


Agenda Report Reviewed by:  
 City Manager: 

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL  
 CITY COUNCIL  
 AGENDA ITEM

**Meeting Date:** May 16, 2023  
**To:** Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers  
**From:** Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director  
 Sebastopol Regional Library  
**Subject:** Re-Use of Fountain at City Hall/Library from Fountain Use to Planter Use  
**Recommendation:** Approve the proposed re-use  
**Funding:** Currently Budgeted: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No  N/A  
 Net General Fund Cost: \$0  
 Net General Plan Fund Cost: \$0

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

**INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE:**

This item is to consider approval for the Sebastopol Regional Library to turn the fountain in front of City Hall/Library into a planter with a Gravenstein Apple tree planted in it.

**BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:**

The water fountain in front of City Hall/the Library has been turned off during the recent drought as a water conservation measure. The water fountain at City Hall/Library site has been drained/off for some time due to recent droughts. The current condition of the mechanical/plumbing is not operable and would require significant work to recommission. If approved, Public Works staff will clean and drain the existing structure, and the Library will sponsor the modifications to turn it into a planter. The proposed planting would be a Gravenstein apple tree, which is consistent with both the City’s identity and the native/edible planting scheme at the shared City Hall/Library grounds.

Compost and planting bedding will be provided from the existing Public Works Landscaping budget, and the Library would provide the Tree and planting coordination. The project would move ahead immediately should Council approve this proposal.

The conversion of the water fountain to a planter would have several benefits, both to the City and the Library. The conversion would eliminate the need for costly mechanical / plumbing to recommission the fountain, while the fountain would still likely be turned off during future drought declarations. Additionally, the maintenance efforts by Public Works staff would be greatly reduced for a planter compared to a fountain, enabling staff to focus on other tasks.

Additionally, fountain had significant electrical power consumption to operate, as well as water usage and chemicals (chlorine) to keep the fountain clean. All of these costs would be eliminated, and the planter would have a simple drip irrigation system which Public Works can install and maintain much more easily.



Current fountain





*Proposed as Planter with Gravenstein Apple Tree*

**GOALS:**

This action supports the following City Council Goals:

Goal 2 - Maintain, Improve and Invest in the City's Infrastructure (Water, Sewer, Streets, Circulation, Parks, Storm Drains and Public Facilities)

- 2.1.6 Continue to beautify and enhance the Library and City Hall buildings with the completion of the Library/City Hall Landscape Project

Goal 3 - Maintain, Enhance and Increase Park-land in the City of Sebastopol

Goal 5 - Provide Open and Responsive Municipal Government Leadership

- 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.

Goal 8 - Enhance and Maintain the Economic Vitality of the City

- 7.2.1 Incorporate the Small Town Character values into the City's land use policies
- 8.1.2 Support a Vibrant, Attractive and Accessible Downtown That Attracts Residents and Visitors thereby creating a Viable Sales Tax Base

And General Plan Goals/Actions:

Goal CSF 1: Provide High Quality Community Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure to All Residents, Businesses, and Visitors in Sebastopol

Goal CD 1: Preserve and Enhance Sebastopol's Unique Character, Design, and Sense of Place as a Small, Compact Town

- Policy CD 1-9: Promote an attractive system of public and quasi-public spaces throughout the community that support public gatherings and social interaction. Encourage new development to include accessible and attractive common areas including unique courtyards, pocket parks, and plazas.
- Policy CD 1-13: Encourage the enhancement and beautification of all areas of the community.

Goal CD 2: Promote and Enhance the Downtown as a Safe, Active, and Attractive Environment

Goal COS 1: Make Proactive, Forward-Thinking Environmental Protection and Resource Management the Cornerstone of Sebastopol's Identity

- Policy COS 1-2: Consider the effects of planning decisions on the overall health and wellbeing of the natural environment and regional ecosystems.

Goal COS 5: Protect, Manage, and Enhance Groundwater as a Valuable and Limited Shared Resource

- Policy COS 5-6: Implement water conservation measures as a key strategy in sustainably managing local groundwater supplies.

Goal COS 6: Conserve, Protect, and Enhance Trees and Native Vegetation

- Policy COS 6-2: Require the use of primarily locally-sourced native and drought-tolerant plants and trees for landscaping on public projects, if feasible, and strongly encourage their use for landscaping on private projects.
- Policy COS 6-4: Facilitate the preservation of existing trees, the planting of additional street trees, and the replanting of trees lost through disease, new construction or by other means.

Goal COS 9: Promote Conservation of Energy and Other Natural Resources

- Policy COS 9-9: Promote water conservation among water users.
- Policy COS 9-17: Integrate the values and practices of environmental sustainability in government operations.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:**

The decommission of a water fountain and conversion into a planter is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Under Section 15303(e), which exempts small accessory structures; Section 15304(b) which exempts new gardening or landscaping; and Section 15061(b)(3), which exempts actions that have no potential for a significant effect on the environment.

**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:**

None. All work would be done within the existing Public Works budget for this fiscal year, and other coordination will be done by the Library. This conversion to a fountain to a planter would save operational costs for both the Library and the City due to the lower on-going maintenance and energy/water requirements, and the cost to recommission as a fountain.

It should be noted that although approximately eight (8) hours of Public Works staff time is anticipated for the conversion, this will reduce future operational costs and maintenance time to maintain the fountain significantly.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve the conversion.

**Attachments:**

none