmth and strength of our community. By reaching out and welcoming those who are not fortunate enough to have a storefront not only introduces them the bevy of new buyers but it also gives residents a reason to come explore something new.

- I can see in the future other community building events such as “The Voice” Sebastopol addition. Where local singers compete for a cash prize, to sing at the 3rd of July, be posted on Instagram and have a local concert, utilizing local voice and drama teachers for judges. Or Sebastopol iron chief addition where local chefs compete with a donated food basket from local farms and stores to make the best meals, utilizing other local chefs for judges. The winning meal can then be made and served at a fundraising event for all to try. The options are endless of how to gather, connect, lift, impact and unite.

What you should expect

The scope of the work that needs to be executed is vast, varied and extensive. This is a job is more then one person and will take a team. We need to access what assets, help and resources there are, create a volunteer group, and prioritize.

The benefit of hiring an individual versus a firm is that companies charge an exorbitant amount per hour and \$86,000 is not going to get very far. Additionally for this project to hire someone with the skill set needed 86,000 is under market value. This means it’s in the best interest of the city to find someone who also has a vested interest in success, someone with a history and dedication to both the volunteer work and the city of Sebastopol. Fortunately Sebastopol is filled with amazingly skilled people within its employment pool.

To implement the ideas we will need volunteers from our high school, community and city support. Additionally I am unique in the fact that I bring my company staff to the table. I will enlist some help from my team to support projects outlined in this proposal. Sumbody will occur this cost.

Time Line by month (This can be adjusted by week if needed, but I think the scope is so broad and there are so many moving parts a month feels like a better measure of time) I want the council to feel they’re getting the job they want done in Sebastopol to have it’s needs met. Having said this there’s a lot of ground to cover, and this year will go by very fast. Prioritizing as I have outlined here and having realistic expectations will be crucial.

Please note Continued PR, outreach and social strategy will be part of every month as well as the follow up and continued work on the months before.

Month 1 Is all about gathering, connecting, organizing assets and needs, making master list of business, volunteer outreach, social media, making a yearly marketing calendar including social plan, reaching out to The Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Association, Business Councils and non profits building partnerships, getting their buy in to our plan and collaboration. Implement call to action on the Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Association websites.

Month 2-3 is our soft kick off of social media, PR, completing the marketing calendar and master list. This is also the time we will review all current assets and give a more detailed list to the council with deliverables based upon our current resources and efforts to build a volunteer group. While I can get a lot done alone, we can do more with proper assistance. It is my hope to work with The Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Association and Business Councils cooperatively, have them choose from the proposed events and pick what they are most excited about, and in tandem with their help get them off the ground. Having this type of help will expand the amount of events we will deliver. We will also implement the merchant evergreen/ crossed pollinating events (see above for handouts, employee discounts...). It is also the target for the first social media contest. This time is also about outreach and connecting with local schools, organizations, nonprofit and city committees.

Month 4, First merchant sale hosted on the chamber website, first Community building event and groundwork for fund raising events. We will also be documenting and making manuals. We will launch our artist contests. It's important to have the buy-in from the Downtown Association and the Chamber of Commerce. We want them to be excited and onboard with everything we're doing. So what the contest is will depend on having them narrow down some of what I've listed above and choosing what they're most excited about. The choice here will be between the design of a T-shirt or apple cider label and make Sebastopol beautiful contest.

Month 5 If we start in January this will be the summer fun event series planning and promoting, making manuals for social media, implementing the above-mentioned design contests, fundraising and all evergreen events.

Months 6,7 will be packed with hosting a summer event, our fundraising project and the groundwork for fourth-quarter. We will launch the finalized the welcome package for new residents and implement.

Months 8,9,10 Fall is about setting up fourth-quarter success. This is a huge PR push, reaching out to all merchants, social media contests, while continuing working on Sebastopol beautification, fundraising and other project started.

Months 11, 12 are about lifting sales, foot traffic utilizing the assets we have created with an increased social presence and email list to get people shopping holiday season local. I will also finish all deliverables to make sure after the year is over there's continued success.

What happens after the year is over

We want to create a sustainable system since the budget for this position is only for 1 year. This means making sure all the documentation, references, and a how to for each and every thing we do is detailed for continued success. This also means working closely with the current staff who run both our website and social media platforms so they can make the posts and do the backend work on our website once this position is eliminated. It's about making a map of success that anyone can follow. All the work put into this initial year must be the groundwork for parlaying a continued successful marketing plan.

How much time will have I or how do I have the time

With 23 years in business at Sumbody, one of the secrets to our success is the team. Traditionally both the spa and retail industries have a high staff turnover rate. Neither are known for high pay or being a career path, both are generally interim jobs. Sumbody has had minimal turnover. At our Alameda location we had the same store manager from the day it opened until 15 years later she moved back to the East Coast. Her assistant manager then took over and is still the manager. Our office manager has been here over 15 years. After having a child she moved to part-time and her successor has now with us over 5 years, our bookkeeper over 12 years, massage therapists for over 14 years. With this dedicated staff it allowed me to write 3 books and travel for both PR and on-site to take care of my celebrity clients. The last year and a half without travel I have decided, to not return to the road and I am not taking a book deal for the foreseeable future. When I'm writing a book I spend minimum of five hours per day and I also traveled quite extensively. The combination of reducing my personal workload and stepping back from the date today allows me the opportunity to fully commit. During the pandemic I did not go into

the office or warehouse. My team seamlessly executed the day to today with my guidance and oversight.

I am used to juggling many hats, I believe the old clichés ask busy person. I have run one company while starting another company and a school all at the same time and in between orchestrated large fund raising events.

Conclusion

Long story short, Sebastopol has the means to be a prosperous, interactive, and engaging community by implementing these tactics and increase traffic, company engagement, PR, boost sales, build an audience, raise revenue and increase her volunteer base.

Having seen my suggestions, ideas and concept you can see I know how to get ball rolling and get things done on a shoestring while additionally bringing in capital to help continued success. This quite honestly is much more than an \$86,000 job as an independent contractor. With taxes, insurance and the help I'll recruit from my team as well as the time to do this properly it will be a large investment. My motivation is not exclusively money. I've been a merchant in downtown for 23 years, raised two daughters in Sebastopol and love this community. We have had a hard time maintaining a consistent thriving downtown and I'm excited to be apart of what we can do. I say this to both reiterate that anybody who has the skills set to execute without some other type of investment might not be able to devote the time needed for our budget.

I want to be very clear that grant writing is neither my strong suit nor will I have the time to accomplish all that needs to be done and devote the right amount of effort to grants.

I also want to be clear that I do not know all the city rules and will need guidance as to what we can as a city do and what we cannot. My hope is to run our promotions, events and other venues through the Downtown Association alleviating any such regulations.

Questions

Things to think about when implementing is what the process will look like. If it's too complicated we won't be able to get things done. For example if we make posts and stories for Instagram will there be review process before they can be posted. If we have things for the website and emails will there be someone who can implement if we give them all the necessary components.

If we design collateral how long will review process be until we can utilize it?

Is there any budget?

Is there any support staff?

Can we form a committee?

What leeway's will we have to work independently on behalf of the city to solicit both donations, volunteers and other needs to achieve our goals?

I think some of the success in this position understands what we can and cannot do and what process would be to get the job done.

References

Business References

Conflict of Interest

Insurance

While I currently do not have insurance, this is a simple task for me to get some on my homeowners or extend my business insurance to include with the city council deems necessary.

To whom it may concern:

I have known Deborah Burnes for over 25 years. Time and time again she has reached out in a local situation that she sees a need and devoted her own time and finances to help.

I was incredibly impressed with her energy and commitment in starting REACH school over 20 years ago. My daughter was in the school and I observed her working tirelessly on the school for several years. She has been involved with helping the homeless near her business warehouse and showed great empathy and understanding of their situation.

During the Tubbs fire she helped coordinate food donations for Sonoma West Hospital. She expressed her appreciation and helped out frontline workers and firefighters.

During the beginning of the Covid epidemic when there was a huge PPE shortage she spent hours and hours of time working to locate N95 masks, hand sanitizer and other PPE.

I know whatever she gets involved with gets the benefit of her amazing generosity with her time and energy. She would be a huge asset as she is devoted to making sure everything she is involved in is a success.

Adelle Kohl

November 17, 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

It is a privilege to write this letter in support of Deborah Burnes.
We have worked with Deborah, and her company The Wine Selection for over twenty years.

Over these years she has proved to be a talented businesswoman and, a highly skilled professional.

She has been a pioneer in women owned business, a leader in her field and, a teacher to those that she has mentored.

I have no doubt that she would be an invaluable member to any business or organization lucky enough to have her.

Sincerely,

Lucy Malocsay
Vinifera Wine



San Francisco,
CA, 94109

Vinifera Wine Marketing
Your Northern California brokerage for premium and ultra-premium wines



CONNER, LAWRENCE, RODNEY,
OLHISER & BARRETT, LLP

Catherine Conner
MaryClare Lawrence, retired
Amy Rodney
Kara M. Olhiser
Susan E. Barrett
Audrey J. Gerard

November 21, 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is to recommend Debbie Burnes as a community builder.

I have known Debbie for approximately 25 years, having first met her when we were both volunteering at Willow Wood Waldorf School. Debbie started the school's Magic Pumpkin Faire, which became both a fundraiser as well as a fun school event. She worked tirelessly to ensure that it was well organized and successful.

Over the years that I have known Debbie, she is often the one to notice something that needs to be addressed and then rather than just complain, she takes action. For example, when Covid 19 arrived and PPE were scarce, Debbie spent countless hours calling, emailing and researching how to obtain PPE so that health care and other workers would be safer. She also has a kind heart and has befriended folks who are living on the street outside her business.

Debbie has tremendous energy and drive and when she decides something needs to be done, she will get it done.

If you need someone who will rally others and accomplish great things, Debbie is the one!

Sincerely,

Catherine Conner

August 31, 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing with enthusiastic support for Deborah Burnes, who is applying for.

I have known Debbi for more than 30 years, and know her to be a person of great integrity. She has a history of community engagement and a passionate interest in the welfare of the underserved segments of society. She currently serves on the Planning Commission and Climate Action Committee, and would bring that experience to this project.

Deborah is a business owner and published author. She has two daughters who are medical professionals (MD and RN) who have treated COVID patients on the front lines of the pandemic. She has a personal appreciation for the wide-ranging consequences of the pandemic for businesses, the medical community, and the population as a whole. Early in the pandemic she became aware of the acute need for adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) for medical staff, and quickly mobilized resources to help provide it.

I feel Deborah would be an excellent choice to serve on this committee.

Sincerely,

Trina Bowen MD

November 23, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

I have had the pleasure of knowing Deborah Burnes for over 20 years. I first met Deborah in 2000 when she founded Mariposa, a charter school for project based experiential learning now known as the REACH Charter School in the Sebastopol Union School District. Deborah was the primary spokesperson for Mariposa and was passionate and articulate as she described the vision of the school. Her charisma and enthusiasm convinced my family to enroll. Over the course of the school year I watched Deborah work tirelessly to build community at Mariposa, inspiring us all to work towards realizing the grand vision. Deborah does not wait for things to happen if there's a need she will find creative solutions. I heartily recommend Deborah, she is a hardworking team player and approaches all her endeavors with integrity, creativity and passion. She will be a great asset to any team.

Sincerely,

Hilda Shum



Dear Mayor and Councilmembers,

Peacetown appreciates the Council's recognition that we need to relaunch our community and our team is eager for the opportunity to partner with the City of Sebastopol to Re-Launch Sebastopol and fortify Community and Economic Vitality. We understand the needs outlined to strengthen the City of Sebastopol's future.

The Peacetown board agreed to the creation of a team to address this RFP. This team's historical and ongoing dedication to the economic and community vitality of Sebastopol provides us with a working understanding of what is already in place. Our members have a set of skills that will allow us to leverage existing programs and tools, and to engage with existing city programs/community organizations to enhance community and economic vitality.

Our team possesses the skills, technology, and capacity required to engage the local community, (business, non-profits, residents) as well as to target visitor traffic. We will serve as a foundation for collaboration.

- Rei Blaser - President of the Sebastopol Downtown Association, familiar with the business community and can advocate for economic development.
- Debbie Ramirez is a dedicated local volunteer and founding donor of Cittaslow Sebastopol, with a background in tourism sales. She is skilled in a variety of survey and text banking tools (eg. Spoke Rewired Platform) to engage our target audiences in order to design successful programs.
- Elizabeth Smith serves on several boards such as Soroptimist International of West Sonoma County and Sebastopol Union School District, coordinates many community events as a weaver with over 100 local organizations, and brings the lens of advocating for Positive Childhood Experiences.
- Jim Corbett, "Mr. Music" has been a tireless advocate for live music and creating community through the Arts and is currently serving on the board of the Chamber of Commerce.

Peacetown has been a staple since 2008 and at that time Sebastopol was declared "Peacetown, USA", having been built on the principles of peace and that "peace brings prosperity". Peacetown and the Family Village drive tourism, attracting families from far and wide to enjoy our community.

Thank you for considering our proposal.

1

Jim Corbett
 President of Peacetown
 Agenda Item Number 1
 City Council Meeting Packet of January 19, 2022
 Page 33 of 85



Request for Proposal Response

Peacetown Team Re-Launch Sebastopol Plan

December 3, 2021

ISSUED BY
PEACETOWN

██████████ Ave
Sebastopol, CA 95472
██████████

REPRESENTATIVE
REI BLASER

████████████████████
(707) ██████████

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Team ReLaunch Sebastopol

Jim Corbett
Elizabeth Smith
Debbie Ramirez
Rei Blaser

Jim Corbett

Email: [REDACTED]
Mobile Phone: (707) [REDACTED]

Profile

My vocation for over 35 years as "Mr Music" has allowed me to share my love of music with young children as their music teacher.

In 1997 I began the Love Choir, a community choir. In 2008 I was part of a group that recommended the City Council declare Sebastopol as Peacetown USA for the beauty of nature, the cultural richness of the area and the progressive and kind values of the entire community.

Sebastopol has embraced Peacetown as a "Way of Being" and a place to honor the Arts and Music. The Peacetown Summer Concert Series began in 2011 at Ives Park, as a FREE community concert which continues to grow, attracting folks from outside the community to Sebastopol.



Community Service Awards

- Chamber "Citizen of the Year"
- Senior Center's "Aged to Perfection"
- 2019 - Sebastopol's Living Peace Wall

Experience/Qualifications

I was on the Board of Directors of the Sebastopol Community Center for 10 years and produced many live shows at that venue.

As a producer I also booked entertainment at the Apple Blossom Festival, the Gravenstein Apple Fair, the July 3rd Fireworks, & performed at many City functions and school events.

Rei Blaser

Email: [REDACTED]
Mobile Phone: (707) [REDACTED]

Experience/Qualifications

- Organizational Coach
- Data Management
- Project Management
- Graphic Arts
- Website Designing
- Admin Assistant
- Redesigned SDA website 2x during my tenure
- Organized and executed multiple events for the SDA
- Active participant in Sebastopol Economic Vitality group since inception in 2018, meeting monthly to support collaboration amongst business organizations, cultural organizations, and local government to help Sebastopol thrive as an authentic, attractive and unique place to live, work and play.



Community Service Awards

- 2020 Sebastopol Volunteer of the Year

Profile

Having served on the Sebastopol Downtown Association (SDA) Board 6 years total (4 yrs President), Rei's experience with the SDA lends her unique perspective to our team.

Her knowledge of the SDA district and current relationships with businesses downtown and around Sebastopol is an asset for quickly completing several of the RFP goals.

Elizabeth Smith

Email: [REDACTED]

Mobile Phone: [REDACTED]



Experience/Qualifications

- Community Manager, Sonoma County PACES Connection(Positive & Adverse Childhood Experiences)
- Peacetown Board Member & Founder Peacetown Family Village
- Sebastopol Union School District Trustee
- Founding President of Soroptimist International of West Sonoma County
- Gravenstein Health Action Coalition Liaison
- Member of Sebastopol Service in Action Coalition
- Local Liaison, Campaign for Trauma Informed Policy & Practice

Having only lived in Sebastopol for a short time, Elizabeth quickly took roots to make this community her home. She chartered a service club, joined boards and committees, coordinated many local events and opportunities to decrease siloed efforts, maximize resources, and weave people

Community Service Awards

- Sebastopol's Local Who Makes a Difference

Profile

Community Leader and collaborator of many organizations as a connective bridge I bring a grass-roots community building lens that is informed by authentic community voice - to my work, both paid and volunteer. Seeking to leverage my strong leadership skills, project management, and collaborative expertise to support and develop systems that serve people throughout Sebastopol.

Debbie Ramirez

Email: [REDACTED]

Mobile Phone: (707) 874-8332



Experience/Qualifications

- Tourism sales manager for cities of Philadelphia, PA and Pasadena CA, 1997-2002
- Trustee, Sebastopol Union School District, 2011-2019
- Communications consultant, Jitterbug Communications, 2018-present
- Fellow, Leadership Institute for Ecology and the Economy, 2012 (now LI for Just & Resilient Communities)
- Active participant in Sebastopol Economic Vitality group since inception in 2018, meeting monthly to support collaboration amongst business organizations, cultural organizations, and local government to help Sebastopol thrive as an authentic, attractive and unique place to live, work and play.
- Technical skill with a variety of stakeholder engagement / survey tools

Profile

A longtime advocate of strengthening our local economy, Debbie served as the Sonoma County GoLocal community coordinator 2009-10, subsequently co-founding the Share Exchange and Made Local Marketplace in Santa Rosa. Debbie was a founding donor of Cittaslow Sebastopol in 2013 and has been an active volunteer on a variety of projects from founding the Sebastopol Area Time Bank to assisting with

City Objectives	Actions to Implement
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A. Fostering Businesses Development
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A1. Make Sebastopol more attractive to prospective businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pump up the number of tourists coming to town for the music, art, culture and nature • Review CoMission’s Business Survey Report • Perform a survey to businesses that have opened in Sebastopol’s City limits within the last two years • Look for common denominators; take steps to enhance what worked and improve on what didn't work • Build a cooperative business alliance model rather than a competitive model
A2. Make it easier for businesses to open or expand in downtown Sebastopol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on survey results (Goal A-1) address the top 3 hurdles/challenges/time consuming elements to opening or expanding in Sebastopol • Assess need for a “Business Concierge” role to serve as point person to assist new & existing businesses in navigating municipal interface
A3. Increase retention of current downtown Sebastopol businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the CoMission’s Business Survey Report; evaluate what has come of the responses and assess what further questions need to be asked to the businesses • Meet with City Staff - review data of business retention in Sebastopol downtown • See “Business Concierge” in A2
A4. Explore the potential expansion of the business improvement district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and execute steps needed to perform a public hearing to expand current BID • Utilize updated SDA website for creating a city wide business district website
A5. Investing ways to unify business districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop marketing tools/videos that showcase the unity of Sebastopol’s business community • Expand SDA website to link to Barlow website and Chamber website
A6. Foster business developments/solutions businesses would support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize results from the survey to develop programs and services to support local businesses • Provide local businesses with information about existing support services available to them, such as the Sonoma County Tourism Bureau

B. Attracting Customers

<p>B1. Make downtown Sebastopol more attractive for consumers to visit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and develop concepts that are appealing to consumers such as Art, murals, sidewalk art, interactive mural/wall/bulletin board, traveling art, scavenger hunts, etc • Include music in the Plaza and downtown venues during the Peacetown summer concert series. Promote all art studios. • Promote existing perks such as free parking • Connect with the cities Art Committee
<p>B2. Ensure consumers who visit downtown Sebastopol return</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research feasibility to implement a "PeacePort" card for locals to encourage consistent, perhaps off-peak, patronage at local businesses
<p>B3. Promoting the City of Sebastopol as a great place to live, work, and visit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scaffold on the work Peacetown and the Family Village are doing. Ask to write a Peacetown USA monthly blurb in the Gazette, Bohemian / SoCo news / Community Voice • Create more digital content to share • Promoting the arts, music, culture and natural beauty of Sebastopol on social media • Add Peacetown, USA to city entry boards
<p>B4. Target our local base</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PeacePort (as described above) • Continue the theme of Local Flavor. Global Vision of the Chamber of Commerce • Embrace Cittaslow Sebastopol theme of Local, Friendly, Green & Artistic

C. Incentivizing Investment

<p>C1. Encourage existing property owners to reinvest in their buildings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate the business and property owners of the Facade Program • Develop reminder letters sent to property owners prior to each application period • Research best practices that other municipalities utilize to encourage building upgrades
<p>C2. Marketing our opportunity sites (Put together package for potential business and developers)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network with core commercial real estate businesses • Create materials for prospective businesses to assist real estate agents • Include area demographics and current business landscape in order to encourage diversity in products and services offered

D. Collaboration

<p>D1. Collaboration with Chamber of Commerce, Sebastopol Downtown Association and Business Councils to cross promote local visitor-serving organizations and events to increase tourism and boost the success of a variety of local businesses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize historical data from Economic Vitality Group to continue creating productive programs • Hold visioning session with Executive Director of the Chamber and the SDA Board of Directors -Support what was beneficial from CoMission • Seek to create a City wide business district to create a cooperative spirit among business owners, by encouraging a group advertising fund for Sebastopol • Promote all the music venues and all the Art Studios as a service to the entire community that will bring visitors from out of town and encourage locals to enjoy locally
<p>D2. Collaboration with Local Non Profits and Service Organizations to provide community engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pick up where CoMission left off / or mention current service meetings and attend them • Continue to attend Sebastopol Service in Action weekly meetings, continue to encourage coming together on projects and provide opportunities to do so; Such as during Peacetown Concert Series, and various Peacetown Family Village events • Connect with local non-profits to learn and develop relationships and offer opportunities to provide collaboration and community engagement • Coordinate City Day/Pop-Up event. • Continue to collaborate with organizations to support meaningful relationships and bridge gaps between services and community (SCPC, Dovetail, TLC, ELI, NAMI, Redwood Food Bank, CPI, First 5, Sonoma Connect, etc)
<p>D3. Main Street Vitality - Put local businesses in contact with each other for products to support buying locally</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodic "Downtown Sidewalk Faire" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Eg. Small Shop Saturday, Summer Sidewalk Faire
<p>D4. Create a "City day" picnic or similar event for the community to bring businesses and community together</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and execute an event that bridges community to business such as Community Fair, showcasing what businesses have to offer.
<p>D5. Or utilizing empty businesses to create "pop up" events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and develop seasonal pop-up events that promote peace, encourage tourism, and community engagement. • Help businesses & entrepreneurs create "Sebastopol Experiences", marketed primarily to visitors (day & overnight)

<p>D6. Work with the local schools for community hour projects to beautify the City (Park/ Street clean up, murals on benches/garbage cans, painting of City light poles, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect with District Administrators and Art Center to research and develop a plan to engage youth • Install Peace Poles at school districts • Research Guinness book world record related to Peace
<p>D7. Establish partnerships that leverage public and private funds to support community vitality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research who are the key stakeholders and Strengthen/develop partnerships, collaborate and decrease siloed efforts • Community awareness of RFP goals and intentions • Peacetown has the ability to raise additional funds to promote music, art, theater, culture and the natural beauty of Sebastopol
<p>D8. Work with the City's Community Outreach Coordinator to promote engagement in the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop relationships with Holly Hansen and promote engagement in the community and research how to best utilize time • Partner with Holly Hansen to fortify social media outreach to locals and visitors, with the goal of increasing foot traffic and visitorship in Sebastopol
<p>D9. Work with City staff and municipal consultant on revenue enhancement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up regular meetings with City Staff to consult on how to bring more money to the City coffers
<p>D10. Create relationship with County for County grants or County funding for community vitality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put together presentations to share with BOS, strengthen/develop relationship with county • Meet with Lynda Hopkins • Research TOT funds

E. Community Vitality

<p>E1. Expertise in applying for grants/In coordination with others, prepare grant applications for possible funding for desired programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing grant searching and opportunities to collaborate • Peacetown has extensive experience of applying for and getting grants for your programs, and will hire a dedicated grant writer to maximize all available resources • Contact Community Foundation of Sonoma County for donors
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<p>E2. Acknowledging housing is the root of community vitality, work with the Planning Department on the implementation of housing goals as outlined in the General Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable housing is the root of community vitality by providing housing for those that work here. The goals of the General Plan are excellent but will need the visioning of the entire community to make them a reality Peacetown supports these goals • Meet with the ad hoc Committee for the Unhoused • Research how COAD, CPC, Catholic Charities, and other groups can support • Explore how the Sebastopol Area Time Bank can interface with local residents in transitional housing to meet needs, provide services, and strengthen community ties
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F. Calendar

<p>F1. Provide On Line options for community events and information for visitors/Manage Community Calendar/Experience Sebastopol</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage Peacetown FaceBook page, submit events to online calendars and press coverage awareness, create flyers for events • Educate community of SDA's new event calendar • Suggest a monthly calendar with the local water bill to reach those who do not use online resources • Cross promote with Chamber of Commerce • Create Community Event Page on Peacetown.org • Assist / Support SCC with managing Community Calendar/Exp Sebastopol
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G. City Committees

<p>G1. Liaison for ad attend meetings on various committees such as: Community Based Councils, Non Profit Councils, Service Organizations, and For Profit Councils</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research who this includes and best use of time to make an impact • Stronger together will make a positive impact. Peacetown is dedicated to being the glue between different groups to make a positive and measurable improvement to our City
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H. City Reports

<p>H1. Provide bi-monthly report out to City Council at each Council meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project lead person from the Team will attend meetings and report out
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<p>Prospective Deliverables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with City Staff to assess what tasks they need the most assistance with • Create Marketing to promote the City's assets for visitors and locals to enjoy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Create promotional videos that will highlight business, community, nonprofits/service organizations/activities in Sebastopol, with in-house video production team. • Attend City and Community Meetings as Requested per RFP • Utilize software to survey target groups regarding the elements of the RFP • Research and execute steps needed to perform a public hearing to expand current BID • Utilize existing assets - eg. Cittaslow; Pedline, Living Peace Wall, Peace Gardens in marketing • Set up outreach table at Peacetown events • "PeacePort": Special discounts or perks for locals • Research and create a City Day/Pop-ups • Added community concerts at Ives Park • Adding "Peacetown USA" to the City entry boards • Conduct a feasibility study in conjunction with the Sebastopol Area Time Bank and local service agencies for the unhoused. Determine how this existing tool could meet needs, provide services, and strengthen community ties. • Quarterly business "Social" • Research / Develop Business Concierge • Connect with School Administrators, County BOS and the Art Center • Install Peace poles around community or local schools • Research Guinness Book of World Records • Develop a relationship with Holly Hansen, to promote engagement in the community, fortify social media outreach to locals and visitors, with the goal of increasing foot traffic and visitorship in Sebastopol. • Sebastopol Community Calendar listed on the Peacetown website 	<p>Contract Amount not to exceed: \$86,000/year</p> <p>Potential Contract Dates: February 1, 2022 - February 1, 2023</p> <p>Hourly Rates</p> <p>Jim Corbett, Principal: \$70/hr</p> <p>Elizabeth Smith, Principal: \$70/hr</p> <p>Rei Blaser, Principal: \$70/hr</p> <p>Debbie Ramirez, Principal: \$70/hr</p> <p>Big Stripe Cat Videographer: \$70/hr</p> <p>Outside Advisor/Contract: \$70/hr</p>
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<p>Project Phases: Taking guidance from city staff, we will adjust priorities and sequencing of the following projects as desired.</p>	<p>Project cost estimate, includes staff time and expenses</p>
<p><u>Explore BID Expansion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Research and execute steps needed to perform a public hearing as put forth in CA Streets and highways code [36000-36081] ● Educate community, conduct surveys, seek stakeholder input 	<p>\$17,200</p>
<p><u>Develop strategies to attract local Sebastopol customers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “PeacePort Program”: special discounts or perks for locals ● Research feasibility to partner with businesses and owners of vacant storefronts to potentially create a pop-up series. 	<p>\$17,200</p>
<p><u>Develop strategies to attract visitors to Sebastopol</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Utilize existing assets such as the PedLine to promote easy parking and navigation; the Sebastopol Calendar; develop visitor outreach strategies in coordination with Sebastopol COC; Chamber of Commerce; SDA; Cittaslow; and other community cultural organizations. ● Work with local businesses / service providers to create and promote specialized Sebastopol visitor experiences ● Research and apply for tourism & marketing grants via County of Sonoma and other entities to promote Sebastopol tourism. 	<p>\$17,200</p>
<p><u>Community Vitality</u></p> <p><u>Housing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore feasibility of partnering with the Sebastopol Area Time Bank and local service agencies for the unhoused. Determine how this existing tool could meet needs, provide services, and strengthen community ties. <p><u>Beautification</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coordinate with local schools to develop community beautification projects 	<p>\$17,200</p>
<p><u>Incentivize business development and support existing businesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Research feasibility of a “Business Concierge” role at the City to facilitate communication between city departments and both prospective and existing local businesses. 	<p>\$17,200</p>

Business References

Corporate Clients:

Jim Corbett and the Peacetown Organization have been a consistently positive influence in creating vitality and economic growth in the city of Sebastopol and the surrounding communities. All of us here at People's Music would certainly support Jim and his team in pursuing a city sponsored program that would enhance his ability to continue doing what he was clearly born to do.

Alex Bryant(owner) & Team

People's Music (Since 1973)

We endorse the team at Peacetown Sebastopol for the city of Sebastopol request for proposal for "Community, economic, vitality project".

Our experience with Jim Corbett and his team has been impressive. Their ability to pull in the community for engagement on a regular basis, to keep the vibe of Sebastopol alive and well during the last year has been so important to the city and its community of small businesses.

Barney Aldridge

Managing Partner

Aldridge Development

NGO:

The Sebastopol Chamber of Commerce would like you to know that we are in support of Peacetown being considered as a solid candidate for the RFP on Relaunch Sebastopol.

Jim Corbett and Peacetown have dedicated themselves to bringing music, crafts, and love to our small town. They understand what is needed to help our community grow, thrive, and prosper in this challenging time we have been faced with. Jim Corbett AKA Mr. Music has been at the forefront of wonderful concerts in the Park as well as asking nonprofits to set tables up at these events.

Linda M. Collins

Executive Director

Sebastopol Chamber of Commerce

Community References

Peacetown embodies my vision for the world, which is music on every street corner. The joy that Peacetown brings to our town, especially during shelter in place, is definitely a life extending offering!

I saw people dancing, getting exercise, meeting old friends, eating and drinking at local businesses. I personally connected with musician friends and was able to hear them play!! I heard musicians young and old sharing their gifts to our community, creating community.

Katie Ketchum M.A.

Singer/Songwriter/Artist

I feel so fortunate to live in the lovely friendly community of Sebastopol. And one of the best things about being here are the pleasant, fun Peacetown gathering every week all summer....Thanks to Jim Corbett aka Mr. Music we get to come together safely outside and sing our favorite old songs, dance around, watch the kids play. What could be a better way to weave us together?

I felt especially grateful for Peacetown during these difficult, isolating Covid times. Being safely gathered outside and enjoying seeing and singing with old friends and new helped me feel less alone and isolated. Thank you Jim, the Love Choir, and anyone around who chooses to as Mr. Music puts it "Show Up and SING"!!!

Lilith Rogers

Conflict of Interest

Peacetown declares that there is no conflict of interests to disclose

Transmittal Letter

Please consider this our transmittal letter. I Laura Hagar Rush am the founder and CEO of Townie Media and as such am able to solicit business and enter into contracts.

Laura Hagar Rush

██████████ St.
Sebastopol, CA 95472
707-██████████

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura Hagar Rush". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with large loops and a long tail stroke.

Relaunch Sebastopol Community/Economic Vitality

A proposal by Townie Media

Sebastopol office:
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Sebastopol, CA 95472
707-[REDACTED]

Office of record:
[REDACTED] Drive
Forestville, CA 95436
707-[REDACTED]

Principal: Laura Hagar Rush
[REDACTED].com

December 4, 2021

Introduction

The city of Sebastopol has done a lot of work in recent years defining what kind of city Sebastopol is and what kind of businesses and visitors it would like to attract.*

Now is the time to pull all that work together into a persuasive brand identity and marketing package that hits that message hard to four key audiences:

- tourists and visitors looking for a place to visit
- residents looking for more ways to engage with their town
- businesses looking for a place to relocate
- existing businesses in Sebastopol

Knowing who we are as a city lets us lean into Sebastopol's actual strengths - strengths that differentiate Sebastopol from other wine country towns.

Here's the deal: Almost all wine country towns offer farm-to-table dining, wineries and breweries, and advertise themselves as close to nature, be it the redwoods, the ocean or both. That's just the nature of Sonoma County.

In order to stand out, Sebastopol has to be different - and luckily, we are. Sebastopol offers **wine country sophistication** with a relaxed **come-as-you-are vibe** and an **appealing cultural quirkiness** that no other town can match.

Our proposal leans into these strengths, as both a lure to visitors and a lodestar for imagining new events to re-invigorate civic life and re-engage the town's residents in the life of their town.

Sebastopol is...

"Eclectic, artistic, green, health-conscious, and sometimes a little quirky...that's Sebastopol!" --
Cittaslow Sebastopol

"Small town charm, farm-to-table organic food and wine, creative artists and healers, and easy access to the Laguna, the Russian River, and the Sonoma coast and redwoods."

- Experience Sebastopol

"For people inspired by community, Sebastopol's funky charm welcomes you ... Grounded in our agricultural heritage, we're devoted to your health and well-being."

- Sebastopol Downtown Association

* "Through market research and business outreach efforts, identify target industries and businesses and create a marketing program to actively solicit and bring a diverse range of companies to Sebastopol. Potential target industries include health care, medical device design and manufacturing, solar, energy-based, and green/clean-tech industries, electric vehicle dealerships,

agricultural enterprises, art and music, retail, professional and business services, educational services, and machinery and short-run manufacturing.” – Sebastopol General Plan

Executive Summary

Our goal is to create real, tangible deliverables that improve the business and civic environment of Sebastopol. These deliverables are part of a turn-key economic and community development package that can be turned over to the city when the year is over and used for several years.

KEY OBJECTIVES

Strategy 1: Create and manage Sebastopol’s brand identity.

Strategy 2: Develop a marketing plan and marketing campaigns to reach three target audiences: visitors, residents, and prospective businesses.

Strategy 3: Expand existing placemaking and place-keeping efforts to beautify the city.

Strategy 4: Celebrate the community spirit of Sebastopol through collaboration with partners, businesses, and residents.

ATTRACTING CUSTOMERS

Develop marketing campaigns aimed at two key audiences: tourists and residents.

- 1) Tourists: Market Sebastopol to tourists from the Bay Area and beyond to increase tourism in general, and, in particular, to increase tourist visits to downtown and other shopping areas of Sebastopol.
 - Create a brand identity and marketing plan for Sebastopol with taglines, hashtags, etc.
 - Create a marketing campaign calendar and do advertising and social media that is linked to brand identity and to a calendar of local events.
 - Expand the SDA’s new Citylight website into the town’s Visitor and Business Development website.
 - Create a travel-writer program to increase the number of articles published about Sebastopol in print publications.
 - Write articles for placement in local tourism websites and other publications.

- 2) Residents: Market the city, city businesses and local events to residents to increase local shopping and civic engagement.
 - Create a Shop Sebastopol First campaign.
 - Rework the city’s weekly newsletter.
 - Create new events, including for 2022, the 120th Anniversary of Ives Park and the city charter of Sebastopol
 - Put a digital sign, announcing local events, at the crossroads of 116 and 12 or in another prominent location downtown.

FOSTERING BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- 1) Create a list of business opportunity sites.
- 2) Expand the SDA's new Citylight website to include Business Development.
- 3) Create a business toolkit detailing what Sebastopol offers/requires of businesses.
 - A Guide for Prospective businesses
 - A Guide for Existing businesses
 - A Welcome-to-Town Guide for New Businesses
- 4) Connect downtown Sebastopol to the Barlow.
 - Redo street murals in the Barlow leading to downtown
 - Banners along McKinley creating a visual path from Barlow to Downtown
 - Identity mural for the back of the Silk Moon building.
 - A Downtown Sebastopol sign as distinctive and large as the Barlow Sign
- 5) Improve the look of downtown and other parts of Sebastopol with design and landscaping solutions
 - A unified architectural plan for gateway and other civic beautification projects.
 - Decorated wire ceiling (lights or flags or Ned Kahn) for the main block of downtown.

COMMUNITY VITALITY

- A reinvigorated town calendar for residents to keep them informed of what's going on in town and get a digital sign for downtown that should be visible from the crossroads.
- The Townsy Sebastopol app, reworked to be a community app, owned by the town, featuring the following:
 - news from the city (newsletter, alerts)
 - event calendar
 - volunteer opportunities
 - a town store that any local business can upload its products to.
- New events: Work with local non-profits and businesses to identify and grow both existing and new signature events for Sebastopol, with a goal of having one large event per month.
 - Example: City Day in Ives Park: Celebrating the 120th anniversary of Ives Park and the chartering of the city of Sebastopol.

Our Proposal Team

Townie Media was founded by Laura Hagar Rush, creator of the Townsy Sebastopol app, which launched in October 2020. Laura created Townsy to help save small local newspapers and the small-town businesses on which they depend. Before creating Townsy, she was a reporter, editor and webmaster of Sonoma West Times & News, Sebastopol's 130-year-old newspaper, and managing editor of North Bay Biz magazine before that. She is intimately familiar with both the political structure and business community of Sebastopol – and in fact, now has her Sebastopol office in the Sebastopol Chamber of Commerce building. She has also been a member of the city's Business Committee. In addition to being a writer and editor, she is also a graphic designer, web designer and social media person. With this broad range of skills, Laura intends to wear many hats in this project: content creator, graphic designer, web design and maintenance, social media, as well as the main liaison to the city, local businesses, nonprofits, and other groups.

Her partner in the Relaunch Sebastopol proposal is Colleen Martell, who moved to Sebastopol in 2020. For the past 25 years, she has been CEO and Chief Strategist of Martell Communications, a PR and content marketing agency in the Silicon Valley. Among her achievements, Colleen and her team have created campaigns for well-established companies such as Analog Devices, Dolby, Epson and Samsung as well as startup companies such as Ayla Networks, Aviatrix, Echelon, StreamSets, and Splashtop. Colleen also focuses on social impact PR, working with non-profits such as the Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT) and Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship at Santa Clara University and Extreme Tech Challenge. She is currently vice president of the board of directors for the Sebastopol Center for the Arts. Her role in this project will be to lead the brand identity, marketing and PR efforts.

They are joined in this venture by Fox Scarlett, who has been building websites and apps fulltime since 2015, and by social media and video producer Lydia Sleeper.

Contact: Laura Hagar Rush, [REDACTED]

Sebastopol office: [REDACTED] St., Sebastopol, CA 95472 - [REDACTED]

Office of record: [REDACTED] Drive, Forestville, CA 95436

We have **no conflict of interest** and are **eligible for and will acquire the level of insurance** required by the city for this project.

Townie Media's Work Plan for Relaunch Sebastopol

With an eye to creating tangible deliverables that make a real, concrete difference to Sebastopol businesses and residents, Townie Media has put together a three-point plan, focusing on the following RFP focus areas:

- 1) Attracting Customers
- 2) Fostering Business Development and Incentivizing Investment
- 3) Enhancing Community Vitality

The RFP goals of collaboration and communication have been enfolded into these.

Before we launch into specifics for each of these RFP focus areas, however it's important to understand that a lot of the heavy lifting in all these focus areas will be achieved through a comprehensive marketing plan. We will discuss the marketing plan first in general and then, in our three-point plan, we'll go into specifics about how it's applied.

THE MARKETING PACKAGE: brand identity and marketing plan

Having a compelling brand identity and well-developed marketing plan is essential because everything else – websites, printed materials, advertising, social media, even events and architectural solutions flow from these foundational elements.

The brand identity and marketing plan creates a shared sense of purpose and guides the city's storytelling and outreach.

Our first order of business will be to develop a brand identity for Sebastopol and then execute a marketing plan with campaigns aimed at three target audiences:

- Tourists/Visitors
- Residents
- Prospective businesses

Brand Identity

Strategy: Create and manage Sebastopol's brand identity. Brand identity is the personality of the city and a promise to visitors and residents. The brand identity reflects what the city's values are and what the city wants people to feel when they visit and shop.

- Action: Develop and refine Sebastopol’s brand identity. Identify and lean into Sebastopol’s unique value proposition and cachet.
- Action: Create a marketing playbook with tagline, city description, messages for audiences.
- Action: Develop city collateral with strong brand consistency throughout.
- Action: Use placemaking and place keeping practices that are consistent with Sebastopol’s brand identity
- Action: Educate regional leaders, industry partners and the media on the City’s new positioning and messaging.

Marketing Plan

Strategy: Develop marketing plan and campaigns to reach new and existing businesses as well as visitors and tourists.

- Action: Create four marketing campaigns for each of the city’s four main audiences. Each campaign will identify the goal, the advertising plan, the publicity and promotion, social media plans, and the content (collateral, newsletters, blogs, articles) to be developed to support the campaign.
- Action: Establish PR program to announce news and generate articles. Establish “the Sebastopol” voice.
- Action: Use social media to support the marketing plan.
- Action: Write content such as web pages, blogs, newsletters, contributed articles, city collateral, etc.
- Action: create visuals to support the marketing campaigns. These include photos, short videos, drone footage, etc.

Website

Strategy: Work with the Sebastopol Downtown Association (SDA) to use its new Citylight website as the lead visitor/ business development website for Sebastopol.

- Action: Add visitor content.
- Action: Add business development content.
- Action: Collaborate with the SDA and Citylight to maximize the Search Engine Optimization by using a list of keywords that will be used in website content, collateral and public relations materials.

Note: In conversations with the founder of Geocentric/CityLight and in exploring its offerings, we learned that many cities use this platform as a one-stop visitor/business development website. There are issues with this approach – in particular, the question of the business district boundary and whether that can be expanded. Since businesses within that boundary pay for the work of the SDA, the city will need to be financially responsible for any non-district content.

Social Media

Strategy: Amplify the city’s social media to increase SEO for the website and generate awareness and interest in visiting the city.

- Action: Create city accounts for Instagram and Pinterest.

- Action: Create a schedule, develop more engaging posts, use better photos, ask for interaction.
- Create themed posts, use storytelling for community news and engagement, use short-form video, ask for engagement and input. Focus on Stories, Highlights for Instagram.
- Create graphic templates for social posts so all Sebastopol's posts have the same look and feel.
- Create online evergreen materials to share.

Public Relations and Content Creation

Establish a consistent public relations and content program to proactively generate positive media about Sebastopol.

- Action: Establish PR program to announce news and generate articles. Establish "the Sebastopol" voice.
 - Create a new level of storytelling for the city. Gather data and develop storytelling ideas. Good data tells a compelling story about a city.
 - Create stories about the community's revitalization efforts and highlight incentives, workforce and quality of life.
 - Work with local newspaper editors to keep them apprised of Sebastopol's goals and developments. (They will support economic development and the potential advertising revenues from new businesses.)
- Action: Build on existing relationships with local media. Create list of new regional publications as well as travel, lifestyle and destination publications.
- Action: Promote the city to travel publications.
 - Set up travel writer trips. Work with the California Travel Writers group for a 3-day trip.
 - Work with destination/lifestyle publications and bloggers such as Sunset magazine.
 - Contribute articles to Sonoma Tourism website.
- Action: Write press releases to promote positive activity.
 - Aim to write and distribute over a wire service once a month. Develop compelling content to reach new markets.
 - Prepare press release on the city's new identity, a recap of the City's most iconic moments in 2021 and a lineup of events scheduled for 2022.
 - Create Press Releases/City News Page on city website.
- Action: Create tailored pitches for targeted media. Examples include:
 - Sebastopol's development potential and regional benefits to potential businesses.
 - Green initiatives, new business, awards or statistics, etc.
- Action: Develop articles and content for travel websites: local tourism websites, wine and food websites and niche interest travel websites.
 - Content options include sample itineraries, videos, blog posts and reviews.
 - Outlets include: Visit California.com, US Travel Association, Sonoma County Vintners, Sonoma County Winegrowers, Visit the USA.com

- Action: Every month write a new blog post for the city website focusing on new things to do when you visit Sebastopol.
 - Ideas for content include: Lists of top 10 things to do in each of the four seasons. Ideas for families, couples, multigenerational groups, girlfriend getaways, etc.
- Action: Craft articles to place into City newsletter.

Video and Photographic Content

Strategy: Use visual media to make an emotional connection and reach your audiences. Use on social media, on the website, in the newsletter and with blogs and content.

- Action: Hire a photographer to take more pictures of Sebastopol.
 - Upload to photo share sites for public use.
 - Prepare photo essays and submit to publications for publication.
- Action: Create short videos for the website.
- Action: Prepare drone footage of Sebastopol to show visually how appealing the walk downtown is and the interesting art as well as various hikes and places to visit. Upload to YouTube and travel channels.
- Action: Ask for user-generated content. Encourage visitors and residents to generate content on the city. Create ambassadors and influencers and offer small benefits/rewards to the best performers.

1. Attracting Customers

RFP Goals: Make downtown Sebastopol more attractive for consumers to visit and encourage them to return.

“Downtown is important because it’s the heart and soul of any community. If you don’t have a healthy downtown, you simply don’t have a healthy town.”

– Ed McMahon, Chair, National Main Street Center Board of Directors

Beautification:

Strategy: Use design and landscaping solutions to improve the look of downtown and other shopping areas in Sebastopol

- Action: Cleanup and renovation
 - Clean up downtown with regular power-washing, street cleaning, window washing, etc.
 - Give the Town Square a facelift
 - Clean, power washed
 - Paint gazebo
 - Flowers
 - Help downtown businesses use the city facade improvement funds.
- Action: Lean into the “urban farmstead” aesthetic of the Barlow and other places like Handline. It is attractive, modern and nicely captures both Sebastopol’s agricultural roots and the sensibilities of its ex-urban transplants. The city should continue this “urban farmstead” aesthetic in Sebastopol’s downtown, particularly the edible/pollinator planters.
- Action: Create an artistic “architecture ceiling” for main block of Main Street – to give visitors and residents alike a visual clue that “there’s a there there” (as Gertrude Stein might have said). Imagine a secular version of Tibetan prayer flags or tiny white lights or a Ned Kahn structure.
- Action: Make alleys and other under-utilized urban spaces visually interesting via murals, landscaping or other architectural elements.

COLLABORATION: Townie Media associates will consult and coordinate with the city’s Planning Department, Planning Commission, Design Review Board, Public Art Committee and Public Works. Consent from City Council.

A path from the Barlow

Strategy: Create a visual path from the Barlow to downtown to encourage tourists to branch out.

- Action: Add banners down McKinley along the theater and in front of Whole Foods to create a visual corridor from the Barlow to Downtown Sebastopol.
- Action: Spruce up the street murals in the Barlow

- Sebastopol sign (with same impact as the yellow Barlow sign)
- Action: Create a Downtown Sebastopol (like the Barlow sign) visible from the Barlow
- Action: Create murals and Instagram selfie moments for visitors, such as a new identity mural on the back of Silk Moon with the word “Sebastopol” in large letters.

COLLABORATION: Work with the Sebastopol Downtown Association, Sebastopol Center for the Arts, as well as the city’s Planning Department, Planning Commission, Design Review Board, Public Art Committee and Public Works.

Use of Art

Strategy: Use art (and Sebastopol’s rich supply of local artists) to improve the look and appeal of Sebastopol’s downtown.

- Action: Add more eye-catching infrastructure around town by asking artists to create striking flower pots, banners, overhead lights, signs, parklets, lamp posts, newspaper boxes, trash cans, bike racks and railings.
- Action: Engage high school students to help with this.

COLLABORATION: Townie Media associates will consult and coordinate with the Sebastopol Downtown Association, Sebastopol Center for the Arts, as well as the city’s Planning Department, Planning Commission, Design Review Board, Public Art Committee and Public Works. Consent from City Council.

Marketing plan for tourists

Strategy: Use new brand identity and marketing plan to attract tourists to Sebastopol.

1) Website:

- Action: Collaborate with the SDA to add more tourism options to the new SDA website.
- Action: Make sure all city tourism domain names point to the new SDA site.
- Action: Create a series of fun itineraries or “adventure sheets” such as:
 - Things to Do on a Weekend Getaway in Sebastopol
 - Apple farm tour map
 - Places to Visit in Sebastopol that Only the Locals Know
 - Things to do with Kids in Sebastopol
 - Back roads of Sebastopol and West County
 - Art Trails/Farm Trails/Wine Trails/Maker Trails in Sebastopol
 - Hiking and Biking in Sebastopol
 - Buy Local in Sebastopol

2) Collateral:

- Action: Create 3-up postcards about the new SDA website to pass out to all downtown businesses, hotels and Airbnbs, tourism and the chamber.
- Action: Write newsletter articles highlighting the various visiting experiences. (Each one of those downloadables is repurposed as a blog post for the website.)
- Action: Write the downloadable adventure sheets (*see Website above*).
- Action: Get a Creative, Hand-drawn Community Map – downloadable.

3) PR Materials:

- Action: Pitch unique stories to targeted to key travel, destination, lifestyle press.
- Action: Write and contribute articles to Sonoma Tourism.
- Action: Set up a travel writer program. Arrange a 3-day event with the Bay Area Travel Writer Association. (Cover hotel and meals for 3-5 travel writers. Create itinerary.)
- Action: Create a new quarterly publication for tourists, Sebastopol City Guide.

4) Social Media:

- Action: Regularly create posts about a unique Sebastopol visiting experience.
- Action: Promote the downloadable adventure sheets from the SDA website.
- Action: Tag, like and comment on social posts from the public that appeared over the past weekend.
- Action: Use social media posts to promote city news, articles about the city, events happening that month, etc.
- Action: Highlight the beauty shots of Sebastopol on a regular basis.
- Action: Feature downtown merchants in individual posts.
- Action: Create YouTube videos of places to visit in Sebastopol.

5) Advertising:

- Action: Advertise on KRCB to hit both North Bay and South Bay audiences, KQED for San Francisco and East Bay audiences.
- Action: Advertise on local and regional independent newspapers, for example, Berkeleyside and the San Jose Metro.
- Action: Buy Google Ads, and Facebook and Instagram ads, focused around the new brand identity and local events.

COLLABORATION: Townie Media associates with input from the Sebastopol Downtown Association and the Sebastopol Chamber of Commerce, the City's Business Committee, and with the consent of the Sebastopol City Council.

Encouraging return visits

Strategy: Encourage stores to use some common commercial tactics to encourage return visits

- Action: Ask local businesses via the Downtown Merchants and Barlow Facebook Groups how they encourage return visits, and add their solutions with the answers below.
- Encourage businesses to use frequent buyer punch cards.
- Action: Urge hotels and airbnbs to give discounts for a return visit within a short amount of time.
- Action: Encourage businesses to use “next visit” discount cards.

COLLABORATION: Townie Media associates will consult and coordinate the Sebastopol Downtown Association and the Sebastopol Chamber of Commerce, the City’s Business Committee.

RFP Goal: Target our local base (or, getting residents and local businesses to shop local)

Shop Sebastopol First Campaign

Strategy: Create a marketing campaign emphasizing the importance of buying local.

- Action: Add “Get it Here” section to the Townsy Sebastopol app, showing where you can get particular locally made items (See the Buy Local page of the Marin Agricultural Land Trust: <https://malt.org/buy-local/>)
- Action: Create a hand drawn map of local food producers and restaurants to be made available around town.
- Action: Create a social media campaign highlighting the businesses in various shopping areas of Sebastopol.
- Encourage the SDA and the Chamber to repost their members social media postings – this can double or triple their reach.
 - We are working on creating a computer program that will allow us to instantly open all the social media pages of every storefront business in Sebastopol – making reposting as easy as clicking a button. To reduce the overwhelm, the program only shows pages that have added new content since your last visit.
- Create a B2B Directory for local businesses.

COLLABORATION: Townie Media associates will consult and coordinate with the Sebastopol Downtown Association and the Sebastopol Chamber of Commerce, the City’s Business Committee.

Local Online Shopping

Strategy: Create a robust local online shopping environment to fight the “Amazon” effect.

- Action: Encourage LOCAL online shopping
 - Create Gift Guide content on SDA site (linking to local stores’ online stores)
 - Create a Sebastopol Store on Townsy, where any store in Sebastopol can post products. (See, for example, the Barlow’s online store)
 - Investigate a biz-funded delivery service to compete with Amazon by providing same-day delivery for locals from local stores.
 - Invite an existing company that does this to expand into or relocate to Sebastopol.
 - Investigate use of PostMates or other online delivery services.
- See further suggestions for targeting locals above under Beautification and Return Visits sections above

2) Foster Business Development/Incentivize Investment

RFP Goal: Make Sebastopol more attractive to prospective businesses.

A place for business

Strategy: Create a one-stop shop for businesses looking to relocate and for new and existing businesses in Sebastopol.

- **Action:** Work with the SDA to add a “Doing Business in Sebastopol” section to the new SDA’s new Citylight website. This section of the website will contain the following:
 - Action: Create an evolving list of **business opportunity sites**. Add to website and build a downloadable PDF package. (Could be printed when necessary.) Since the list of available properties will change, we suggest the majority of the package address the business areas and business environment of Sebastopol, with an interchangeable insert for new property listings.
 - Action: Create the **‘Doing Business in Sebastopol’ Toolkits**. Create 2-3 business toolkits detailing everything a business needs to know to relocate, open a new business, or expand an existing business in Sebastopol. These will be available on the business section of the city website, the SDA website and as downloadable PDFs.
 - Sample toolkit for prospective businesses:
 - A description of the town, business environment and various business districts.

- A description and map of existing opportunity sites for businesses, like the city currently has for housing.
- Updated commercial property listings
- Quotes from existing businesses about why doing business in Sebastopol is so great.
- City and county programs to benefit local businesses.
- Contacts for everyone in city staff (related to business), Chamber of Commerce, Sebastopol Downtown Association, and other local business organizations
- Contacts to commercial realtors
- A local b2b directory.
- Sample toolkit for new or existing businesses:
 - A complete list of licensing requirements, information on city taxes, and signage rules, etc.
 - County and city programs (like façade improvement) that benefit local businesses.
 - Contacts for city staff (related to business), Chamber of Commerce, Sebastopol Downtown Association, and other local business organizations.
 - A B2B directory
- Action: Create fresh content for the business section
 - Write business roundup articles to highlight what new businesses are opening up
 - Feature a regular Community Business Spotlight

COLLABORATION: Townie Media associates will coordinate with the Sebastopol Downtown Association on the Citylight site, and consult with the SDA, the Chamber, and the city's business committee on the contents of Toolkits.

Marketing Campaign

STRATEGY: Create a marketing campaign to attract businesses to Sebastopol

- 1) Website: Market the SDA website (with added business development section) and the downloadable business resources described above.
- 2) Collateral: Create the collateral to be used in development efforts
 - Action: Create Toolkits described above
 - Action: Create 3-up postcard about SDA website and distribute around town
- 3) PR: Put a PR campaign in motion:
 - Action: Press release announcing that Sebastopol new campaign targeting new businesses.
 - Action: Media outreach to the North Bay Business Journal, Press Democrat and SoCo News for specific articles.

4) Social Media: Execute a social media for business promotion

- Action: Heavy promotion of the SDA website, particularly its business resources
- Action: Highlight local businesses news on social
- Action: Promote the content stories on the SDA website via social media.
- Action: Work with the chamber and SDA to regularly include business opportunity sites in their social media.
- Action: Use existing hashtags: #sebastopol, #sebastopolca, #downtownsebastopol, #sebastopolrealestate, #sebastopoldowntown, #sebastopolbusiness, #sebastopolcalifornia

COLLABORATION: Townie Media associates will coordinate with the Sebastopol Downtown Association on the Citylight site, and consult with the SDA, the Chamber, and the city's business committee and locals businesses on the contents of Toolkits.

Pop-ups

Strategy: Let businesses “try out” Sebastopol by doing a pop-up.

- Action: Create a directory of vacant sites that can be used as pop-ups
- Action: Create a list of local businesses that are willing to host pop-ups.

COLLABORATION: Townie Media associates will consult with the SDA, the Chamber, and the city's business committee and local businesses.

Hands-on economic development work

Strategy: Do the hands-on, face-to-face economic development work to make promising businesses aware of Sebastopol and to get them to visit to experience the Sebastopol difference:

- Action: Reach out to business brokers, commercial brokers and real estate agents, and give them your materials and discuss what's new and different.
- Action: Hold an open house for commercial realtors and business brokers at one of the opportunity sites. Bring in food and drink on a Thursday afternoon from 11am to 2pm. A team of city officials, such as the mayor, the planning director and city council members are there to talk about what's happening.
- Action: Also hold one-on-one briefings with top prospective businesses.
- Action: Develop an entertainment package to be included with particularly promising prospects (drinks at Fern Bar, cookies from the Cookie Factory, socks from Silk Moon, for example) to encourage them to come investigate Sebastopol

COLLABORATION: Townie Media associates will coordinate with city staff, council members and with the SDA, the Chamber, and the city's business committee.

Placemaking

Strategy: Use architectural and landscaping solutions to make Sebastopol's shopping areas more attractive to prospective businesses.

- Action: Clean, refresh and repair shopping areas.
 - Action: Keep downtown tidy, clean and trash free and maintain common areas
 - Action: Create a unified Industrial Farmhouse design look throughout downtown and at the eastern and southern gateways
 - Use with edible/pollinator planters, Handline-like rock cages (gabions), and themed directional signs
 - Action: Improve the streetscape look in the downtown area with the Industrial Farmhouse look (flower pots, trash cans, lampposts)
 - Action: Refresh and repair all city signs to them a modern, unified, refreshed look that matches with the Industrial Farmhouse look.
 - The city's two brown signs at all the gateways and solar dragon
 - Sebastopol Visitors Bureau sign.
- Action: Install a digital sign to highlight city events and news.
 - Possible location: at the crossroads of 12 & 116 or in front of Screaming Mimi's
- Action: Add a Sebastopol banner as you enter downtown.
- Action: Use decorative lighting over Main Street in the Industrial Farmhouse style

COLLABORATION: Townie Media associates will consult and coordinate with city's Planning Department, Planning Commission, Design Review Board, Public Art Committee and Public Works. Consent from City Council.

Incentivize Investment

Strategy: Create an email list of landlords for downtown and shopping areas and communicate the town's new business development plan.

- Action: Show them the ways the town is investing in the business environment as a way of encouraging them to do the same.
- Make sure they know about city and county programs to help landlords improve their properties (i.e. façade improvement).

RFP Goals: Make it easier for businesses to open or expand in downtown Sebastopol and increase retention of current downtown businesses.

Streamline Government Processes

Strategy: Make life easier for businesses by ensuring that all business-related city processes are streamlined, simplified and available online.

- Action: Begin this process by interviewing new business owners (and businesses who've recently expanded) to see how they experienced the process.
- Action: Work with city staff to review existing business processes and regulations to make sure they are simple, straightforward, and can be accomplished online.

COLLABORATION: Townie Media associates will interview new businesses and businesses that have recently expanded, and then consult and coordinate with city staff, particularly in planning and licensing.

Pop-ups

Strategy: Let businesses "try out" Sebastopol by doing a pop-up.

- Action: Create a directory of vacant sites that can be used as pop-ups
- Action: Create a list of local businesses that are willing to host pop-ups.

COLLABORATION: Townie Media associates will consult with the SDA, the Chamber, and the city's business committee and local businesses.

Retention and expansion

Strategy: Expand the customer base for local businesses by marketing Sebastopol's unique shopping experience to visitors and residents. Increasing the customer base will increase business retention and expansion.

- See Actions and Collaboration under "Attracting Customers" above: The marketing campaign will increase visibility for downtown businesses via PR, social media, SEO and website blogs and articles. Increased visibility will lead to an increase in visitors.

Beautification

Strategy: Beautify the city to make it more welcoming to shoppers.

- See Actions and Collaboration under Beautification/Design solutions under Attracting Customers

RFP Goal: Explore expansion of the Downtown Business District

The Sebastopol Downtown Association was created by the Sebastopol City Council several decades ago and comprises a small L-shaped stretch of downtown Sebastopol. Businesses within the district pay a yearly fee, tacked onto their city business tax, which goes to pay for promotional activities by the district.

Our recommendations regarding the business district include:

- Action: Expand the business district to represent all of Sebastopol's shopping areas.

- Action: Expand the scope of the district’s new Citylight website to include:
 - Other business areas of the city.
 - A visitor/tourism section of the website.
 - A business development section.
- If the city decides that the business district can’t be expanded, then we would suggest that the city pick up part of the cost of the site’s yearly subscription (Citylight subscriptions are approx. \$5,000-\$6,000 a year) and the cost of maintenance of non-district parts of the site, in exchange for sharing the site.

NOTE: Citylight specializes in downtown business district websites and they have sites in large and small towns all over the country. In conversations with CEO of Citylight Jim Blakesee, I saw several city websites where all these activities – tourism, business development, and biz district activities - were combined in a single site. It does not make sense for Sebastopol to purchase a separate Citylight website for the whole city. According to Blakeslee, the cost is \$10,000-\$20,000 in set up, plus the yearly subscription. It would make much more sense to share the existing SDA site. (Two notes about Citylight – it cannot use the city’s existing calendar system and it cannot handle extensive e-commerce.)

COLLABORATION: Townie Media associates will coordinate with the Sebastopol Downtown Association on the Citylight site, and consult with the SDA, the Chamber, and the city’s business committee on the contents of business and tourism sections.

RFP Goal: Enhance Community Vitality

Townsy

Strategy: Turn Townsy into a community engagement app for Sebastopol residents.

Action: Rework the Townsy’s navigation as follows:

- News
 - City Newsletters
 - City Alerts
 - Links to Local News about Sebastopol from Press Democrat, SocoNews.org, Sebastopol Living and the Gazette.
- Events (includes government meetings)
- Volunteering
- Local Arts
 - local music
 - local art
 - poetry: Larry Robinson’s poem for the day.
- Shopping (If allowed)
 - The Sebastopol Store – open for all stores in Sebastopol to contribute to. (See the Barlow Store.)

- Get it here: where to buy what locally (See MALT's Buy Local page)
- Online store for local independent artisans

NOTE: Townsy is currently a web app – a website configured to look like an app on your phone. Our goal is to produce a native app that residents can download to their phones, giving the city a way to instantly communicate alerts, news, and other important information about the community via people's phones.

COLLABORATION: Laura Hagar Rush, founder of Townie Media and Townsy, will collaborate with city staff, city communications officer, and the city's non-profit committee to create a truly useful community engagement tool that will let people know what's happening in their town and how they can get involved.

Art for the community

Strategy: Enhancing community vitality through art

- Action: With a program called "Let's Paint the Town," Princeton, Ky. gathered the community together to literally paint the town and spruce it up to make it more visually and aesthetically pleasing to potential employers. Let's do the same.
- Action: Sebastopol's creative atmosphere has been a magnet for a broad variety of artists and arts businesses that further enrich the cultural environment. Provide news and listings for arts organizations in City publications and communications.
- Action: Give artists city blocks to decorate with the city providing materials.
- Action: Develop more exciting, eye-catching infrastructure around town by commissioning artists (and high school students) to create striking parklets, lampposts, newspaper cages, trash cans, bike racks and railings.
- Action: Facilitate the integration of artwork and performances in public spaces (Town Plaza, parks, rights-of-way), and encourage the installation of artwork in existing buildings.
- Action: Coordinate and simplify permit procedures for signs, banners, and other materials used to promote local cultural resources and events.

COLLABORATION: Townie Media associates will consult and coordinate with the Sebastopol Downtown Association, Sebastopol Center for the Arts, as well as the city's Planning Department, Planning Commission, Design Review Board, Public Art Committee and Public Works. Consent from City Council.

Events

Strategy: Create new city events to supplement traditional events.

- Action: Work with local businesses and service organizations to create new annual events for Sebastopol, with a goal of one event per month.
 - A must for 2022: Celebration of the 120th anniversary of Ives Park and the incorporation of the city (1902).

- Set the table for community conversation. After breaking bread with someone, it's hard to consider them a stranger. That's the philosophy that informed The Longest Table, a 400-person feast put together by community groups in Tallahassee, Florida, to break down social barriers and get neighbors talking to each other. Let's copy this great idea! Imagine a long table stretching the length of Laguna Parkway.
- Other new events might include:
 - Winter Wine Walk
 - Pet Costume Parade
 - Rosalia
 - Fall Harvest Long Table (all the way down Laguna Parkway)
 - Art and Wine in the Park (associated with Art at the Source).
 - And we have a list of about 50 other ideas

COLLABORATION: Townie Media Associates will collaborate with the city's non-profit committee and local service organization and non-profits, as well as city staff, the police and fire departments as needed.

RFP Goal: Collaborate with the city or local nonprofits and service organizations to apply for grants to support Relaunch Sebastopol programs and infrastructure improvements.

Grants

Strategy: Collaborate with local nonprofits and service organizations to apply for grants to support Relaunch Sebastopol programs and infrastructure improvements.

Townie Media principal Laura Hagar Rush is an accomplished journalist has written and won grants in the past. In addition, she has raised more than \$100,000 in angel investment for the Townsy app, applying the same kind of language and logic one uses to apply for grants.

Strategy: The city should consider subscribing to grants service for researching grants online and share this resource with local nonprofits.

City Communication

Strategy: Review the communication tools the city uses to reach residents and the press.

- Action: Install a digital sign to inform people of upcoming events, city meetings and more.
- Action: Improve the look and reach of the city's newsletter.
 - Action: Make city newsletter content and design livelier and more attractive.
 - Action: Repurpose newsletter articles for SDA and Townsy sites.

- Action: Increase the number of newsletter subscribers through targeted campaigns.

COLLABORATION: Townie Media associates will collaborate with city staff, city communications officer, and the city's non-profit committee to create a truly useful community engagement tool that will let people know what's happening in their town and how they can get involved.

Proposal Team Members

Laura Hagar Rush

Laura Hagar Rush founded Townie Media and launched the Townsy Sebastopol app in October 2020. She created Townsy to help save small local newspapers and the smalltown businesses on which they depend. Before creating Townsy, she was a reporter, editor and webmaster of Sonoma West Times & News, Sebastopol's 130-year-old newspaper, where she covered the city council, wrote news and feature stories about this remarkable little town called Sebastopol. She has a long-time interest in helping small business and was managing editor of North Bay Biz magazine for several years. For fifteen years before that she was a reporter at the East Bay Express in Berkeley. She is also a graphic designer and web designer.

Colleen Martell

Colleen Martell is a successful PR and marketing pro helping tech B2B companies reach their marketing goals. For the past 25 years, she has been CEO and Chief Strategist of [Martell Communications](#), a PR and content marketing agency. Among her achievements, Colleen and her team have created campaigns for well-established companies such as Analog Devices, Dolby, Epson and Samsung as well as startup companies such as Ayla Networks, Aviatix, Echelon, StreamSets, and Splashtop.

Colleen also focuses on social impact PR, working with non-profits such as the Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT) and Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship at Santa Clara University and Extreme Tech Challenge. In addition to serving as vice president of the board of directors for the Sebastopol Center for the Arts, she has been a Sonoma County community lead for Revel, a social platform startup for women over 50.

Colleen has taught publicity writing at the San Jose State University, her alma mater, and her own professional articles have appeared in MarketingProfs, PR Daily, Ragan.com and Muck Rack.

Fox Scarlett

Born and raised in the North Bay, Fox Scarlett has been programming for 40 years and building websites and apps full time since 2015. He is involved in various digital community and climate projects. A former professional guitarist and recording engineer, he also enjoys making electronic music for the label he cofounded with an internet buddy in Poland as well as drinking black tea and watching kitten videos.

Lydia Sleeper

Lydia leads the Media Production for TownsyApp. She joined the team in March 2021 and works directly with founder Laura Rush. Her contributions include producing promotional videos, integrating social media campaigns and curating the events section to ensure the calendar is current and reflects the vibrancy of Sebastopol. Lydia is a native Angeleno who earned her Business and Entrepreneurial degrees from San Jose State University. She currently lives in west Sonoma County where she is expanding her music career and loves going on long walks with her dog, Buddy.

Laura Hagar Rush

[REDACTED], Forestville, CA 95436 / [REDACTED]

Skills and experience: editing, writing, advertising design, copywriting, web and graphic design, newsletter design

4/20 – Now Townsy, a community web app. Townsy is a community app that re-envisioned how both community news and advertising are delivered to a hyper-local audience.

Founder. Created the idea and structure for Townsy, built the wireframe, raised capital, and hired a developer to build the MVP, which launched in October 2020. I continue to keep the app populated with news and advertising content. See it at <https://townsyapp.com>.

1/21 – Now Social Media. Managed social media for a portfolio of clients including Sebastopol Center for the Arts, the Sebastopol Downtown Association, and Silk Moon (a retail store).

8/16 – 7/20 Sonoma West Publishers (Circ. 12,000), a community newspaper group serving western and northern Sonoma County communities: *Sonoma West Times and News*, *The Healdsburg Tribune*, *The Windsor Times* and *Cloverdale Reveille*.

8/18 – 7/20 – Editor, Sonoma West Times & News. Managed editorial calendar, developed story ideas, wrote articles, edited, photographed, laid out using Quark, proofread. **Webmaster:** I continued in my role as webmaster for all four papers, managing updates and design.

8/16 – 8/18 - Webmaster, email manager, reporter. Re-designed and maintained four newspaper websites. Founded, designed and send out weekly e-newsletters. Created and maintained the online calendar sections for four papers. Also wrote features and other news, and managed the social media for two newspapers.

7/13 – 11/16 KRCB Public Media for the North Bay

Graphic design and web maintenance. Laid out the monthly program guide *Open Air*, created print and web ads, as well as posters, postcards, logos, etc. Updated the website, which is run on Joomla and Core Publisher. Founded, designed and sent out KRCB's weekly e-newsletter.

10/09 – 11/12 The eLearning Guild

2011-2012 Newsletter Production Manager. Wrote, edited and emailed Guild newsletters, including the weekly eLearning Insider and biweekly Learning Solutions Update newsletters, in addition to daily marketing emails. Also created banner ads for newsletters.

2009-2010 Senior Web Designer. Edited and updated the eLearning Guild's multiple websites, including the main Guild site, Online Forums, DevLearn

Conference, Learning Solutions Conference and mLearnCon sites. Chose photographs and laid out articles for *Learning Solutions Magazine*.

2/09 – 7/10 KRCB Public Media for the North Bay

Web and Graphic Design. Part-time temporary job. Laid out the monthly program guide, advertisements, posters, postcards, etc. Created two mini-sites: Tengo La Voz, a Latino youth arts website in Joomla (9/09), and Sonoma County Hiking Trails (Joomla) (7/10)

2005 – 2009 Web Design – Freelance

Designed and maintained websites for Studies in Emergent Order and Conversations on Philanthropy (online academic journals), as well as CP Monopole Wines, Wickland Law Office, Ormed Institute, REACH Arts Magnet and others.

1/02 – 12/05 NorthBay BIZ Magazine (circ. 14,000), a glossy, business-to-business monthly covering Sonoma, Napa and Marin counties

Managing Editor (5/04–12/05). Developmental editing, copy editing, story development and assignment, feature and column writing (food and wine columns). Oversaw a stable of 25 freelancers. Managed the editorial calendar, monthly photo schedule, photo acquisitions and writer recruitment. Ad design and magazine layout as needed, utilizing Quark and InDesign.

Associate Editor (11/02–5/04). Developmental editing, copy editing, feature and column writing. Ad design and magazine layout as needed.

8/86 – 2000 East Bay Express (circ. 50,000), an alternative weekly in Berkeley, CA

Book Reviewer and Columnist (3/95–6/97). Wrote book reviews and a monthly column about books by local authors and publishers.

Associate Editor (8/94–6/95). Edited short news and cover stories. Responsible for recruitment and development of new writers.

Staff Writer (1/89–11/91). Wrote short news pieces, long cover articles, book and music reviews. Specialized in environmental and education policy and profiles of leading academics.

Regular Contributor (1986–2000)

7/91 – 7/92 Northern California Best Places, a travel book (Sasquatch Books, 1993)

Managing Editor. Developed and managed a stable of 40 writers, organized the book's format, did initial research, edited the book and wrote copy for several sections.

6/89 – 5/91 Sierra Club Yodeler (circ. 30,000), Sierra Club's Bay Area newspaper

Editor. Recruited and managed a large volunteer staff. Wrote, edited and proofread articles. Laid out the newspaper.

1985 – 2002 Freelance Writing: Published in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Parenting*, *Sierra*, *San Francisco Focus*, *Communication Arts*, *Village Voice*, *California Magazine*, *Chicago Reader*, *L.A. Weekly* and in alternative press newspapers around the country.

Education: B.A., English Literature, University of California at Berkeley, 1987.
Ongoing Online Education via Lynda.com in web and graphic design

Computer Skills: HTML5, CSS3 and the content management systems WordPress, Squarespace, Core Publisher and TownNews. Adobe Creative Suite, esp. Photoshop, InDesign, Acrobat Pro. Basic film editing skills with Adobe Premiere. Audio editing with Audacity. Quark. And, of course, Word, PowerPoint and Excel. PC and Mac fluent.

References

To Whom It May Concern;

We had the privilege of working with Laura Hagar Rush for three, too short years from 2017-2020. Laura proved to be a versatile, proficient, creative and tenacious team member and project leader. Starting at Sonoma West Times & News, Laura came on board as our parttime webmaster and in short time began contributing community news coverage of Sebastopol and west county. She greatly upgraded our online presence and digital presentations. She juggled multiple deadlines, often on a changing basis due to impacts of breaking news. Then, 2018 she was elevated to Sonoma West Times & News editor and became a prominent face and voice for our local newspaper that has covered the Sebastopol community since 1889. In fact, she was instrumental in putting a community program at the Sebastopol Grange to celebrate our newspapers' 130th anniversary. During these times, our local news organization and the entirety of America's newspaper industry was undergoing historical challenges. Laura's versatility in web design, writing, journalism, editing and social media management proved invaluable. During this historical transformation as we moved the 130 years of Sebastopol Times legacy to digital only and rebranded as SoCoNews.org, Laura remained a very positive influence on us all. And, remember, these were also times of wildfires, a historical Russian River flood and other calamities that filled our news budgets. Through her entire tenure with us, Laura Hagar Rush gave all of herself to our mission. Our observation of why she did this is her devotion to the spirit and fabric of a local community. For any organization or project seeking to improve the local community's quality of life— or engage more people to get involved — Laura would be a strong asset and experienced adviser.

Sincerely, Rollie Atkinson

Publisher/CEO SoCoNews.org

To Whom It May Concern,

I write in support of the application of Laura Hagar Rush in response to the RFP for Relaunch Sebastopol.

I have known and worked with Laura for some ten plus years. In all the various ways in which we have worked together, Laura has evidenced a deep knowledge of Sebastopol and the surrounding area. And, if I may say, that knowledge is also accompanied by a real affection for and commitment to our community.

Laura worked for me when I was the President and CEO for KRCB Television and Radio, now Northern California Public Media. As our graphic designer she produced a wide variety of collateral material including web maintenance, monthly newsletter, and the launch of an email newsletter. Her creative skills are excellent and she was always attentive to our needs and desires, a critical skill in the kind of creative work I suspect Relaunch Sebastopol will entail.

As a board member of Sonoma West Publishers, now SoCoNews, I am well aware of the value which Laura brought to the creative graphic design on a variety of projects there. I was also

aware of the respect with which Laura was held by the SWP staff, both for her specific graphics skills as well as for the ease and pleasure of working with her.

To me these personal traits and graphics skills are reflected in the creation, launch, and operation of Townsy. During a most difficult time, Laura persisted in implementing her vision. Again, her commitment to community is strong and her ability to act on that commitment is evident in all her work.

I encourage your very serious consideration for Laura for the important work of Relaunch Sebastopol.

Nancy Dobbs
President Emerita, Northern California Public Media
Board Chair, SoCoNews

To Whom It May Concern

As the Director of Advancement at the Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT), I give my highest level of recommendation and endorsement to Colleen Martell and her team. Team Martell's professionalism, thoroughness, thoughtfulness, attention to detail, and taking the time to get to know key stakeholders and audiences, in addition to developing a collaborative working partnership with their clients has resulted in increased engagement, revenue, and stronger PR and communications across the board for our organization. Happy to answer any questions and talk to anyone about how productive and enjoyable working with Colleen and her team is!

Sincerely,
Jennifer Carlin
Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT)

Budget for Relaunch Sebastopol

Activity	Amount	Optional
Consultation, Collaboration and Planning		
Discovery meetings, attend meetings for various city committees, reports	\$14,500	
Tourism Program		
Marketing		
Prepare brand identity package, write marketing plan, campaigns	\$8,000	
Content/Blogs/Website		
Writing content, adventure guides, blog posts, website updates	\$28,000	
Quarterly Sebastopol City Guide		\$16,000
PR		
Press releases, media outreach, pitching stories	\$14,500	
Travel Writer Program		\$5,000
Social Media		
Create calendar, 2/wk posting, photos, videos, design images, engage with followers	\$8,500	
Doing Business in Sebastopol Program		
Create website, business webpage copy, toolkit of downloadables	\$3,000	
Collateral: Fact Sheet, Overview, 3 up Flyer		\$5,000
Real Estate open house, 2 sessions		\$2,500
Marketing to Residents Program		
Townsy App for Residents		
Develop and maintain updates (Funded by Townsy)	\$0	

Events		
Community Day/lves Park 120th anniversary	\$9,500	
Buy Local Program: website copy, PDF of flyer, blog content, PR news		\$3,000
TOTAL	\$86,000	

Calendar for 2022 Relaunch Program

RFP Calendar Townie Media				
Qtly Theme	Time	Activity	Marketing Channel	Audience
Q1 Getting Started	Jan-March 2022			
		Begin initial discovery meetings for branding with key city decision makers	Planning	Public
		Discovery meeting with Planning, Zoning etc.	Planning	New Biz
		Prepare brand identity package	Marketing	Public
		Write marketing plan, begin campaigns	Marketing	Public
		Start development on Townsy app for residents	App	Residents
		Start PR, collateral, blog, social media, newsletter programs	Marketing	Public
		City starts clean-up, washing, repairs, painting	Community	Public
		Start the Doing Business in Sebastopol program; Write website copy; write list of opportunity sites	Website	New Biz
		Create the Spring issue of the Sebastopol City Guide, a quarterly pub	PR	Public
		Update city event calendar	Events	Public
		Discovery meeting with key downtown businesses, service orgs, non-profits on community engagement	Community	Dwtm Biz, Residents
		Blog Content: Create adventure guides	Blogs	Visitors
		Create master list of story ideas and PR news calendar for use with newsletter, blog, social and PR	PR	Public
		Press release: City announces new brand identity and spring cleaning/beautification program	PR	Public
	Attend meetings for various city committees	Community	Residents	
Ap-June 2022				

Q2: Launching Marketing	Write toolkit collateral pieces for the Doing Business in Sebastopol program	Collateral	New Biz
	City initiates placemaking infrastructure elements (town sign, lights, banner, flower pots)	Community	Public
	Press release: City announces new website for new businesses; Media outreach	PR	New Biz
	Write adventure guides, post on website	Collateral, Blog	Visitors
	Hold open house at an opportunity sites for commercial real estate brokers.	Events	New Biz
	Update website content on new Townsy app for residents	Website	Residents
	PR: Contribute content to Sonoma Tourism	PR	Visitors
	PR, blog, social media, content programs	Marketing	Public
	Blog Content: Create adventure guides	Blogs	Visitors
	Install outdoor digital sign with calendar & news	Community	Public
	Create a business toolkit with 3 guides	Collateral	New Biz
	Press release: City announces new brand identity and spring cleaning, beautification program	PR	Public
	Artists, students, community paint wall murals and street murals	Community	Public
	Blog Content: Community Business Spotlight	Blog	Public
	PR: Initiate travel writers program; promote articles	PR, social	Visitors
	Buy Local campaign: PR, blog, collateral, social media	Collateral, Blog	Residents
	Event: Community Day celebrating 120th anniversary of Ives Park, Pet Costume Parade, Rosalia Festival, Seb-edible Foodie Trail	Events	Residents
	Work with city on grant access program for all non-profits	Community	Residents
	PR, blog, social media, content programs	Marketing	Public
	Attend meetings for various city committees	Community	Residents

		Update city event calendar	Events	Public
Q3: Engaging Community	July-Sept 2022			
		Event: Interdependence Day, Fall Harvest Long Table Dinner, Art and Wine in the Park (associated with Art at the Source)	Events	Residents
		PR, blog, social media, content programs	Marketing	Public
		PR: Create tailored pitches for targeted media	PR	Public
		Blog Content: Create adventure guides, Community Business Spotlight	Blogs	Visitors, New Biz, Dwtzn Biz
		Create the Summer issue of the Sebastopol City Guide, a quarterly publication	Content	Public
		Attend meetings for various city committees	Community	Residents
		Work with Planning on implementation of housing goals	Community	Residents
		Meet with local schools to develop events and projects with them (service day, senior day)	Community	Residents
		Engage with community on the Townsy app with news, deals	App	Residents
		Hold open house at an opportunity sites for commercial real estate brokers.	Events	New Biz
Q 4 Celebrating	Oct-Dec 2022			
		PR, blog, social media, content programs	Marketing	Public
		Blog Content: Holiday Promotion with Merchants, Community Business Spotlight	Blog	Residents, Visitors
		Event: Senior Day (Senior Citizens and high school seniors), Turkey Trot, Winter Wine Walk, Santa Stroll, Santa Run 10K	Event	Public
		Attend meetings for various city committees	Community	Residents
		Engage with community on the Townsy app with news, deals	App	Residents
		Create the Fall issue of the Sebastopol City Guide	Content	Public
		Hold open house at an opportunity sites for commercial real estate brokers.	Events	New Biz

		Update city event calendar	Events	Public
Q1 2023 Focusing	Jan 2023			
		PR, blog, social media, content programs	Marketing	Public
		Attend meetings for various city committees	Community	Residents
		Engage with community on the Townsy app with news, deals	App	Residents
		Events: Plan 2023 calendar of events	Events	Public
		PR: Create the Winter issue of the Sebastopol City Guide	PR	Public
		Update city event calendar	Events	Public