

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM REPORT FOR MEETING OF: April 15, 2025

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To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
From: Emi Thériault, Community Development Director
Subject: City Council Conduct Interviews for three openings on the Climate Action Committee (CAC) to include interviews of the following candidates: Emily Ocon, Steve Pierce, and Lila Newton

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

City Council conduct interviews for three openings on the Climate Action Committee and consider making appointments later in the agenda.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Climate Action Committee promotes initiatives related to climate change issues and make recommendations to Council. There are currently three openings on the committee due to the term of former committee members whose terms ended on December 31, 2024. Vacancies are available under the variety of experience and/or characteristics approved for the Committee makeup at their March 18, 2025 Council meeting.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

The Climate Action Committee is regularly scheduled to meet the second Tuesday of each month from 3:00 p.m. to 4:50 p. m. at the Sebastopol Youth Annex on 425 Morris Street, Sebastopol, CA. Terms of office are four-year terms, and the opening term will last until December 31st, 2028. The Department noticed the vacancies in the City Hall bulletin board and various other media outlets and provided an application deadline of December 26th, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.

On March 18, 2025 the City Council reviewed a proposal to reconfigure the makeup of the Committee and directed staff to update the Committee composition to include 7 members from the following backgrounds:

1. One City Councilmember Liaison (at large)
2. Six members with one or more of the following experience/characteristics:
 - Youth representative
 - Climate Change
 - Sebastopol Business Owner
 - Local Climate Action Group
 - Environmental Justice and Equity
 - Rights of Nature
 - Energy
 - Transportation
 - Zero Waste

Current Climate Action Committee terms/categories are listed below (vacancies are highlighted.)

MEMBERS	Category	TERM ENDING DATE
Sandra Maurer	Council Liaison; Climate Change	As assigned
Phil Carter	Council Liaison at large; zero waste	As assigned
Kenna Lee, Chair	Climate Change	12/31/2026
Liselotte (Lisa) Pierce	Local Climate Action Group	Upon expiration of DRB term
Vacant	3 available seats	12/31/2028

15-minute interview for the applicants are scheduled as follows:

CLIMATE ACTION COMMITTEE INTERVIEW

Climate Action Committee (Three Seats Open)

Note: Interview times shown below are approximate and may start after the time indicated. The following interviews will start at 6:00 pm:

<i>Interview Time</i>	<i>Applicant Name</i>	<i>Experience/Characteristics</i>
6:00 p.m.	Steve Pierce	Sebastopol Business Owner, Energy, Transportation, Local Climate Action Group
6:15 p.m.	Emily Ocon	Transportation, Climate Change, Local Climate Action Group
6:30 p.m.	Lila Newton	Youth Representative, Climate Change

STAFF ANALYSIS:

The City received three applications within the time period for the three openings. This item is for the Council to consider these applications for the three available seats. If any seats are unfilled, City staff will re-advertise vacancies. It should be noted that the two existing Councilmember supported positions were assigned prior to the recent reconfiguration of the Committee to require only one Council liaison. Therefore, staff will be bringing Councilmember assignments back at a later date.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

This item has been noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled meeting date.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct fiscal impact associated with the recommended action tonight.

RESTATED RECOMMENDATION:

1. Interview the applicants who have applied and consider appointments based on the interview later in the agenda.

OPTIONS: None. Consideration of appointments will be considered later in the agenda

ATTACHMENTS:

Applications (redacted)

APPROVALS:

Department Head Approval: Approval Date: 4.9.25

CEQA Determination (Planning): Approval Date: 4.9.25

The proposed action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Administrative Services (Financial) Approval Date: N/A _____

Costs authorized in City Approved Budget: Yes No N/A

Account Code (f applicable) _____

City Attorney Approval: Approval Date: 4.9.25

City Manager Approval: Approval Date: 4.9.25

City Boards, Commissions, and Committees

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- Planning Commission
- Design Review Board
- Public Arts Committee
- Other Miscellaneous Boards/Committees/Commission as Approved by the City Council

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Application Process

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- At the pleasure of the City Council, without cause;
- If he/she is absent from three consecutive meetings, unless permission by a majority vote of the board, committee or commission had been granted as reflected in the official minutes of the body.
- Or by operation of the City Code if:
- If he/she is convicted of a crime of moral turpitude.
- If he/she ceases to be a qualified board, commission or committee member per the City of Sebastopol Municipal Code.

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City boards, commissions, and committees shall have the following general powers, duties and responsibilities in addition to those set forth in the Sebastopol Municipal Code and various Resolutions:

- To establish rules and regulations governing the election of their officers, the holding of meetings and the conduct of business for these meetings.
- To use all appropriate techniques in crystallizing and testing public sentiment on major public issues in their respective fields.
- To hold official hearings as required by law or requested by the City Council.

- To advise and recommend on City policies and procedures pertinent to their respective activities and functions.
- To support and adhere to all City policies promulgated by the City Council and to establish needed interim policies in the absence of the same.
- To provide information and promote good public relations between the City and the general public.
- To perform such other related functions as may be assigned to them by the City Council.

Desirable Characteristics in Applicants for Boards, Commissions, and Committees

While membership on City boards, committees and commissions requires no specific qualifications, with the exception of some seats on the Design Review Board and the Public Arts Committee, there are desirable characteristics for which the Council will be looking as they review applications:

- **Familiarity with Community**

The Council would require appointees to be familiar with the physical, social, and economic make-up of the City.

Applicants should have demonstrated an active interest and involvement in the community.

Familiarity with Major Issues

While it will be assumed that applicants are familiar with the specific issues that are being addressed by the board, committee or commission for which they are applying, it is also expected that applicants be aware of issues which will impact all sectors of City programs and services.

Knowledge of the Board, Commission or Committee

During the application process, applicants should become familiar with the responsibilities and role in the City's policy-making structure of the board, committee or commission for which they are applying.

Commitment to Serve

When appointed, members are expected to serve their term of office. While personal or professional circumstances might prompt an unexpected resignation, applicants who are aware of any reasons why they may not be able to complete a full term or attend regularly scheduled meetings, should indicate this on the application. While time commitments will vary depending upon schedules and workload, members are expected to attend all scheduled meetings. In addition to attending scheduled meetings, members may be expected to participate in study sessions or serve on subcommittees.

Relationship with the Community

As a member of a City board, committee or commission, your actions will reflect on the City of Sebastopol and you are required to relate to the community with impartiality and courtesy.

Commitment to City Policy:

The City Council has adopted ordinances and policies following an appropriate public process. As an appointed board, committee or commission member, your duty is to abide by such policies rather than implement personal preferences.

Tips for Applying for a City Board, Commission, or Committee

Type or neatly print your application. Due to the quantity of applications the Council must review, a neat application is appreciated.

Answer all questions on the application. Council reviews your application to gain an understanding of your background and experience, and what skills and talents you believe you could bring to a particular board, committee or commission. Don't forget to sign and date your application.

Attend one or two meetings of the board, committee or commission for which you are applying. Find out what the current issues are, and what issues may be coming in the future. Review the minutes of past meetings, available on the City web site or at City Hall depending on the appointment being applied for.

Talk to a current member. Current members can share with you their experience, they can give you an estimate of the time commitment involved, and they can discuss with you what they see as current and future issues for the City.

If you have questions about the function and role of members, talk with the City staff liaison to the board, committee or commission you are applying for. The City Clerk can provide contact information for City staff members who are assigned to work with the boards, committees and commissions. It is important to note that City staff members cannot and do not recommend or lobby for any applicant.

Find out City Council's priorities and interests. Attend City Council meetings and review meeting minutes. Council meeting videos are archived on the City's website <http://ci.sebastopol.ca.us/> and are available for purchase on DVD from the City Clerk's Office.

Review the Code of Ethics for Appointed and Elected Officials (the Brown Act), available by request from the City Clerk's Office and understand that if you are appointed to a board, committee or commission, you will be required to abide by it.

Prepare for the interview. Although we do not know what specific questions Council will ask, we suggest that you clarify for yourself why you are applying for a specific board, committee or commission, understand its role and function, and be familiar with the current issues it is examining.

Treat the interview with City Council as a business or job interview. Understand that the City Council is not only considering what experience, skills and talents you bring, they are interested in how you will represent the City.

APPLICATION FOR CITY OF SEBASTOPOL BOARDS, COMMISSIONS & COMMITTEES

Contact Information

Assistant City Manager/City Clerk,
MMC Mary Gourley
7120 Bodega Avenue
P.O. Box 1776
Sebastopol, CA
95473
Mgourley@cityofsebastopol.gov

phone: 707-823-1153

fax: 707-823-1135

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday - 7:00 am - 5:30 pm (closed 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm for lunch) Closed every Friday

Instructions:

Use this form to apply to serve on any of the City of Sebastopol's Boards, Committees or Commissions. Please complete the entire form and either print and mail it to the address above, or email your completed application to mgourley@cityofsebastopol.gov. If a question does not apply, please note as not applicable. Please deliver completed form, by the date and time due, to the City Clerk. All applications will be reviewed by the City Council. If appointed, you have a choice whether you wish to have your contact information visible to the public; however, your information may be made public upon request by (a) member(s) of the public.

The Climate Action Committee will consist of eleven (11) to thirteen (13) members from the following backgrounds:

Appointed Roles

- Two City Councilmembers (SCTA/RCPA and ZW Sonoma Reps)
- One Planning Commissioner – Climate background
- One Member of City Staff (Planning Director or designee)
- One Zero Waste representative/background

Categories

- Two Youth members (ages 17-23)
- Climate background
- Reside within Sebastopol city limits
- Reside outside Sebastopol city limits within the 95472-zip code
- Sebastopol business owner
- Sebastopol Climate Action or other local climate group representative
- Environmental justice/equity background
- Rights of nature background

Which category is being applied for? (Fill out all that apply)

Sebastopol business owner

Climate background

Name: **Steven Pierce**

Home Address, City, State and Zip Code:

[Redacted Address]

Home Phone Number: [Redacted]

If appointed, do you want this number to be visible to the public?
Yes No

Work Phone Number [Redacted]

If appointed, do you want this number to be visible to the public?
Yes No

Facsimile Number: NA

If appointed, do you want this number to be visible to the public?
Yes No

E-Mail Address: [Redacted]

If appointed, do you want this address to be visible to the public?

Yes **No**

Are you a registered voter in Sebastopol?

Yes No

If so, for how long? 27 years

Do you hold a current business license from the City of Sebastopol?

Yes No

If so, for how long? 6 months

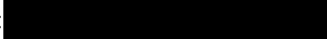
Have you attended a meeting of this body? When?

Yes, almost all of them _____

Have you served on, interviewed for, or applied for this body previously?

Yes **No**

If so, when? _____

Present Employer: 

Job Title: **Principal Software Engineer**

Have you previously served on any governmental bodies or held elected office? If so please list position held and dates:

RCPA Citizens Advisory Committee 2016 - 2020

Please list civic or charitable organization to which you belong or have belonged:

Sebastopol Grange, Sebastopol Climate Action, Noth Bay Electric Auto Association and Bike Sebastopol

Have you been an officer in any of these organizations? If so, please list position held and dates:

No

What special interests, skills and talents would you bring to this board, commission, or committee?

- **Owned a Title 24 Energy Consulting business in Berkeley for twelve years.**
- **Created CityClimateDashboard.org website that displays climate indicators for the entire state and selected counties, cities or zip codes and shows progress comparisons and rankings.**

Please list any college, professional or vocational schools you have attended with major subject studied, dates and any earned degrees:

Graduated from UC Berkeley in 1984 with a Bachelor of Science in Conservation and Resource Studies with an emphasis on residential energy conservation and community energy policy.

Please list any special awards or recognition you have received:

Please state why you would like to become a member of this board, commission or Committee, including what specific objectives you would be working toward as a member of this body:

I want to become a member of the CAC to help direct the committee to accomplish achievable climate actions.

Examples of Specific Objectives:

- **Prioritize the list of actions from the Active Transportation Plan within the three action tiers**
 - **Determine what the “low-hanging fruit” is and establish a road map for implementation.**
- **Pursue grant funding for the bigger items in the Active Transportation Plan.**
- **Identify opportunities in the upcoming City Fleet Study for electrification.**
- **Update the City’s climate action website pages with an emphasis on resources available for climate action assistance and information.**
- **Help the City collaborate with other cities and regional boards.**
 - **Update the data and distribute the local climate progress dashboard website CityClimateDashboard.org**
- **Survey residents on what businesses in surrounding cities they most travel to. With the idea that we can help identify businesses that should be targeted for expansion to Sebastopol to help reduce greenhouse gases and improve the local economy.**

Are you associated with any organization/employment that might be deemed a conflict of interest in performing your duties if appointed to this position?

Yes No

If yes, please state name of organization/employment: _____

City policy directs all appointed, advisory body members not to vote on matters where there exists a potential conflict of interest such as property ownership near a project, or a financial relationship with the applicant. Would you be willing to abstain from voting if such a conflict arises?

Yes No

How did you hear about this opening?

CAC meetings and email from City

Is there any other information that you feel would be useful to the City Council in reviewing your application and materials provided with the application?

No

What do you think qualifies you to be appointed to this board/committee/commission?

Extensive experience in building energy analysis, energy policy and metrics analysis

Are there particular issues you think the board/committee/commission should concentrate on?

- **Public education on climate action opportunities for assistance and incentives for residents and businesses.**
- **Funding for transportation improvements**

How should community comments be integrated into the board/committee/commission decision-making process?

Community comments should be appreciated and acknowledged. When appropriate, questions should be responded to.

If appointed, how would you handle it if another board/committee/commission member vehemently disagrees with your comments on a regular basis?

If the disagreement was expressed in a collegial manner, I would have no problem with strong disagreement. If it was not polite, I would approach the member outside of meetings to see if we can come to agreement on how to express disagreement in way that satisfies the both of us.

How would you handle a situation where a proposal comes before your board/committee/commission that the City staff finds consistent with City policies and standards, but that you personally do not support?

It is hard to imagine this circumstance in the context of this committee. If it did come up, I would express my views knowing that sometimes City policies and standards are not clear cut and open to interpretation, but in the end, I would defer to staff direction.

What is your involvement with the climate crisis, including ways you have educated yourself and worked to model and promote climate action?

- **Studied energy conservation and local energy policy in college.**
- **Ran my own energy consulting business**
- **Helped form the citizen's group Sebastopol Climate Action**
- **Major contributor to the Sebastopol Electrification Survey**

- **Promoted electrification at the Sebastopol Farmers Market**
- **Drive and electric car and switched to heat pumps for water heating and space heating/cooling**

What is your understanding of the current obstacles to implementing action on Climate Change? How would you suggest overcoming those obstacles?

Obstacles:

- **General resistance to change and resistance to government requirements**
- **Upfront cost barriers to improvements**
- **General perception that actions at a local, state and national level will have little impact on overall long-term direction on climate change**

Suggestions:

- **Increased education on alternatives that have lower climate impacts**
- **Easy access and consistent funding for incentives**
- **California is at the forefront of climate action. Showing how making climate action work here is critical and can have ripple effect.**

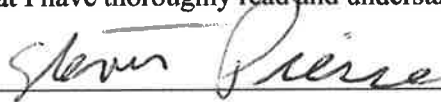
What should be the City’s role in addressing climate mitigation, adaptation, drawdown, and environmental justice? Give examples of policies you think the City should enact to address the climate crisis.

Given the City’s financial constraints, the role of the CAC should primarily be education. Many of the needed policies and goals at the local and regional level are already in place, but the financial resources are lacking to follow through with climate action implementation.



I certify that I have thoroughly read and understand all material in this application. Applicant’s

Signature: _____



Applicant’s Name (PLEASE PRINT): **Steven Pierce**

Date: **12/18/2024**

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APPLICATION FOR CITY OF SEBASTOPOL BOARDS, COMMISSIONS & COMMITTEES

Contact Information

Assistant City Manager/City Clerk, MMC
Mary Gourley
7120 Bodega Avenue
P.O. Box 1776
Sebastopol, CA 95473
Mgourley@cityofsebastopol.org

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fax: 707-823-1135

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Board, Commission, or Committee being applied for? _____

Name: _____

Home Address, City, State and Zip Code:

Home Phone Number: [REDACTED]

If appointed, do you want this number to be visible to the public?

Yes No

Work Phone Number: _____

If appointed, do you want this number to be visible to the public?

Yes No

Facsimile Number: _____

If appointed, do you want this number to be visible to the public?

Yes No

E-Mail Address: _____ If

appointed, do you want this address to be visible to the public?

Yes No

Are you a registered voter in Sebastopol?

Yes No

If so, for how long? _____

Do you hold a current business license from the City of Sebastopol?

Yes No

If so, for how long? _____

Have you attended a meeting of this body? When?

Have you served on, interviewed for, or applied for this body previously?

Yes No

If so, when? _____

Present Employer: [REDACTED]

Job Title: _____

Have you previously served on any governmental bodies or held elected office? If so please list position held and dates:

Please list civic or charitable organization to which you belong or have belonged:

Have you been an officer in any of these organizations? If so, please list position held and dates:

What special interests, skills and talents would you bring to this board, commission, or committee?

Please list any college, professional or vocational schools you have attended with major subject studied, dates and any earned degrees:

Please list any special awards or recognition you have received:

Please state why you would like to become a member of this board, commission or Committee, including what specific objectives you would be working toward as a member of this body:

Are you associated with any organization/employment that might be deemed a conflict of interest in performing your duties if appointed to this position?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please state name of organization/employment: _____

City policy directs all appointed, advisory body members not to vote on matters where there exists a potential conflict of interest such as property ownership near a project, or a financial relationship with the applicant. Would you be willing to abstain from voting if such a conflict arises?

- Yes
- No

How did you hear about this opening?

Is there any other information that you feel would be useful to the City Council in reviewing your application and materials provided with the application?

What do you think qualifies you to be appointed to this board/committee/commission?

Are there particular issues you think the board/committee/commission should concentrate on?

How should community comments be integrated into the board/committee/commission decision-making process?

If appointed, how would you handle it if another board/committee/commission member vehemently disagrees with your comments on a regular basis?

How would you handle a situation where a proposal comes before your board/committee/commission that the City staff finds consistent with City policies and standards, but that you personally do not support?

What is your involvement with the climate crisis, including ways you have educated yourself and worked to model and promote climate action?

What is your understanding about the urgency of the climate crisis?

What is your experience in working on policy issues – mobilizing public support, changing public consensus, or influencing fellow commissioners, for example?

What is your understanding of the current obstacles to implementing action on Climate Change? How would you suggest overcoming those obstacles?

What should be the City's role in addressing climate mitigation, adaptation, drawdown, and environmental justice? Give examples of policies you think the City should enact to address the climate crisis.


What does a resilient, carbon-free Sebastopol look like in the future and how might we get there?

What do you expect to accomplish as a sub-committee member?

In your role as a climate sub-committee member, how will you ensure that actions to address the climate crisis in Sebastopol are equitable?

How do you feel the role of a sub-committee member relates to the community?

I certify that I have thoroughly read and understand all material in this application.

Applicant's Signature :  _____

Applicant's Name (PLEASE PRINT): _____

Date: _____

Youth Application Instructions:

Use this form to apply to serve on any of the City of Sebastopol’s Boards, Committees or Commissions.

Please complete the entire form and either print and mail it to the address above or email your completed application to mgourley@cityofsebastopol.org. If a question does not apply, please note as not applicable. Please deliver completed form, by the date and time due to the City Clerk. All applications will be reviewed by the City Council. Interviews may be required by City Council. If appointed, you have a choice whether you wish to have your contact information visible to the public; however, your information may be made public upon request by (a) member(s) of the public.

Board, Commission, or Committee being applied for? _____

Name: _____ Age _____

Home Address, City, State and Zip Code:

Phone Number: _____

If appointed, do you want this number to be visible to the public? Yes No I am a minor (your phone number will not be made public)

E-Mail Address: _____

If appointed, do you want this address to be visible to the public? Yes No I am a minor (your email will not be made public)

Do you live in Sebastopol? Yes No

Do you go to school in Sebastopol? Yes No

Have you attended a meeting of this body? When?

Can you make a one-year commitment to participating on this board/commission/committee? Yes No

Have you served on, interviewed for, or applied for this body previously? Yes No

If so, when? _____

Do you have a job? Yes No

If yes, who is your present employer: _____

Job Title: _____

Please list school clubs and/or civic or charitable organizations to which you belong or have belonged:

Describe the activities you have helped organize or taken part in through these groups or organizations.

What special interests, skills and talents would you bring to this board, commission, or committee?

Please list any educational programs or courses you have taken that relate to the work of this board/commission/committee

Have you previously served on any governmental bodies? If so, please list position held and dates:

Please state why you would like to become a member of this board, commission or committee:

To your knowledge, are you associated with any organization/employment that might be deemed a conflict of interest in performing your duties if appointed to this position?

No

Yes. If yes, please state name of organization/employment: _____

Are there particular issues you think the board/committee/commission should concentrate on?

What exciting possibilities do you see for Sebastopol as a community in the future and how might this board/commission/committee help us get there?

Is there any other information that you feel would be useful to the City Council in reviewing your application and materials provided with the application?

I certify that I have thoroughly read and understand all material in this application.

Applicant's Signature : Jula Newton

Applicant's Name (PLEASE PRINT): _____

Date: _____

Parental Consent: (If applicable)

If applicant is under age 18, parent/guardian must complete the following:

As parent/guardian of this minor, I have reviewed the volunteer application form and give my consent for (name): _____, (age) _____: To participate in this volunteer committee/commission/board.

Signature of Parent: Dan A. H. Date: _____