

Public Comment 2/1/22

Councilors

The City of Sebastopol need to declare a city wide state of emergency to reign in our autocratic council and associates, who are pursuing personal projects utilizing city resources to such an extent that keeping track of their latest schemes that get rushed through is destroying everyone's time and patience while making citizens increasingly anxious.

As Diana Rich says on her disingenuous and inaccurate personal website (which I attach below and which visually appears to be a city of Sebastopol website unless you happen to read the small print... why is this permissible for an elected official?):

"We simply cannot any longer have meetings that go beyond 10pm and sometimes to midnight. It's just not sustainable, and it's definitely not fair to the City Staff, City Council, or most importantly to the public. At the last meeting we had three items that we could not get to because the meeting had gone too late".

The reason we now have these ever longer meetings and why other city business is grinding to a halt is because council keep trying to force their hugely unpopular projects and partnerships down resident throats, and they are not complying.

The way council have been behaving recently is unconscionable

- Deciding to create a 'committees for the unhoused' comprised of two heavily biased councilors and a network of homeless advocate non

profits with no other balancing city resident or business representation

- Embarrassing public internal squabbles about who will be the next mayor and whether their friends can be vice mayor
- Endless 'we'll roll our own' project creation instead of pressuring the county to perform
- And of course marathon council ideological and philosophical rambling and wrangling of decision making with very brief interludes where actual residents (and of course non profit homeless organization friends) can speak for a few seconds.

In 2022 the council has so far devoted more time and energy to the well being of a few west coast transients than to the city citizens and businesses they were elected to serve.

The latest time consuming council fiasco is their bid to open up a fresh city sanctioned homeless care site on the northwest side of Sebastopol, after the previous council plot to open up a homeless RV parking site next to the community center in partnership with non profit activist friends failed.

Council is currently attempting to blackmail residents that they can only grant city wide overnight parking restrictions if they allow the SAV leased former Amerigas site to be set up as a 'self governing' transient parking area, despite the fact these are two entirely separate projects.

Council and their allies are riding roughshod over tax paying citizens wishes to pursue personal predilections no matter what

This aberrant and undemocratic behavior has become increasingly unpopular so I now urge council to step aside by resigning to allow more credible democratic citizen organization of the city's affairs to take place.

Sadly more and more time and expense will be burnt if we continue on the current path of council expecting citizens to conform to their whims and wishes. I suggest it would be more ethical and appropriate for the current council to resign and form a new non profit to help with homeless services, which is a very lucrative field and clearly their main areas of interest and focus.

The city of Sebastopol with its tiny annual budget is already punching well above its weight in helping transients and local homeless in comparison to other local municipalities and of the course the county bureaucracy and supervisors.

The city of Sebastopol should be pressuring our county to perform instead of outsourcing their own naive ideas as local band aids for county failures while fishing for short term budget help.

I am appending the last self serving councilor committee report to the council in the following pages, **marked up with extensive comments and suggestions.**

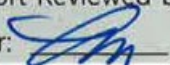
I suggest council catch up with the current California political climate by reading Michael Shellenberger's book ' San Fransicko' [available at our library](#), and to read this addict [palliative care](#) article, which I hope will make you realize many of your actions are naive, enabling and codependent. Not 'compassionate' but cruel...

The county has the apparatus to triage the many needs of people living in RVs and on the streets. As a city we should be applying significant political pressure to improve their actions to help those in need recover.

Oliver Marks

Downtown City of Sebastopol

Please download and open this document, then roll mouse over colored highlights, and click to see longer comments

Agenda Report Reviewed by:
City Manager: 

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM

Meeting Date: February 1, 2022 **Item Continued from the January 18, 2022 City Council Meeting**
To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
From: Committee for the Unhoused
(Councilmember Glass/Councilmember Rich)
Subject: **Ad Hoc Committee for the Unhoused** Monthly Report Out
Recommendation: That the City Council Discuss the Information Provided and Give Direction to the Committee Regarding Needed Next Steps
Funding: Currently Budgeted: _____ Yes _____ No X N/A
Net General Fund: N/A
Amount: N/A
Net General Fund Cost: N/A

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

INTRODUCTION: The Ad Hoc Committee for the Unhoused, created on October 5, 2021 by the City Council, was requested to provide the Council with monthly reports out. This item is to present the monthly report out for discussion by the City Council, and to request direction regarding next steps for the Ad Hoc Committee.

BACKGROUND:
On October 5, 2021, the City Council created an Ad Hoc Committee for the Unhoused. Councilmember Una Glass and Councilmember Diana Rich were appointed to the Committee. The Committee was assigned specific tasks, and directed to report out for discussion and direction to the City Council monthly. The Ad Hoc Committee was given until March 31, 2022, to complete its assigned tasks.

Committee Tasks: The City Council assigned the Ad Hoc Committee a number of tasks.

1. ASSESS: Assess the needs and impacts of Sebastopol’s unhoused.
2. WCCS SUPPORT: Provide short-term support to West County Community Services in the initial stages of its delivery and coordination of services to the unhoused.
3. PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL: Develop a preliminary proposal for addressing any needs and impacts not within the **WCCS contract**.
 - a. Integrate into the preliminary proposal a plan for **maximizing funding** opportunities.
4. STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH: Meet with WCCS staff and their identified stakeholders to collect input and inform the work of the Committee. Obtain information and input from City Staff, local business interests, the unhoused, and others affected by the unhoused situation in Sebastopol (through stakeholder meetings or otherwise as needed).
5. LIAISON ROLES: Identify liaison opportunities that will provide the City of Sebastopol with ongoing information relevant to **addressing the needs and impacts of the unhoused**, and facilitate appointment of Sebastopol City Councilmembers to those groups.

6. MONTHLY REPORTS TO COUNCIL: Submit written reports monthly to the City Council on progress and developments, placed on the City Council agenda for discussion and decision-making on policy questions by the full City Council.
7. TOWN HALL: Coordinate a Town Hall, to be held during the lifetime of the Ad Hoc Committee, at which the Committee will be expected to provide a status report to the public, make available relevant stakeholders, and invite input and comments from the public.
8. CONTINUING NEED FOR A COMMITTEE: Provide a recommendation to the City Council as to whether there is a need for a standing committee to continue to address issues related to the unhoused beyond the expiration date of the Ad Hoc Committee.

As a priority, the Ad Hoc Committee was tasked to focus on identifying a viable alternate location for the RV dwellers on Morris Street.

DISCUSSION:

The Ad Hoc Committee for the Unhoused has since the November 2021 report accomplished the priority goal set by the City Council: finding a viable alternate location for the RV dwellers on Morris Street. At the November 30, 2021 and December 7, 2021 City Council Meetings, the Committee for the Unhoused brought forward and the Council approved the following:

- A Resolution Proclaiming the Existence of a Local Homeless Emergency in the City of Sebastopol.
- A Site Location of 845 Gravenstein Highway North for the RV Pilot Program.
- Funding allocation from the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors in the amount of \$80,000 for this program
- A commitment to clearing Morris Street of permanent encampments, and supporting parking rule changes, as needed, to protect Morris Street as well as the neighborhoods from developing overnight parking problems in the future
- Direction to City Staff to develop a practical, enforceable, realistic plan to do the following: (1) clear Morris Street, (2) modify and enforce parking rules on Morris Street to prevent future collection of overnight lived-in vehicles on that street, and (3) make any needed changes in parking rules City-wide to prevent similar situations from developing in neighborhoods and elsewhere in town.
- Direction to City Staff to submit the parking plan, with an outline of relevant alternatives.
- A commitment to prohibiting RVs from moving into an RV Village until the described parking concerns have been addressed and resolved, with the benefit of the requested plan from City Staff.

Following the direction above, the City Council received a report from City staff on parking options and the Council authorized City staff to prepare a draft ordinance to be returned for Council discussion and approval at this same meeting (January 18, 2022).

Since the November 21, 2021 City Council meeting, much activity has happened on the assigned tasks. A summary report is provided here. This Committee meets regularly once a week with SAVS as well as conducts weekly meeting with City staff to address and respond to the tasks of this Committee. These weekly Committee meetings will continue until such time that the Committee is disbanded or Council determines to treat this Committee as a Standing Committee.

NOTE: While continuing work with Sonoma Applied Village Services (SAVS) and St. Vincent De Paul on the 845 Gravenstein Highway North site, the Committee also was involved in efforts to open a Warming Center. During the holiday period, the City saw continual rain and freezing temperatures that directly impacted the health and safety of the unhoused. When the temperature drops or rain is constant, staying safe, warm, dry and fed can be challenging and dangerous. Councilmember Rich worked diligently with Community Church, Housing Advocates

and SAVS, and as a result of these efforts, the Community Church opened a room for people to stay inside, eat and be warm. This Warming Center was hosted and operated by SAVS, with assistance from Sebastopol Homeless Support, West County Homeless Advocates, and Homeless Action!. The Warming Center offered soup each evening and volunteer monitors for covid testing, herbal tea and morning clean up. This Committee proposes that the Emergency Operations Chief (Fire Chief Braga) work with the County and this Committee to discuss a policy and funding for future warming and cooling locations, including the standards for determining when to open these facilities.

1. TASK: ASSESS NEEDS and IMPACTS: Provide a comprehensive assessment of the needs of Sebastopol's unhoused population, and the resulting impacts the community is experiencing, in order to better understand the full array of concerns to be addressed.

- a. Sanitation and Safety Issues
- b. Mental Health, Medical, and Social Services
- c. Housing Alternatives
- d. Safe Overnight Parking
- e. Law Enforcement Concerns
- f. Business Concerns
- g. Community Access to Shared Spaces
- h. Funding Opportunities (Continuum of Care, as well as other Federal, State, and County funding sources)
- i. Liaison Opportunities
- j. Coordination with Stakeholders (new)

COMMITTEE STATUS REPORT (Needs and Impacts of the Unhoused): Please see attachment (Needs and Impacts) for details of the concerns, progress achieved, and efforts "in the works" in each of the above categories.

2. TASK: WCCS SUPPORT: Provide support to WCCS in the initial stages of its delivery of services to the unhoused: The intent is to provide short-term support, to act as a bridge for information and resources in these initial months, but to then allow WCCS to perform its services independently, as provided in the City's contract with WCCS.

WCCS's overall goal under the contract with Sebastopol is "to coordinate City-wide efforts (faith-based, non-profit, business, governmental and individuals), as well as provide hands-on services to people without homes in Greater Sebastopol." Specific tasks are as follows:

- Refer people without homes to Coordinated Entry as appropriate
- Represent WCCS at relevant meetings
- Take leadership coordination role in homeless services
- Develop relationships with clients and connect them to services
- Develop citywide services matrix, including relevant county services, to inform both housed and unhoused communities as to what type and availability of services
- Increase citywide understanding of rules/laws around homelessness
- Partner with City staff and first responders in homeless response.
- Develop volunteer/civic engagement opportunities around homelessness
- Support Safe Parking efforts. Facilitate communication/collaboration between the safe parking programs offered by various churches and other institutions. Help facilitate communication regarding offers of safe parking to the unhoused.

COMMITTEE STATUS REPORT (Support to WCCS): The Ad Hoc Committee is confident that WCCS is meeting its obligations under the contract with the City. In fact, it is the Ad Hoc's experience and observation that the

Navigator for WCCS, Jennifer Lake, is an invaluable asset to the City's efforts to serve the unhoused, and has shown herself to be compassionate, organized, responsive, hard-working, informed, and collaborative beyond what could have been anticipated. Without her assistance, many efforts that have produced impressively positive results would not have been possible. The Ad Hoc Committee applauds her efforts on behalf of Sebastopol's unhoused.

WCCS has and will continue to provide monthly reports to the City on activities and results related to their contract with the City of Sebastopol. They have also convened meetings and facilitated coordination /collaboration with volunteers who are offering assistance to the unhoused. A Copy of WCCS's latest report is attached.

Jennifer Lake continues her contact with the unhoused, the Police Department, and advocates on issues related to Morris Street, as well as City-wide, and has also been involved in the Safe Parking meetings as noted below. It has been noted that RVs are spread throughout the City and it is expected that the parking regulations being proposed will help to address concerns of the residential and business community.

The Ad Hoc Committee will continue to work with WCCS on two key projects: The Safe Overnight Parking program and a plan and protocol for future Warming/Cooling Centers.

Safe Overnight Parking: WCCS is providing support to the existing overnight parking program at Community Church, and they are prioritizing the expansion of the safe overnight parking to additional lots. WCCS has been meeting with the Ad Hoc Committee and various parties that have stated they are open to hosting safe overnight parking in their lots. There are two churches in addition to Community Church that are considering safe overnight parking. This could potentially expand the safe overnight parking program from five spots to fifteen.

3. TASK: PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL: The Ad Hoc Committee has been tasked with developing a preliminary plan for addressing the needs and impacts of the unhoused. Initially, the assignment was to limit the preliminary proposal to those concerns not addressed by the WCCS contract. However, because the WCCS services are an essential element of many aspects of the Preliminary Proposal, the Ad Hoc Committee has elected to provide an overall Proposal that includes all services. This is especially important because the City Council has specifically assigned the Ad Hoc Committee with integrating into the preliminary proposal a plan for maximizing funding opportunities, and the Ad Hoc Committee has now concluded that renewing the WCCS Contract for next fiscal year is an important part of the Proposal.

COMMITTEE STATUS REPORT (Needs & Impacts Outside WCCS Contract): The Ad Hoc Committee's Preliminary Proposal is attached. Please note that **this Proposal is not final**. It will be updated and revised for subsequent Reports.

4. TASK: STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH: Meet with WCCS staff and their identified stakeholders to collect input and inform the work of the Committee. Obtain information and input from City Staff, local business interests, the unhoused, and others affected by the unhoused situation in Sebastopol (through stakeholder meetings or otherwise as needed).

COMMITTEE STATUS REPORT (Stakeholder Outreach): The Ad Hoc Committee's outreach has included many stakeholders and will continue outreach to these and other stakeholders as it moves forward to complete its assigned tasks. SAVS has engaged in substantial outreach, including two well-attended Community meetings held on Dec. 9 and Dec. 14, 2021 with residents, businesses and the charter school parents drew a total of 102 people. These meetings enabled SAVS to record neighborhood concerns and to begin the process of addressing them. The Community Advisory Committee will be formed this month. The full monthly report from SAVS is attached.

5. TASK: LIAISON ROLES: The Ad Hoc Committee has asked to identify liaison opportunities that will provide the City of Sebastopol with ongoing information relevant to addressing the needs and impacts of the unhoused, and facilitate appointment of Sebastopol City Councilmembers to those groups.

COMMITTEE STATUS REPORT (Liaison Roles): The Ad Hoc Committee has not yet developed a list of liaison opportunities but will provide that list prior at the March 15th City Council Meeting as the Committee is expected to disband March 2022, At that time, liaison opportunities can be considered when the City Council makes its appointments for calendar year 2022. The Ad Hoc Committee notes that at the most recent City Council meeting, appointment of a representative for West County to the Continuum of Care Board was considered, and City Councilmember Una Glass was appointed by unanimous decision of the Council. This appointment will provide Sebastopol and all of West Sonoma County with a voice on this very important County Board, which makes decisions on issues and funding related to the unhoused.

6. TASK: MONTHLY REPORTS TO COUNCIL: The Ad Hoc Committee was directed to submit written reports monthly to the City Council on progress and developments, placed on the City Council agenda for discussion and decision-making on policy questions by the full City Council.

COMMITTEE STATUS REPORT (Monthly Reports): The Ad Hoc Committee has and will continue to provide written monthly reports to the City Council. This first report was November 2021, and the present report is the second one. The remaining dates for monthly reports are February 15 and March 15.

7. TASK: TOWN HALL: Coordinate a Town Hall, to be held during the lifetime of the Ad Hoc Committee, at which the Committee will be expected to provide a status report to the public, make available relevant stakeholders, and invite input and comments from the public.

COMMITTEE STATUS REPORT (Town Hall): The Ad Hoc Committee is recommending a Town Hall Meeting be held in early March of 2022, with the specific date to be included in the Ad Hoc Committee's February 15 Report.

8. TASK: CONTINUING NEED FOR A COMMITTEE: The Ad Hoc Committee was directed to provide a recommendation to the City Council as to whether there is a need for a standing committee to continue to address issues related to the unhoused beyond the expiration date of the Ad Hoc Committee. At its October 5, 2021, meeting, the City Council recognized that the needs and impacts of the unhoused will continue to require Sebastopol City Council attention well into the future, beyond the limited timeframe identified for this Ad Hoc Committee. The City Council was clear that this Committee is not expected to solve all the City's issues regarding the unhoused, but is instead tasked with assessment and the development of a preliminary plan. The Ad Hoc Committee was therefore requested to provide a recommendation about whether the City Council should consider appointing a standing committee, to continue to work on future issues involving the unhoused, after this Ad Hoc Committee is disbanded.

COMMITTEE STATUS REPORT (Continuing Need for a Committee): Prior to its last scheduled report to the City Council, the Ad Hoc Committee will provide a recommendation regarding any future need for a Standing Committee, and/or will offer alternative suggestions for addressing the continuing needs and impacts of Sebastopol's unhoused.

CITY COUNCIL AND/OR GENERAL PLAN GOALS:

GOALS:

Goal 5 - Provide Open and Responsive Municipal Government Leadership

5.1.4 – Enhance the use of the City of Sebastopol Committees, Commission and Board.

5.3.3 - Encourage and increase public awareness of City Policies, decisions, programs and all public processes and meetings, by investigating effective methods of communication and obtaining feedback from the community.

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:

There is no fiscal impact cost.

RECOMMENDATION: That the City Council accept this report from the Ad Hoc Committee for the Unhoused, discuss the report, and provide the Ad Hoc Committee with any direction the City Council deems appropriate regarding the activities of the Committee.

Attachment(s):

Needs and Impacts of the Unhoused
Preliminary Proposal to Address Needs and Impacts of the Unhoused
WCCS Monthly Report
SAVS Monthly Report

Attachment: Needs and Impacts:

This section is not final. It will be updated with each monthly report from the Ad Hoc Committee for the Unhoused.

a. Sanitation and Safety Issues:

- a. Concern: Morris Street and the adjoining streets have presented the greatest concern in town regarding sanitation and safety.
- b. Progress Achieved:
 - i. Sanitation. The sanitation issue has been addressed by the City setting up porta potties, hand-washing stations, and providing additional trash bins in key locations. WCCS has been instrumental in this effort, obtaining funding to cover associated costs of the porta-potties and hand-washing stations. The City has also increased substantially the staff time assigned to trash pick up in these areas.
 - ii. Safety. The safety concern has been expressed by all facets of the community: business owners, cyclists, visitors to the Laguna de Santa Rosa trail, Little League families accessing the fields at the Community Center, advocates for the unhoused, the vehicular unhoused themselves, and the community at large. These safety concerns have been partially addressed through enforcement efforts of the Sebastopol Police, in coordination with WCCS and local advocates, as well as business owners.
- c. In the Works:
 - i. RV Village. The efforts described above have addressed the sanitation and safety concerns to the extent possible, but the sheer number of lived-in vehicles and people living in those vehicles has made it impossible for the City to keep up with the level of need. The number of vehicles and occupants on Morris Street and environs has also made the safety concern difficult to address. RVs and other lived-in vehicles are found 24/7 on Morris Street, Laguna Parkway, and Johnson Street, in many cases parked end-to-end. The long-term solution to these sanitation and safety concerns is to move the RVs/lived-in vehicles into a managed location with services and support. That's the purpose of the RV Village. Once the RV Village is operable, it is expected that the sanitation and safety concerns on Morris Street and environs will be eliminated or reduced, especially if the establishment of the RV Village is combined with parking ordinance changes that protect against the future development of similar unsanitary and unsafe situations.
 - ii. Parking Ordinance Changes: The City Council is in the process of considering parking ordinances that will meet the goals set by the Council on November 30 to develop a practical, enforceable, realistic parking plan to clear long-term encampments on Morris Street and to make changes in parking rules to prevent future collection of overnight lived-in vehicles on that street, as well as in neighborhoods and elsewhere.

b. Mental Health, Medical, and Social Services:

- a. Concern: These concerns extend to all unhoused in Sebastopol, although the sheer number of unhoused on Morris Street and environs makes that area of particular concern.
- b. Progress Achieved:
 - i. WCCS Coordination. Services are being coordinated through the City of Sebastopol's contract with West County Community Services. The full-time navigator working under this contract is Jennifer Lake. She does outreach to all Sebastopol unhoused to connect them with mental health, medical, and social services, as well as shelter and other housing options.

- ii. County MST. The Sebastopol Police Department continues to have a productive relationship with the Sonoma County Mobile Support Team (MST), which has been responsive when called to assist with mental health issues.
 - iii. County IMDT. The Interdepartmental Multi-Disciplinary Team (“IMDT”) has been working collaboratively with WCCS, SAVS, and advocates for the unhoused to provide services, and was a particularly helpful resource for shelter and other services when there was a need to move the unhoused out of the Laguna de Santa Rosa in September of 2021.
- c. In the Works:
- i. RV Village: The City Council-approved RV Village, to be operated by SAVS, provides the best possible opportunity for mental health, medical, and social services to the lived in vehicles on Morris and environs that will move there. Complete services will be offered by SAVS in that environment. The expectation is that that SAVS will be able to focus on that group of unhoused, which will allow the WCCS navigator to concentrate more time on the remaining unhoused in Sebastopol.
 - ii. CAHOOTS: The services described above are substantial, but what is still needed is the implementation of a Sebastopol mental health response team. That is expected by the end of this calendar year. Discussions are progressing between the Chief of Police and representatives of the very successful CAHOOTS program out of Oregon.
 - iii. Warming/Cooling Center: Sebastopol has offered cooling centers in the past, and recently the Ad Hoc Committee worked with SAVS and the Community Church to facilitate a warming center over the New Year’s holiday, as temperatures dipped below freezing. The Ad Hoc Committee is in the process of developing a policy and protocol to be followed when future incidents of cold or hot weather merit opening of a cooling or warming center.

c. **Housing Alternatives:**

- a. Concern: For the vehicular unhoused, the housing concern is finding them a sanitary and safe place for their lived-in vehicles. For the rest of the unhoused, the challenge is finding them shelter, preferably long term.
- b. Progress Achieved:
 - i. Park Village: The City Owned Park Village, managed by WCCS under a contract with the City, provides housing alternatives for Sebastopol’s unhoused. It is primarily a mobile home village, offering approximately 8 RV spots without regard to ability to pay. With the completion of construction and acceptance of the final finalization of the apartments there was also the creation of two new RV pads so a total of 10 new spots. The two new pads are different at WCCS took people off of Morris Street are charging lower rent for those spaces not “without regard to ability to pay.”
 - ii. Elderberry Commons: This is a County-owned facility (formerly known as Sebastopol Inn). It is within the City of Sebastopol. Currently home to individuals selected from throughout the County of Sonoma based on Covid sensitivity, it is expected that eventually this facility will offer housing to local Sebastopol unhoused.
 - iii. WCCS Navigator: The WCCS Navigator continuously works with Sebastopol’s unhoused to facilitate placement in hotels, Park Village, shelters, in addition to other housing options.
- c. In the Works:
 - i. RV Village: This will serve the needs of 20 RVs or similar sized lived-in vehicles.
 - ii. Safe Overnight Parking Program: This program is described more fully below.
 - iii. Additional Housing Options: The Ad Hoc Committee will continue to work with the County and others to develop additional housing/shelter options for the Sebastopol unhoused, both the vehicular unhoused and those without vehicles.

d. Safe Overnight Parking:

- a. Concern: Local advocates report that there are many vehicular unhoused who are living in four door or other “normal-sized” vehicles. There is a general sense that what is needed for these vehicular unhoused is safe places to park overnight.
- b. Progress Achieved: Community Church: This Church has a long-standing safe parking program that offers five overnight parking spots in the Church parking lot. WCCS is now providing support to this parking program, in order to help screen new applicants for the lot, as well as connect with the “parkers” to facilitate access to other supportive services.
- c. In the Works: Expanded Safe Parking: WCCS, as part of its contract with the City of Sebastopol, is prioritizing the expansion of the safe overnight parking program to additional parking lots. (This program is for regular sized vehicles rather than RVs and similar sized vehicles.) WCCS is holding regular meetings to support and expand this program. Participants include the Committee, City staff, various organizations and churches, as well as advocates that have stated they are open to hosting safe overnight parking in their lots.

e. Law Enforcement Concerns:

- a. Concern: The Police Department has an obligation to enforce parking and other laws on Morris Street and environs, as well as elsewhere in the town. This has become a challenge, in particular in terms of lived-in RVs and trailers that have become a 24/7 fixture on Morris Street, Laguna Parkway, and Johnson Street. Registrations have expired, repairs have gone undone (resulting in raw sewage, etc. in the roadway), trash and waste have collected on the sidewalks and roadways, and vehicles have sat largely unmoving.
- b. Progress Achieved: Making Vehicles Legal: Police Chief Kilgore has developed a strong working relationship with WCCS Navigator Jennifer Lake and other local advocates to build the foundation for enforcing the laws that affect the vehicular unhoused in a fair and compassionate manner.
- c. In the Works:
 - i. Making Vehicles Legal: The above working relationship has allowed the Police Department to collaborate with WCCS, advocates for the unhoused, and the vehicular unhoused themselves in a concerted effort to get all vehicles on Morris Street and adjoining streets properly registered, properly maintained (to prevent, for example, vehicle fluid and sewage leaks), and in compliance with 72-hour parking regulations. Some of the vehicular unhoused have actively engaged with these efforts, but many have not. As a result, vehicles that are not properly registered, maintained, or in compliance with the 72-hour parking regulations are subject to citation and are being towed. Police personnel planned to begin enforcement actions as of December 25, as related to towing, but delayed that plan until very recently (January 4).
 - ii. RV Village: It is expected that the RV Village approved by the City Council will make the law enforcement challenge on Morris Street and surrounding streets much less challenging for our police department.
 - iii. Parking Ordinance: It is similarly expected that approval of an enforceable parking ordinance will be a positive development in terms of addressing law enforcement concerns.

f. Business Concerns:

- a. Concern: Businesses on Morris Street and adjoining streets, as well as in The Barlow, have been concerned about the impact that the RV presence has had on their business opportunities and on their revenue.
- b. Progress Achieved:
 - i. Morris Street: Following the December 21st Council Meeting, businesses have been supportive of parking regulations to address the issues on Morris Street and City-wide. The draft regulations are being heard at this January 18 meeting.

- ii. Contractual Rules and Agreement: The concerns of businesses near the RV Village site were the motivation for the inclusion of a number of stringent and demanding contractual provisions in the agreement between the City and SAVS that allowed the RV Village to move forward.
- c. In the Works:
 - i. RV Village: The RV Village, expected to be ready for RVs in February, is expected to address much of the negative effect the businesses have experienced from their presence on Morris Street and surrounding streets.
 - ii. Community Advisory Committee: SAVS is doing outreach to the businesses near the RV Village Site and has begun to organize a Community Advisory Committee that will include business representatives. The Community Advisory Committee will provide input and suggestions to SAVS regarding the RV Village, and will be a means of addressing business concerns as the plans for the Village move forward.
 - iii. Parking Ordinance: Consideration of a parking ordinance that will address the needs of businesses on Morris Street, and environs, including The Barlow, and that will provide a means for preventing a situation similar to the one that developed on Morris from developing in other business areas of town.
- g. **Community Access to Shared Spaces:**
 - a. Concern: The greater Sebastopol community has expressed interest in reclaiming community use of shared spaces that have become unavailable as a result of the RVs parking on Morris Street and adjoining streets. Shared community spaces are areas where people of Sebastopol can interact with one another and build meaningful social connections. They are places where residents can build a sense of understanding of the neighbors who live in their community. These community gathering spaces showcase the City. Those who have expressed concern include cyclists, walkers, Little League families, people using the Community Center or Wischemann Hall, the local High School, and many others.
 - b. Progress Achieved: Discussions held as the Ad Hoc Committee was doing its initial outreach with community members established the importance of access to the shared spaces along Morris Street and the Laguna, and helped to establish a common understanding of the importance of those shared spaces for the community.
 - c. In the Works:
 - i. RV Village: Moving RVs to the RV Village will once again make Morris Street and the public spaces in that area available to the public.
 - ii. Parking Ordinance: The parking ordinance, once it is implemented, should effectively make shared community spaces available by clearing long-term encampments on Morris Street, and also by preventing future collection of overnight lived-in vehicles on Morris as well as in neighborhoods and elsewhere.
- h. **Funding Opportunities:**
 - a. Concern: Any substantial solutions to issues raised by the unhoused will require funding sources.
 - b. Progress Achieved: Funding has been received by the City of Sebastopol for a variety of efforts related to the unhoused: \$370,000 from the County as partial reimbursement for lost hotel tax revenue as a result of the County purchasing the Sebastopol Inn and using it for shelter for the unhoused; \$80,000 from the County recently to provide funds to pay lease obligations for the RV Village; and \$36,814 for the sanitation work on Morris Street and surrounding areas.
 - c. In the Works: The Ad Hoc Committee and City staff will continue to work together with the goal of applying for and obtaining grant funding from the County and the Continuum of Care Board, as well as from State and Federal sources and private-public partnerships.
- i. **Liaison Opportunities:**

- a. Concern: The City needs to remain aware of opportunities County wide that will serve the needs of the unhoused. One way to achieve this goal is to have City Council presence on key Boards and decision-making bodies.
 - b. Progress Achieved: The City has appointed Councilmember Una Glass to hold the West County seat on the Continuum of Care Board. This is a two-year appointment.
 - c. In the Works: The Ad Hoc Committee will develop a list of recommended Liaison opportunities. The Ad Hoc Committee will provide the liaison opportunities list prior to the March 15th City Council Meeting, as the Committee is expected to disband in March 2022. Liaison appointments can then be considered for the remainder of calendar year 2022.
- j. **Coordination with Stakeholders:**
- a. Concern: Effective solutions to the many issues raised by the unhoused in our community requires coordination with a variety of stakeholders.
 - b. Progress Achieved: The Ad Hoc Committee has done substantial outreach with stakeholders, and has been impressed by the benefits those conversations and meetings have produced in terms of the progress of the Committee's efforts.
 - c. In the Works: The Committee continues to engage in regular outreach to stakeholders.
- k. **Other Related Concerns**: The Ad Hoc Committee will review potential programs and ideas as a future agenda item to be discussed by the full Council.

Attachment: Preliminary Proposal:

This section is not final. It will be updated with each monthly report from the Ad Hoc Committee for the Unhoused.

- a. **Sanitation and Safety:** Morris Street and the adjoining streets have presented the greatest concern in town regarding sanitation and safety, but the potential issues are City-wide.

Preliminary Proposal:

- a. RV Village: Support the opening and operation of the RV Village, which will move 20 RVs from Morris Street and environs into the Village, eliminating their sanitation and safety impact on Morris Street and addressing their sanitation and safety needs in a managed, humane manner.
 - b. Parking Ordinance Changes: Pass parking ordinances that will meet the goals set by the Council on November 30 to develop a practical, enforceable, realistic parking plan to clear long-term encampments on Morris Street and to make changes in parking rules to prevent future collection of overnight lived-in vehicles on that street, as well as in neighborhoods and elsewhere.
 - c. Porta-Potties, Hand-Washing Stations, Trash Bins: **Reaffirms the need for this support** once the RV Village has been populated and parking changes have been implemented on Morris Street. Continue to provide these sanitation services for the unhoused as needed. Consider moving some porta potties/hand washing stations to support safe overnight parking lots.
- b. **Mental Health, Medical, and Social Services:** These concerns extend to all unhoused in Sebastopol, although the sheer number of unhoused on Morris Street and environs makes that area of particular concern.

Preliminary Proposal:

- a. RV Village: **Support** the opening and operation of the RV Village, which will provide all these services to the occupants of 20 RVs (up to 35 unhoused) from Morris Street and environs.
 - b. WCCS Contract: Encourage the City Council to approve renewal of the contract with WCCS for next fiscal year, recognizing that the services of the WCCS Navigator have been instrumental in addressing these needs of the unhoused in Sebastopol.
 - c. WCCS, SAVS, and Advocates for the Unhoused: Continue to work with these groups to serve the needs of Sebastopol's unhoused.
 - d. County MST: Encourage the Police Dept to continue to access the services of the County MST.
 - e. County IMDT. Encourage the Police Dept, as well as WCCS, SAVS, and advocates for the unhoused to continue engaging the services of IMDT, as well as other County support groups, to benefit Sebastopol's unhoused population.
 - f. CAHOOTS: Support the Police Chief's efforts to implement a CAHOOTS-style mental health response unit in Sebastopol.
 - g. **Warming/Cooling Center:** Continue to work with WCCS, SAVS, and other key parties to help develop a policy and protocol to be followed when future incidents of cold or hot weather merit opening and operation of a cooling or warming center.
- c. **Housing Alternatives:** For the vehicular unhoused, the concern is finding them a sanitary and safe place for their lived-in vehicles. For the rest of the unhoused population, the challenge is finding them shelter, preferably long term.

Preliminary Proposal:

- a. Park Village: Continue to support Park Village, which provides housing alternatives to the Sebastopol unhoused **without regard to ability to pay.**

- b. Elderberry Commons: Monitor developments at Elderberry Commons in order to maximize the opportunity to have that facility serve the Sebastopol unhoused.
 - c. WCCS Contract: Encourage the City Council to approve a renewal of the contract with WCCS for next fiscal year, recognizing that the services of the WCCS Navigator are a continuing source of shelter/housing opportunities for the unhoused in Sebastopol.
 - d. RV Village: Support the opening and operation of the RV Village, which will provide a housing location for 20 RVs, housing as many as 35 of our Sebastopol unhoused.
 - e. Safe Overnight Parking program: Continue to work with WCCS to expand the current program at Community Church, to other lots, in order to increase the available safe overnight parking spots from 5 to 15.
 - f. Additional Housing Options: Work with the County and others to develop additional housing/shelter options for the Sebastopol unhoused, both the vehicular unhoused and those without vehicles, with special attention to the fact that the RV Village operated by SAVS is temporary and is under contract at the 845 Gravenstein Highway North location only through December of 2022.
- d. **Safe Overnight Parking:** Local advocates report that there are many vehicular unhoused who are living in four door or other “normal-sized” vehicles. There is a general sense that what is needed for these vehicular unhoused is safe places to park overnight.

Preliminary Proposal:

- a. **Expand Program:** Continue to work with WCCS to expand the current program, in order to increase the available safe overnight parking spots from 5 to 15.
 - b. WCCS: Encourage the City Council to renew the WCCS contract for next fiscal year, so that WCCS can continue to oversee the safe overnight parking program, and the WCCS navigator can continue to connect the safe overnight “parkers” to social, medical, and mental health services, as well as long-term housing opportunities.
 - c. Funding: Provide funding for reimbursement of expenses incurred by churches or others that have offered their parking lots for the program.
- e. **Law Enforcement Concerns:** The Police Department has an obligation to enforce parking and other laws on Morris Street and environs, as well as elsewhere in the town. This has become a challenge, in particular in terms of lived-in RVs and trailers that have become a 24/7 fixture on Morris Street, Laguna Parkway, and Johnson Street. Registrations have expired, repairs have gone undone (resulting in raw sewage, etc. in the roadway), trash and waste have collected on the sidewalks and roadways, and vehicles have sat largely unmoving.

Preliminary Proposal:

- a. Police Dept: Support the Police Dept’s efforts to enforce parking and other laws, and encourage officers to coordinate these efforts with the WCCS Navigator, as well as advocates for the unhoused, and to continue to be compassionate and caring toward the unhoused.
 - b. RV Village: Support the opening and operation of the Village, which should reduce the law enforcement challenge on Morris Street by moving RVs off that street to a managed site with services and supervision.
 - c. Parking Ordinance: Support the approval of a parking ordinance that will be practical, realistic, and enforceable, and which takes into consideration the concerns of the Police Chief.
- f. **Business Concerns:** Businesses on Morris Street and adjoining streets, as well as in The Barlow, have been concerned about the impact that the RV presence has had on their business opportunities and on their revenue.

Preliminary Proposal:

- a. Morris Street: Monitor the situation on Morris Street to address promptly any concerns that Morris Street businesses continue to express after the RV Village is open and parking ordinance changes have become effective.
 - b. RV Village: Support the opening and operation of the RV Village, to address the concerns of businesses on Morris and nearby.
 - c. Community Advisory Committee: Monitor the situation to make sure that SAVS makes good on its promise to include business representative on the Community Advisory Committee and to engage and listen to the concerns of those on the Community Advisory Committee.
 - d. Contractual Rules and Agreement: Monitor the situation to make sure that SAVS complies with the contractual provisions in the agreement between the City and SAVS.
 - e. Parking Ordinance: Monitor the parking ordinance once it has been passed, to make sure that it meets its intended purpose to support the clearing of long-term encampments on Morris Street and to make changes in parking rules to prevent future collection of overnight lived-in vehicles on that street, as well as in neighborhoods and elsewhere.
- g. **Community Access to Shared Spaces:** The greater Sebastopol community has expressed interest in reclaiming community use of shared spaces that have become unavailable as a result of the RVs parking on Morris Street and adjoining streets. Shared community spaces are areas where people of Sebastopol can interact with one another and build meaningful social connections. They are places where residents can build a sense of understanding of the neighbors who live in their community. These community gathering spaces showcase the City. Those who have expressed concern include cyclists, walkers, Little League families, people using the Community Center or Wischemann Hall, the local High School, and many others.

Preliminary Proposal:

- a. RV Village: Support the opening and operation of the RV Village, which will provide a managed housing location for 20 RVs, moving them away from shared community spaces.
 - b. Parking Ordinance: Monitor the parking ordinance once it has been passed, to make sure that it is effective in making shared community spaces available, by clearing long-term encampments on Morris Street and preventing future collection of overnight lived-in vehicles on Morris, as well as in neighborhoods and elsewhere.
 - c. Relaunch: The Ad Hoc Committee proposes that the City Council consider encouraging the selectee of Relaunch Sebastopol to consider creating a strategy to bring the community together using Sebastopol's shared outdoor spaces, especially the fields, trails, and other shared spaces in the vicinity of Morris Street and the Laguna de Santa Rosa, in order to reaffirm the shared nature of these spaces for the entire community.
- h. **Funding Opportunities:** Any substantial solutions to issues raised by the unhoused will require funding sources.

Preliminary Proposal:

- a. Monitor and coordinate with Staff to maximize the opportunities for receipt of future funding.
- b. Integrate a funding provision into each substantive recommendation included in the final version of this Preliminary Proposal, as requested by the City Council.

- i. **Liaison Opportunities:** The City needs to remain aware of opportunities County wide that will serve the needs of the unhoused. One way to achieve this goal is to have City Council presence on key Boards and decision-making bodies.

Preliminary Proposal:


- a. Prior to March 15, 2022, provide the City Council with a list of liaison opportunities and facilitate appointment of City Councilmembers to represent the City's interests.
- j. **Coordination with Stakeholders:** Effective solutions to the many issues raised by the unhoused in our community requires coordination with a variety of stakeholders.

Preliminary Proposal:

- a. Continue to actively engage with stakeholders on future issues involving the unhoused. Important stakeholders will always include WCCS and advocates for the unhoused, but will also including, as appropriate, businesses, residents, nonprofits, schools, County, federal, and other jurisdictional interests, various City departments, and others.
- k. **Other Related Concerns:** The Ad Hoc Committee will review potential programs and ideas as a future agenda item to be discussed by the full Council.

Sebastopol Homeless Outreach Coordinator

December City Report

 Submitted January 6, 2022

1. **Refer people without homes to Coordinated Entry as proper:** Referred three un-housed residents from Morris Street to Charlie Kennedy, Catholic Charities for Coordinated Entry and screening for the Palms Permanent Supportive Housing Program in Santa Rosa. three people referred to WCCS Guerneville Covid Navigation Site, three referrals to Safe Parking at Community Church of Sebastopol, one was approved, and one is pending approval for the Safe Parking program.
2. **Represent WCCS at relevant meetings:** Homeless Services Outreach Coordinator attended four community meetings. Volunteer Support Meetings, SAV RV Parking Program community meeting, and SAVs Morris Street resident feedback group at Sebastopol Community and Cultural Center's Peace Garden. In-person meetings with four un-housed Sebastopol residents and attended a City Council meeting.
3. **Leadership coordination role in homeless services:** Supplying support for the SAVs Volunteers to prepare for the opening of the RV Village, setting up resident meetings. Participated in planning for a cold shelter supplying program/operations information to Council Member, Diana Rich, who coordinated opening a cold shelter in Sebastopol. Volunteered to find un-housed in Sebastopol living outside and transported them to Community Church to get warm and escape cold temperatures dipping to 28 degrees.
4. **Develop relationships with clients and connect them to services:** Contacted 28 un-housed individuals citywide, referring to medical clinics, court services, food resources, Sonoma County Housing Authority, shelters. Worked on DMV Registration renewals, provided 10 days of hotel stays to a homeless resident. Transported homeless clients to: the Cold Weather shelter, CalFresh, West County Health Center in Guerneville. Provided shelter to three campers living on Joe Rodota Trail who requested shelter to get out of the cold. Met with Courtney at the Library to discuss strategy for reaching safe parkers who use the library during the day and other un-housed people. Made three new contacts at the library. Placed one at Community Church Safe Parking, and one refused Safe Parking due to their vaccination requirement. The one sleeping outside I placed into a hotel for 10 days to get him out of the cold and work with him to reconnect him to services. Partnered with West County Health Centers, and IMDT to support him. Transported six people to the Community Church cold weather shelter.
5. **Increase citywide understanding of rules/laws around homelessness:** Sebastopol Police Department notified the Homeless Outreach Coordinator (me), SAVs Volunteers, and the residents of the department's intention to begin enforcement action of parking code violations on Morris Street beginning December 25, 2021. Chief Kilgore also sent via email this notification to stakeholders, and relevant community groups, and city staff highlighting enforcement that enforcement action is necessary due to non-compliance with city health/safety and parking laws. The chief also announced this at the SAVS volunteer group meeting and the homeless Outreach Services Coordinator began informing residents that parking code violation enforcement was beginning and their trailers may be tagged to move. This prompted some discussion of moving with a few people and three trailers left the area, and two new trailers moved onto Johnson Street.

Sebastopol Homeless Outreach Coordinator
December City Report
Submitted January 6, 2022

6. **Develop a citywide services matrix, including relevant county services, to inform housed and unhoused communities about the type and availability of services.** During this reporting period, the Homeless Services Coordinator spent time developing a “Citywide Homeless Services Matrix” of homeless services available in Sebastopol and other resources in the county that is relevant to meeting the needs of the unhoused community. Sebastopol City Homeless Services Matrix will be available for review this month.
7. **Partner with City staff and first responders in homeless response:** Much of this is mentioned above, but the Homeless Services Outreach Coordinator continues to work with Sebastopol Police Department to address issues associated with the unhoused community by working with them to register vehicles and clean up Morris Street. These issues continue to challenge us all as we look to new strategies to address the health and public safety code violations on Morris Street. We will continue to work towards resolution of these concerns.
8. **Develop volunteer/civic engagement opportunities around homelessness:** WCCS Dannielle Danforth, Director of Housing supports clean-up efforts by assigning community service volunteers to Morris Street. These volunteers will aid resident volunteers in keeping Morris Street clean. The two WCCS volunteers work on Sunday each week clearing debris on the street and near the debris box, empty cans overflowing, and walk the laguna to remove debris and shopping carts. The Homeless Services Coordinator continues to support SAVs volunteers and their efforts to prepare residents for the new RV Village opening in mid-February. The Homeless Services Coordinator helped the SAVs organization to provide cold shelter service to the unhoused community.
9. **Support Safe Parking efforts:** West County Community Services is leading safe parking planning and discussion meetings for proposed new safe parking sites found around the city of Sebastopol. The Community Church of Sebastopol Safe Parking program continues to be the only program offering safe parking to unhoused living in their vehicles in Sebastopol. When the RV Village opens and 72-hour parking ordinances/laws are enforced around the city, we will likely see an increase in the number of unhoused sleeping in cars that need Safe Parking to find a safe place to sleep.

DATA POINTS	TOTAL Q1*	October	November	December	Cumulative/ Non-Cumulative
# Of new people contacted (un duplicated number)	54	66	79	86	cumulative
# Of camps citywide	33	37	32	30	cumulative
# Of camps pre sweep	24	NA	NA	NA	non-cumulative
# Of RVs on Morris St and Laguna Pkwy & Palm street	Morris 13 Laguna 3	Morris 15 Laguna 6 Palm 1	Morris 17 Laguna 7 Palm 4	Morris 19 Laguna 6 Palm 2, Johnson 5	non-cumulative
# of other vehicles Morris St, Laguna Pkwy & Greater seb. area	12	21	31	27	non-cumulative
# Of people housed by WCCS (shelters, ACS/NCS, family)	8	11	15	20	cumulative
# Of people displaced (returning to Morris)	5	12	15	17	cumulative
# Referrals for service (from city government, PD or community)	10	7	8	10	non-cumulative
# Of Housing referrals	15	13	7	5	non-cumulative
# Food Assistance/referrals	4	5	7	11	cumulative
# Of Cal-fresh , SSI, or UEI Applications	1	0	3	4	non-cumulative
# Of healthcare referrals (includes IMDT refs)	4	3	3	2	non-cumulative
# Expired Registrations (Morris and Laguna, & Greater Seb. Area Parkers) .	27	15	21	24	non-cumulative
# Registrations renewed (WCCS funding reqs.	0	3	5	7	cumulative
other types of assistance (Zoom appts, other programs/services) ie taking people to court, etc	42	17	15	17	non-cumulative
# Of Volunteers hours (6 vol. x 9 wks. x 4hr shifts)	324	95	156	176	non-cumulative
Community Engagement Mtgs (SAVS, WCHA, City Council, neighborhood meetings)	7	5	5	5	non-cumulative

note: contacted 5 new unhoused - 4 are sebastopol natives -1 began homelessness in San Jose but homeless here in sebastopol 4 years.

SAVS Report to the Sebastopol City Council
January 18, 2022

Two well-attended Community meetings held on Dec. 9 and Dec. 14, 2021 with residents, businesses and the charter school parents drew a total of 102 people. These meetings enabled SAVS to record neighborhood concerns and to begin the process of addressing them. A Neighborhood Advisory Committee, which includes a representative from the staff of the Sebastopol Charter School, will be formed in January.

Demolition work at the site has begun and will be completed by Jan. 18. The city staff have approved a final site plan. Plans and contracts for the village facilities have been investigated and/or finalized. Once the site is cleared, SAVS expects the village will be ready for occupancy by mid-February.

SAVS and the City of Sebastopol have completed their contract and the funding contract with the Sonoma County Community Development Commission has been signed.

SAVS has a signed Letter of Intent with the property owner, St Vincent de Paul and hopes the property lease will be finalized by the time of this meeting.

Village rules and procedures pertaining to neighbor relations have been finalized and discussed in detail during two December Resident Meetings. A final list of resident applicants is complete with specifics, including how long each has lived on Morris St.

Incident Report: On Jan 9, two trailers parked at the front of the Safe Parking Lot at 845 Gravenstein N. SAVS and local volunteers contacted the owners and explained that they were not allowed on the lot. The property owner contacted the Sebastopol police who issued a verbal warning. Both trailers were moved by their owners from the lot by Jan. 11.

SAVS hired Annalise Madsen for the Village staff. Ms

Madsen brings an MA in psychology and organizational development, and 15 years of experience working with homeless people in transition, many who were living with severe mental illness and drug addictions. Several more staff hires are in process to complete a team with experience in mental illness, drug addiction and the range of homeless issues that present barriers to the acquisition of long-term housing.

HOME | NEWS | WHY IS THE PARKING ORDINANCE (SECOND READING) NOT ON THE FEB 1 AGENDA?

Why is the parking ordinance (second reading) not on the Feb 1 agenda?

The new parking ordinance was expected to get its second reading at the February 1 City Council meeting. It's not on the agenda for February 1st any more. Why is that?



The First RV Dwellers arrive at Horizon Shine, the RV Village operated by Sonoma Applied Village Services

Here's the answer - it's a practical one. We simply cannot any longer have meetings that go beyond 10pm and sometimes to midnight. It's just not sustainable, and it's definitely not fair to the City Staff, City Council, or most importantly to the public. At the last meeting we had three items that we could not get to because the meeting had gone too late. Members of the public were at the meeting, waiting for hours in the hopes that those issues would eventually be discussed. They weren't, because we ran out of time. Those items are now on the February 1 agenda, which was already packed without those three being added. So something had to go. That something was the second reading of the parking ordinance.

To those of you who are most interested in the parking ordinance, that may feel unfair. But to those of you who feel the Calder Creek Restoration project needs to get its fair share of focus, or that the mid-year budget discussion is a priority, this decision will feel like the right one. And of course there are those of you who are interested in one or another of the many other items still on the agenda for February 1.

The parking ordinance is now expected to be on the February 15 City Council agenda.

But let me get to the most important point I want to make here: If the parking ordinance had remained on the City Council agenda for February 1, I and others on the City Council likely would not have supported it. So...it's probably a good thing (in my opinion) that the parking ordinance won't come back before the City Council until February 15th.

Why would I have not supported the parking ordinance if it had come back for consideration on the February 1 agenda? Because there has been a lawsuit filed that seeks to delay and/or prevent the RV Village from opening. As I and other City Councilmembers made clear at the last City Council meeting, we are not comfortable supporting the parking ordinance if the RV Village does not become operational. The filing of the lawsuit makes the potential for delay a real possibility.

We expect that the lawsuit's impact will be clear by February 15. It is my hope and expectation that the full City Council will then be in a position to support the parking ordinance changes.

This is an issue of compassion. I have been asked why the RV Village and the parking ordinance are linked for me, from a policy perspective. The answer is simple: It's an issue of compassion. To make these changes in parking rules requires that we support a system that will give lived-in RVs nowhere to park during the day. This is a major step that in many ways goes against our compassion (and the compassion of our community). I truly believe that the only way our City Council (and our town) can support this outcome is with the knowledge that we are offering an opportunity for a better life to many of those human beings who are currently on Morris Street, struggling to survive. The RV Village offers a glimmer of hope for these people: a managed, safe, humane, and sanitary alternative to the slum-like situation on Morris Street.

I am confident in the City's position on the RV Village decision. We have had the benefit of outside council's advice, and know that our decision-making was compliant with the law, and that it is producing the best possible outcome for our community.

To those in the community who feel frustration at the lawsuit that has caused this uncertainty in terms of the parking ordinance, please remember that all citizens have the right to turn to the judicial system to address their concerns. **That's democracy.** It's messy, but it allows for the voices of all to be heard, and it gives access to judicial review of decisions like the City's, regarding the RV Village. As a community, we need to respect that process. It means that there will be some delay, but that's because we have people in our town who have concerns and want their voices heard in the court system. That's their right, and we need to be respectful and patient as they pursue that right.

Please remember that all any of us on the City Council are trying to do is find the best possible solution to a problem that has no perfect outcome. The good news, as I've already said, is that the City's decision-making regarding the RV Village is completely defensible. We made the right decision, following the right procedure, for the right outcome for our town.

TESTIMONIALS

PHOTOS

CONTACT

