

From: Danielle Connor [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 9:33 AM
To: John Jay; Mary Gourley; City Council; Don Schwartz
Subject: Support for Sebastopol Farmer's Market

Hi all,

I'm writing in to express support for the Sebastopol Farmer's market and the requested changes to their use permit:

- **Allow the market to operate between the hours of 9 AM - 1:30 PM:** this is helpful to businesses downtown to overall encourage foot traffic early, and incredibly helpful to community member's with families and small children who rely on the market for their groceries. It is much easier to navigate the market earlier. Since the hours have changed, our business has seen a decline in sales from 7 am - 10 am, on average we are 30% slower each Sunday since that change went into effect.

- **Allow the market to have full control over the mix of vendors:** in this day and age, we can no longer operate a successful farmer's market without a wide variety of complimentary vendors serving food, beverages, and vending their arts at the market. The vendor mix shows how diverse our community is and allows for a more successful market for all vendors, but especially farmers. People enjoy the diversity and if we take that away, they will instead support other farmer's markets that do not have restrictions on the number of arts n craft vendors in relation to the number of farmers.

I started my business at farmer's markets in 2015 - we know from firsthand experience that the diversity of vendors directly relates to the diversity of foot traffic and in turn, boosts sales for all. People who sell at farmer's markets are the smallest of small businesses in our community: they are people who do not have other outlets to sell like a brick & mortar shop, and rely on the farmer's market for affordable booth fees. Often, booth fees at craft fairs are more than double the cost of a farmer's market stall. For example, The Trade in the Barlow costs \$120 - \$230 for a stall, whereas the farmer's market booth fee is less than half.

- **Allow the market to expand seasonally with more vendors:** the farmer's market has operated in debt for a long time, well before current manager Barbara took over. She inherited a lot of debt and poor financial planning when she began managing the market. In order to continue to make the market successful and not operate in the red, they need to increase the amount of vendors to collect more booth fees. Increasing the market space seasonally also enhances the market as our community living room - providing more space for engagement, and more opportunity for sellers to make sales with an increase in overall foot traffic.

Ultimately, the farmer's market is a gem to our community and our small business community. The market is directly putting a lot of foot traffic in front of every business in downtown Sebastopol. Majority of small businesses downtown appreciate and value the farmer's market for bringing this to our front door, and it should come as no surprise that the community at large relies on the market each Sunday for more than just fresh produce.

Thank you,

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Danielle Connor, she/her

Co-Founder, Head of Operations,
Retrograde Coffee Roasters



[REDACTED]



www.retrograderoasters.com



[REDACTED]



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January 24, 2025

Sebastopol Planning Commissioners
c/o Emi Theriault
Community Development Director
City of Sebastopol
Community Development/Planning Department
7120 Bodega Ave.
Sebastopol, CA 95472
Email: etheriault@cityofsebastopol.gov

RE: *Sebastopol Farmers' Market*
Application for Modification of Conditional Use Permit
Hearing Date: January 28, 2025
6:00 p.m.
Agenda Item: 6B

Dear Commissioners,

I have been retained to represent the Sebastopol Farmers' Market. I am in receipt of the Planning Commission Staff Report regarding the Market's application for a modification of its Conditional Use Permit (CUP). I am writing to respectfully request that you approve the application including removing the percentage restriction for products sold at the Market.

The Sebastopol Farmers market is held every Sunday, rain or shine, all year round. I am sure that you are very familiar with the Market. For over 30 years, the Market has been offering local farmers a market for their produce, and a place for locals and tourists to shop. It provides community and social interaction for all ages. As noted in the staff report, the Market is a popular community event and an economic development engine that attracts locals and visitors.

The current Market Manager is Barbara Hom. Not only is she a well-known local chef, Ms. Hom has lived in Sebastopol for more than 40 years. She is part of this community. Ms. Hom took on the job of managing the market a few years ago and has strived to maintain

Sebastopol's community values while improving the Market with chef demonstrations and other enhancements consistent with the Market's traditions.

We appreciate the collaboration with the city's staff in preparing the application for the outdated 1997 CUP.

However, we request that you, the Commissioners, decline Staff's recommendation to impose a percentage restriction on the Market. The recommendation is not needed and is vague. The restriction is not needed because the Market has an established track record that we trust you are familiar with. The Market's tradition will not be disturbed. To the extent there is concern about transition of the Market's managers or board members in the future, we note the CUP is recommended for a 3-year period with a one-year renewal option. While we doubt that any concerns would arise, they could be addressed at the time of renewal. Even better, in a small community like Sebastopol the Market could be contacted informally about any concerns.

The recommendation is vague and would make compliance challenging. Specifying that 85% of products be primarily agricultural-related products leaves questions about what the City considers such products. The market has olive-oil vendors, processed and cured meat and fish, dairy products. The market may have beeswax purveyors selling products such as candles or waxed paper. Would any or all of those be considered agricultural-related products? Imposing a vague percentage restriction would put the Market in the position of guessing whether its vendor complement was compliant with the CUP. Additionally, the Market is a non-profit. Having a full complement of vendors is important as the Market's only revenue is for stall fees and minor income from T-shirt sales. If the Market manager received notice that even a couple of produce vendors were not available on a Sunday and could not confidently offer that space to other vendors that sold products that might not be considered agricultural-related, that would have a significant impact on the Market's income needed for its very limited staff and insurance and other costs. Allowing some allowance for such occasions would allow the Market to maintain itself without a risk of failing to comply with the CUP.

We are not aware of other farmers' markets in California having percentage restrictions. As noted in the staff report, there is no such restriction required by either the Federal Department of Food and Agriculture or the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

We trust that you want the Sebastopol Farmers Market to thrive. The Sebastopol General Plan has multiple references to encouraging a year round farmers' market such the well-established Sebastopol Farmers' Market:

- Section 9, Economic Vitality:
Policy EV 4-2 is to "[s]upport the maintenance and expansion of Farmers Markets.

Action EV 4a is to maintain and expand partnerships to promote among other things "Farmers' Markets."

- Section 10, Community Health and Wellness:

The preamble notes that access to “full-service grocery stores and *famers’ markets* is also correlated with increased consumption of fruits and vegetables.” (Emphasis added.)

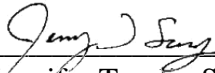
Policy CHW 3-5: “Encourage and support the continued year-round operation of farmers’ markets.”

Approving the requested modification to allow the Market to open an hour earlier is consistent with the General Plan. Imposing a vague percentage restriction would not be. Granting the request for modification without a percentage restriction is consistent with the Criteria and Conditions for approving CUPs as set forth in the Sebastopol Municipal Code 17.415.020.

You all know the Market. We request that you approve the modification without a percentage restriction and by doing so support and encourage the Sebastopol Farmers’ Market and help it thrive.

Very truly yours,

MURPHY SANCHEZ PLLC



Jennifer Tomlin Sanchez

cc: **Via Email Only**

Barbara Hom
Sebastopol Farmers Market
Market Manager
Email: sebastopolfm@gmail.com

From: Sierra Rinehart [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, January 23, 2025 7:04 PM
To: John Jay; City Council; Mary Gourley
Subject: Support for Sebastopol Farmers Market Use Permit

Dear Members of the Sebastopol Planning Commission,
I am writing to express my wholehearted support for the Sebastopol Farmers Market and its proposed use permit adjustments. The market is a cherished community hub that not only provides access to fresh, local produce but also fosters a sense of connection and vitality in the heart of our town. I respectfully urge you to consider the following points in support of the market's ongoing success:

1. **Extended Hours (9:00 AM – 1:30 PM)**

The proposed extended hours make the market more accessible to a diverse range of attendees. Families with children, those who prefer to shop early to avoid crowds, and individuals with varying schedules all benefit from a larger time frame to shop. Additionally, longer hours help ease parking congestion by spreading attendance throughout the morning, enhancing the overall experience for both shoppers and nearby businesses.

2. **Removal of Percentage Restrictions on Booths (80/20 Rule)**

The current 80/20 rule is outdated and no longer reflects the operational standards of most markets. The Sebastopol Farmers Market already maintains a strong focus on local farmers and produce, but removing this restriction allows for an increased variety of food, beverage, and arts-and-crafts vendors. Many of these small businesses rely on the market as their primary outlet, as they lack brick-and-mortar locations. Greater vendor diversity enriches the market experience, attracts more visitors, and boosts foot traffic for downtown businesses.

3. **Seasonal Expansion of Vendors**

The seasonal nature of the market necessitates flexibility in its size to accommodate increased demand during spring, summer, and fall. Allowing for more vendors during these peak seasons not only strengthens the market's financial stability through additional booth fees but also provides more space for the community to gather and celebrate the vibrancy of Sebastopol. As a "community living room" in the center of town, the market plays a vital role in bringing people together. Supporting its ability to grow seasonally ensures its longevity and the preservation of its legacy as a beloved institution.

The Sebastopol Farmers Market is a cornerstone of our community, enriching lives, supporting local businesses, and embodying the values that make Sebastopol unique. By approving these proposed adjustments to its use permit, you are investing in the future of a vital institution that serves as both a marketplace and a gathering place for residents and visitors alike.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,
Sierra Rinehart

From: Jacqueline Gleason [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, January 23, 2025 9:44 PM
To: John Jay; City Council; Mary Gourley
Subject: Support for Sebastopol Farmers Market Use Permit

Dear Members of the Sebastopol Planning Commission,
I am writing to express my wholehearted support for the Sebastopol Farmers Market and its proposed use permit adjustments. The market is a cherished community hub that not only provides access to fresh, local produce but also fosters a sense of connection and vitality in the heart of our town. I respectfully urge you to consider the following points in support of the market's ongoing success:

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Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,
Jacqueline Gleason
460 Bohemiaan Hwy
Sebastopol, CA 95472

Sent from my iPhone

From: Jalini Waxman [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, January 23, 2025 10:21 PM
To: John Jay; City Council; Mary Gourley
Subject: Support for Sebastopol Farmers Market Use Permit

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I am writing to express my wholehearted support for the Sebastopol Farmers Market and its proposed use permit adjustments. The market is a cherished community hub that not only provides access to fresh, local produce but also fosters a sense of connection and vitality in the heart of our town. I respectfully urge you to consider the following points in support of the market's ongoing success:

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Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,
Jalini Waxman

From: Sarah Garrison [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, January 26, 2025 10:23 AM
To: Mary Gourley; City Council; John Jay
Subject: Support for Sebastopol Farmers Market Use Permit

Dear Members of the Sebastopol Planning Commission,
I am writing to express my wholehearted support for the Sebastopol Farmers Market and its proposed use permit adjustments. The market is a cherished community hub that not only provides access to fresh, local produce but also fosters a sense of connection and vitality in the heart of our town. I respectfully urge you to consider the following points in support of the market's ongoing success:

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Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Sarah Garrison

Sebastopol Resident since 1976

Sent from Mobile device. May contain typos.