


Agenda Report Reviewed by:  
City Manager: 

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL  
CITY COUNCIL  
AGENDA ITEM

**Meeting Date:** May 3, 2022  
**To:** Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers  
**From:** Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director  
**Subject:** Approval of Annual Peace Wall Honorees  
**Recommendation:** Acceptance of Nominations  
**Funding:** Currently Budgeted: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No  N/A  
Net General Fund Cost: \$

Account Code/Costs authorized in City Approved Budget (if applicable) AK (n/a) (verified by Administrative Services Department)

**INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE:**

The item tonight is for Council acceptance of the Annual Peace Wall Honorees.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Sebastopol Living Peace Wall is located on City property, at the southeast corner of McKinley Avenue and Petaluma Avenue. The Peace Wall is intended to honor efforts to promote peace.

As approved by the City Council, the persons proposed to be honored on the Peace Wall are required to be reviewed by the City Council, since the Wall is located on public property.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Sebastopol Living Peace Wall Selection Committee was convened on March 10, 2022. The committee members present were: Michael Gillotti, Chairman, Richard Retecki Vice Chairman, Paul Robbins from the Redwood Friends group, Charles Prickett, Alice Waco from the Sonoma County Peace and Justice Center.

After a thorough review and discussion of the nominees, the following four persons were selected to be honored for the year 2022. Upon your approval their names will be inscribed onto the Living Peace Wall and added to the roll of honorees on the peace wall web site, [www.sebastopolivingpeacewall.com](http://www.sebastopolivingpeacewall.com). An "alternate" is also being put forth, in case one of the four nominees declines or is unavailable for the ceremony.

Thank you for your consideration and for your support in promoting the cause of peace and justice by honoring those who have who dedicated their lives to this cause.

1. Brother Toby Carroll
2. Rev. James Coffee
3. Barton Stone
4. Joan Baez
5. Alternate: Media Benjamin

Upon Council approval their names will be inscribed onto the Living Peace Wall and added to the roll of honorees on the Peace Wall website, [www.sebastopolivingpeacewall.com](http://www.sebastopolivingpeacewall.com). The attached submittal provides information about each proposed honoree.

**GOALS:**

This action supports the following City Council Goals and General Plan Actions:

Goal 8 – Enhance and Maintain the Economic Vitality of the City.

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.

7.2.1 Incorporate the Small Town Character values into the City’s land use policies.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

As of the writing of this staff report, the City has not received any public comment. However, staff anticipates receiving 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 the agenda 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:**

There is no financial impact associated with this item tonight.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Council accept the Annual Peace Wall Honorees

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Proposed Peace Wall Honorees

## 2022 PEACE WALL NOMINEES - BIOGRAPHIES

### 1. Brother Toby Carroll / Starcross Community

Brother Toby is the founder and leader of the Start Cross Community in Annapolis, CA. In the early 80's they cared for children who had been infected with aids by their mothers, caring for them on their 95 acre site, giving them a loving home, as well as the medical care they needed. They soon expanded their care with shelters for AIDS children in Romania and Uganda.

Brother Toby, an attorney, and some of his closest associates took monastic vows and have dedicated themselves to the service of those in need, especially emotionally disturbed and ill children. They support themselves by making Christmas wreaths and organic olive oil and grow their own food.

Over the past three decades, McCarroll and the nuns who make up this tiny monastic community — Sister Marti Aggeler, and Sister Julie DeRossi, have taken in dozens of sick or abused children. They have even legally adopted a half dozen children whose birth mothers were HIV-positive and had become too sick to care for them.

As Gaye LaBaron said in describing the Starcross community, "I guess it would be that it is a few people and their extended family, tucked away in the northwest corner of Sonoma Country, saving the world in small segments. at a time"

### 2. Rev. James Coffee

Long time pastor of Santa Rosa's Community Baptist Church since 1963, passed away in 2010. He was a beloved leader of the predominately African American church who always made everyone feel welcomed and loved. His congregation eventually expanded to include Hispanics, Asians and whites.

In addition to his church services and activities, he was also a very visible African American leader in the community and an advocate for justice and racial equality. Some of his many community activities include: 100 Black Men of Sonoma County, Cool Kids Camp, for children who have witnessed domestic violence, the Diversity Forum and Hate Free Santa Rosa.

In addition he organized the first Martin Luther King Jr .Birthday celebration in 1982, years before it was declared a national holiday.

Rev. Coffee was the first one that law enforcement, judicial and government officials turned to when they found themselves facing racially charged issues. During the Rodney King trial, he helped Santa Rosa Officials organize a rally and spoke out to help defuse the potentially violent response to the not-guilty verdict.

### 3. Barton Stone

Like many who became eligible for the military draft during the Vietnam War, Barton had to comfort his attitude toward war and his involvement in it. In high school he joined the National Guard. However, after reading Ghandi and Henry Thoreau, and after becoming familiar with the concepts of "Satyagraha" (non-violence) and civil disobedience, he realized that he could no longer in good conscience be part of the military and war and resigned from the Guard.

He then began working for peace and non-violent resolutions of conflicts. He seriously began contemplating the “horrors of war” and vowed to oppose war and find a way to live without enemies. “In what moral system could it be considered okay to deliberately hurt, injure , or even kill someone?”

Two anti war actions stand out: First his walk to Moscow for peace and Second, his participation in building a 30 foot plywood sailboat, the Everyman, which he tried to sail into the pacific nuclear bomb test area in the Marshall Islands in 1962 to stop the continued testing of nuclear bombs. He and the crew were arrested by the coast guard and held in jail for eight months.

Barton continues to work for peace by hosting weekly meditation (mindfulness) retreats which help others connect up with the peace within themselves and build an awareness of the dignity and sacredness of all living beings, human and otherwise.

#### **4. Joan Baez**

Since the early sixties Joan Baez has used her gift of singing and songwriting to promote the cause of peace and social justice. Among her early peace activism was her participation in numerous anti war rallies and events including demonstrating at the Oakland draft induction center where she was arrested along with her mother and many other demonstrators.

Her Civil Rights activism culminated but did not end at the 1963 Martin Luther King march on Washington D.C., where together with Bob Dylan sang Blowin in the Wind and other anti war songs, including We Shall Overcome, to the crowd of thousands.

Later as the Vietnam War escalated she supported her then husband, David Harris as he was arrested and imprisoned for draft resistance. She also encouraged other young men to resist the draft and often called for an end to the Vietnam War.

She founded the “Institute for the Study of Nonviolence” near Palo Alto and has been recognized and received many awards over her lifetime. Among them are:

- 2020 Kennedy Centers Honors: Joan Baez Tribute
  - Rock and Roll Hall of Fame
  - Life time achievement award at the 45th Annual Grammy Awards
  - Earl Warren Civil Liberties Award
  - Courage of Conscience Award
  - Spirit of American Free Speech Award
- and many, many more

#### **5. Alternate Honoree — Media Benjamin**

Media Benjamin is the cofounder of Code Pink, the women-led peace group and co-founder of the human rights group Global Exchange. She has been an advocate for social justice for more than 40 years. Described as “one of America’s most committed and most effective fighters for human rights by New York Newsday and “one of the high profile leaders of the peace movement “by the Los Angeles Times,

She has received numerous prizes, including: The Martin Luther King, Jr. Peace Prize from the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the Peace Prize by the US Peace Memorial and the Gandhi Peace Award.

Medea has been at the forefront of the anti-drone movement, publishing *Drone Warfare; Killing by Remote Control* in 2013. She is the author of ten additional books on war and peace and international relations.