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**Sent:** Monday, February 13, 2023 12:18 PM  
**To:** Mary Gourley <[mgourley@cityofsebastopol.org](mailto:mgourley@cityofsebastopol.org)>  
**Subject:** Report on CA Cities Sacramento Conference

On Wed Jan. 18 to Friday Jan. 20, 2023 I attended the League of California Cities (Cal Cities) conference: "New Mayors and Council Members Academy" in Sacramento. I received two required trainings on Harassment Prevention and Ethics Laws. I attended all the classes they offered. The topics included: how to work with Cal Cities; working with the city manager; legal powers and obligations; policy in land use planning; effective advocacy; do's and don'ts of public meetings; social media; and city revenues. These were super informative and helpful classes.

I attended the networking luncheons, breakfasts, and one of the networking after programs with the Northern California division for Cal Cities. I met and talked with many council members, mayors and some city staff from across California. I signed up to stay informed with Cal Cities because I value both their educational efforts and especially their emphasis on local control.

Some of the ideas that stayed with me are:

- "Disagreement is the oxygen of Democracy" especially when we have a foundation of respect and we value continuous learning.
- High performing councils are a true partnership between council members, city manager and staff. We have clarity and respect for our roles and responsibilities, civility and respect for all. We know when to compromise, when to go to the mat, and communication is essential. We're here to make people's lives better! We need to work together to find solutions, not direct blame.
- Brown Act Laws were clarified. The public has a right to comment and to say what they want is allowable by law. "People have a right to criticize the government".
- Regarding Policy Role in Land Use- the General Plan is our constitution. It is our city's vision and guide.
- Ask staff prior to a council meeting to get your questions answered.
- If you agree with another council member, just say I agree to save time and redundancy.
- Regarding privacy as a council member- we were told-"all microphones and cameras are on all the time"
- Regarding bias it is essential that a council member does not decide beforehand on an issue. If you do that is bias.
- You can legally abstain from a vote, however it's best to do your homework and ask questions before the council meets. "Don't ask questions during the council meeting that you can ask beforehand".

I found this conference to be invaluable- Thank you!

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