

From: [Diana Rich](#)
To: [Mary Gourley](#)
Subject: Fwd: Please Reconsider A Ceasefire Resolution
Date: Saturday, February 17, 2024 9:21:16 PM
Attachments: [Resolution Santa Cruz City Council.docx](#)

Mary: I am forwarding you this public comment so it can be posted for Tuesday's meeting.
Thank you. Diana

Please reply to: Diana Rich
Mayor, Sebastopol City Council
drich@cityofsebastopol.gov



Begin forwarded message:

From: [REDACTED]
Subject: Please Reconsider A Ceasefire Resolution
Date: February 17, 2024 at 1:42:35 PM PST
To: "drich@cityofsebastopol.gov" <drich@cityofsebastopol.gov>

I am a recently retired Jewish community relations professional. I spent the majority of 30-year career focused on coalition and bridge-building with the diverse faith, ethnic and community groups to address our shared values and priorities related to social justice issues including hunger, homelessness, marginalized populations, and gun violence. Through dialogue, education, relationship building and advocacy, we found common ground and goals that drove advocacy campaigns and public policy. And although there was opportunity for dialogue and occasionally education, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been and continues to be divisive. At a period in history fraught with so much divisiveness and anger around so many issues, adding to the divisiveness is profoundly discouraging. A ceasefire resolution only exacerbates this.

I am writing with two specific asks:

1. Remove Item #4 from the February 20 consent agenda, and
2. Minimize the opportunity for divisive community conflict by replacing and/or amending the language of the current resolution

I am of the experienced opinion (having witnessed firsthand similar efforts in other Bay Area communities, including most recently the Santa Rosa City Council and the Sonoma County Human Rights Commission) that non-binding resolutions inflame hate targeting the Jewish community. Recent resolutions in Oakland led to a surge in antisemitic incidents, including graffiti, vandalism and offensive postings by government and public-school educators and in San Francisco, flyers have targeted Jewish businesses and attacked Jewish leaders, including State Senator Scott Weiner, accusing them of genocide. Public hearings were filled with antisemitic jeering, perpetuation of conspiracies and

false information. In Santa Rosa last week the City Council had to clear the chambers when the lack of civility continued to manifest itself.

Non-binding resolutions will not address the root causes of the crisis in the Middle East, have no binding effect on it, and will exacerbate the feeling of insecurity among Jews. In addition, the resolution will divert valuable time and resources of the Sebastopol City Council that could be better utilized to address real community issues. Hours of time devoted to public comments for a ceasefire resolution from a small vocal cadre of supporters (many of whom have appeared multiple times at City Council meetings throughout the Bay Area) will not solve the complex and nuanced situation thousands of miles away. It will, however, contribute to making members of the local Jewish community feel unsafe and isolated.

I know that Sebastopol prides itself on its focus as a "Peace town" but this resolution will not advance that goal. If the city Council is intent on a resolution, I would suggest two alternatives;

- the Santa Cruz City Council "Peace resolution" as a model, adopted after 10 hours of heated public argument. (Attached)
- The current resolution be amended, at a minimum, to include VERY specifically both condemnation of Hamas and that Hamas be removed from power in any peace agreement.

Thank you for your public service and the attention to concerns of the community.

Paula Simon