

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: about the budget
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The question of budget will be ongoing - a permanent fix is what is required. It is not possible to "save" our way out of this condition or necessarily simply adjust taxes. It requires a structural change in how we think.

So I have two ideas to suggest considering.

First, abandon the formula business zoning.

This has been responsible for both reducing the tax income we might have and for increasing our carbon footprint as we fail in our role as the service center for the 30,000+ residents of west county by forcing them to travel to Santa Rosa. We should recognize and promote Sebastopol's role both as a service center and as a getaway destination for South Bay folks.

Second, we might consider whether a city of this size makes sense in the 21st century.

Expectation of citizens and expanded regulations beg this question. City governments are responsible for a lot more than they were in the early 20th century and that is expensive to support.

Two approaches might be considered. One is to simply disincorporate. In that case, we become part of the county and local control is lost.

The second is to consider creating an expanded discontinuous city. There are various expertise and capabilities every city needs. The cost when supporting a smaller population is extremely high per capita. This could be addressed by creating a larger city incorporating perhaps Sebastopol, Cotati, Graton, and others into a single municipal structure.

We moved here from Sunnyvale. It has a population of 178,000. It takes quite a lot of people to support that population, but it needed one city manager, one city attorney, one planning director, one director of public works, aone police chief, as does Sebastopol with a population of 7,300.

And if the concept of a discontinuous city is NOT palatable, then restructuring so that we staff in a similar manner to how the building department is staffed today. We have extremely talented folks there and they split their time between departments and cities. Can we take some of our key functions and share staff with our cities?

We now have owned property here in Sebastopol for 10 years and been residents for 8 of those years. Not a long time. My observation is that the city sees itself through the lens of what it was more than 50 years ago, rather than what it is today. That more than anything drove it to the financial crisis that it currently finds itself in today.

The challenge is not to find ways to support that false perspective, but rather to consider what the city currently has become and how to structure it to meet the challenges that new city faces.

Regards,

Gerry

Gerald (Gerry) Glaser

