

Dear Council Members,

I ask that you vote no on Item 12, the Saint Vincent du Paul Homekey Project.

The reasons why you should absolutely reject this proposal are many.

- 1) Does the City want to willingly partner with an organization that is trying to sue the City? Will SVP be a good partner, today, tomorrow and forever if SVP uses legal means to bully the City into getting what it wants? How can the City be an equal partner if they are forced into the situation? How will this bode for future negotiations? What happens if SVP doesn't honor their side of the agreement? Will Sebastopol have to sue them? How much will that cost citizens?
- 2) SVP has already proven to be a bad partner. Currently, they allow squatting on their property, which is dangerous to the surrounding community and businesses.
- 3) SVP has a terrible reputation as property managers. See this article on their slumlord practices at the Gold Coin Motel, which left tenants living in squalor:  
<https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/a-santa-rosa-charity-bought-a-rundown-motel-to-help-homeless-people-two-ye/>
- 4) The success of this project depends on who manages it. As the City and everyone witnessed with Horizon Shine, without good management projects such as these fail. Does the City have faith that SVP will be able to hire and retain excellent managers? What happens if they are unable to consistently staff the facility? The County has issues trying to retain people. They have had substantial fraud with DEMA. Money from the state will be limited. What recourse does the City have if the building is not properly staffed and it falls into social chaos?. It seemed that the City had zero control or influence over SAVS. How would SVP be different.
- 5) Staff has already said they do not have the time and resources to manage the project. Sebastopol is in a declared fiscal crisis and will be slimming down staffing to manage the crisis.
- 6) SVP is inept in managing administrative details as they failed to properly disclose the City's financial obligation in the Homekey partnership in the 5/16/23 Council Meeting. See staff report from that meeting: <https://www.cityofsebastopol.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Agenda-Item-Number-10-St-Vincents-De-Paul-Project-HomeKey-Application-845-Grav-Hwy-N.pdf>
- 7) As SVP is inept and also not prone to full disclosure, they would not be good partners with the City on a project which requires intensive administrative and legal work.
- 8) Sebastopol already has one Homekey Project, which is more PSH than many larger cities such as Windsor.
- 9) This project will take at minimum 18 months/ 1 year and 6 months and will not alleviate the RV encampments or any encampments in Sebastopol.
- 10) Grants Pass will be ruled upon by the Supreme Court this month. The ruling in Grants Pass will give the legal determination on homeless encampments, which might greatly limit their legal viability.

Given SVP poor track record and the demands of this project not only today but for every single day in the future, I urge Council to vote no on this project. Do not burden the community of Sebastopol and City Staff with yet another failed project. Residents, business owners, nonprofits and visitors have already had to absorb the loss of revenue from the Sebastopol Inn, the crime and public health issues of Morris Street, the debauched failure of Horizon Shine and the ongoing RV encampments caused by Horizon's Shine failure. Please do not continue down this pathway as the citizens of Sebastopol have already carried the weight of bad council decisions. Frankly, the City needs a break.

For Sebastopol's future and for the sake of our City Staff, please vote no on item 12.