

No downtown Saturday showers in the heart of Sebastopol, please find a more appropriate location

I recommend council oppose the request by county library staff to fund and provide Saturday morning showers in the center of the city of Sebastopol. Since the shower units are self contained they could be set up anywhere in the county.

Our city is in a budget crisis and the heart of our downtown is struggling to survive. Saturdays are the busiest shopping day and we are striving to encourage more people to visit, spend money and therefore contribute the sales taxes that we rely on to fund our city budget.

As stated below, the purpose of services sponsorship is to generate sales tax or bed tax through hotel stays (although of course the county eliminated our only downtown hotel in 2020, and are now giving it to a 'non profit' that won't need to contribute property taxes to the city). Our county, who couldn't organize a drinks party in a tasting room without layers of bureaucracy and incredible expense, are already spending well over a hundred million a year on homeless initiatives with very questionable results. Our city budget is around eleven million for everything - Fire, Police, public works, staff salaries - and we are over two million in shortfall right now. The city will have to make significant cuts to survive at a time when we need new fire engines, a new city manager, a new city attorney and a lot of infrastructure retrofitting.

A basic charitable logic flow is to generate more income via sales taxes and *then* hopefully have money left over for altruism.

Unhappily years of council fiscal mismanagement and autocratic pet project funding has resulted in where we are today. Past councils spent our tax income on emotion driven ideas around compassion which sadly were very short on competent execution. I'm sure they were well meaning but failed both vulnerable homeless people and the seven thousand citizens they are fiscally responsible to.

We are cutting the 'relaunch Sebastopol' budget due to our budget crisis. We have a lot of work to do to make downtown a place worth stopping at and visiting. Encouraging a parade of free shower visitors to the heart of the downtown shopping area on Saturday mornings (where will they go post showers?) makes little sense given all the other locations our city provides for homeless services - The Sebastopol Inn at Gravenstein Station, SAVS Rise, Shine Park Village (which we are still paying off past purchase price in our budget). There are many, many locations in the city and county that are far more appropriate for free mobile showers.

I strongly suggest council spends a great deal less time on international activist driven initiatives, proclamations about events outside the city's sphere of influence and maintains a laser focus on the fiscal and community health of our tiny city.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE 1 . Description of services or event being provided to the city. (Describe the event/ activity and explain the impact you believe that it will have on the Sebastopol community. Will it generate sales tax and/ or bed tax through retail sales or hotel stays? Will it educate and/or provide quality of life to Sebastopol residents/visitors?):

Redwood Gospel Mission has been providing shower services intended for unsheltered individuals at six Sonoma County locations through it's (sic) Mobile Shower Unit. The unit is self contained and water used will be stored within the unit to be driven away for safe disposal at a Santa Rosa facility. To mitigate hazards, Redwood Gospel brings carpets to cover cords. The Mobile Shower will be offered every Saturday at the South High St, Parking lot from 11am-12pm. This will enhance quality of life for vulnerable people who frequent the library, and the community at large.

Oliver Marks

Downtown Sebastopol