



January 27, 2025

Members, Sebastopol Planning Commission  
City Hall  
Sebastopol, CA 95472

**RE: January 28, 2025 Planning Commission Hearing  
Item 6B  
6908 Weeks Way – Farmer’s Market**

Commissioners-

I am a Sebastopol resident with more than 40 years of planning experience, including 10 years as Assistant Director and Zoning Administrator for a major Bay Area city. As such, I am very familiar with Conditional Use authorizations, the enforcement of conditions and Planning Codes. I have not been engaged by any parties on this item and write only as a concerned resident.

I have reviewed the Planning Department’s recommendation on the Farmer’s Market and am heartened that they support the amendment of the previous Conditional Use authorization.

However, I am particularly concerned about the following limitations on the arts and crafts and the limitation upon the area the Farmer’s Market may occupy.

The staff report recommends the following condition:

- a. Recommended Market vendor type ratios: limitation to no more than 15% of arts and crafts or as otherwise suggested by the Commission. Remaining 85% shall include primarily agricultural or food related products.*

It is unclear the purpose of this restriction. There are no findings related to the restriction in the proposed motion, which seems to be a deficiency. If it is to avoid competition with brick-and-mortar stores, that seems misguided. The Farmer’s Market brings customers to the downtown that far outweigh any competition by the craft vendors.

The percentage seems excessively restrictive and difficult to enforce. The proposed condition is unclear how the percentage is measured. Is the percentage related strictly to the number of vendors or is the area that the vendors occupy included? For example, some of the craft vendors only occupy a small table while some produce vendors have much larger spaces. It seems unfair to count them the same. Further, there are seasonal variations that do not seem



to be considered. There's less produce available in the fall and winter, and at the same time craft vendors are ramping up for the holidays.

It also seems like this issue is covered by the Sebastopol Planning Code under "Accessory Uses":

Accessory Use Types. In addition to the principal uses expressly included therein, each use classification type shall be deemed to include such uses as are customarily associated with and are appropriate, incidental, and subordinate to, such a principal use. Such accessory uses include, but are not limited to, the uses indicated below:

...

4. Sale of goods on the same lot as a principal civic use, but only if such goods are available only to persons participating in the principal use.
5. Production of goods for sale by a firm engaged in a principal commercial use on the same lot, but only if:
  - a. All goods so produced are sold at retail by the same firm on the same lot; and
  - b. Such production does not occupy more than 50 percent of the total floor area and open sales, display, storage, and service area occupied by such firm on the lot; and
  - c. Such production does not in any case occupy more than 2,000 square feet of such floor area and open area.

...

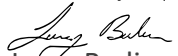
Sale of crafts and arts are "...customarily associated with and are appropriate, incidental, and subordinate to..." a farmer's market. Most farmer's markets in the area allow non-food and produce items without limitation according to the applicant's submittals.

As to the area that the Market occupies that varies by season, I urge you to allow the maximum area for the entire year, including the parking extension south to Bodega Highway and west to include the parking spaces behind Main Street. The limitations on the area seems to be an attempt to address a concern about parking. Sebastopol has plenty of parking available to the Farmer's Market and downtown business patrons. Nearby parking includes the Whole Foods lot, the public lots opposite the police station, on High Street, next to Hopmonk as well as the CVS and RiteAid parking lots.



In summary, I urge you to either increase or eliminate the 85 food-15 arts and crafts ratio or allow a much higher percentage of arts and crafts, and allow the Farmer's Market to occupy the largest area possible

Sincerely,

  
Larry Badiner