



COUNTY OF SONOMA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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May 21, 2024

Dear Mayor Rich and Members of the Sebastopol City Council:

The City's Ad Hoc Library Committee (Ad Hoc) will present its Report to the City Council at your meeting on May 21, 2024.

I have closely followed the work of the Ad Hoc through conversations with both Vice Mayor Stephen Zollman and Fifth District Field Representative Debbie Ramirez, and wanted to share my support for the continued work of Ad Hoc to advance and empower the presence of the Sebastopol Branch Library as one of our community libraries.

At the start of this process, the Ad Hoc was challenged to investigate how to provide the Sebastopol Library with a new, larger, and modern location. The Ad Hoc's solution: a Community Center (Hub) which would not only provide space for the library but also for community-based services and programs for Sebastopol and greater West County.

Public libraries offer a unique venue for developing new approaches to expanding access to social service programs, resources, and information. Creating effective partnerships between social workers and public libraries – a universally recognized neighborhood resource – offers new opportunities to meet community needs. These types of partnerships challenge us to rethink engagement as an invitation to create and build with communities, as opposed to doing something to or for them. The outcomes of these collaborations are important, but often the unknown, unacknowledged histories and narratives that shape the present can inform the future.

Through its work, the Ad Hoc has convened partners, experts, and practitioners to identify strategies, resources, and practices that can be used locally to empower individuals to think critically about information in an ever-expanding information environment. A modern, community based, Library located in a Community Building designed through collaboration and engagement would benefit the City of Sebastopol and West County culturally, economically, and socially.

I am excited by the possibilities for collaboration and community engagement presented by the Ad Hoc in its Report, and welcome future conversations with the Ad Hoc and Council. Please feel free to reach out to me, or Fifth District Field Representative Debbie Ramirez, to discuss ways in which we can continue to engage and support this process.

Sincerely,

Lynda Hopkins
Supervisor – District 5, Sonoma County, Board of Supervisors