

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
CITY COUNCIL
STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: April 3, 2018

Presentation: Cittaslow Report to City Council (Tasha Beauchamp)



cittaslow sebastopol
Keeping Sebastopol green, local, friendly and artistic

2017-2018 Cittaslow Sebastopol Progress Report

The Year of the Non-Profit

In November 2016, Cittaslow Sebastopol and then-Mayor Sarah Gurney held a "Mayor's Breakfast with the Non-Profits" to find out what kinds of support non-profits as a group would like. Collectively they needed skill-building workshops, greater exposure to the community, help recruiting volunteers, and opportunities to network with each other. With the help of the non-profits banding together—Cittaslow Sebastopol prefers to always work in collaboration—we came up with these specific projects for the 2017/2018 Fiscal Year:

- **Lend-a-Hand Day Sebastopol.** Saturday April 28, 2018 is our city-wide day of service. Sebastopol Rotary, the Library, the Lions Club, and Community Bikes joined with Cittaslow Sebastopol to serve as the Planning Team for this event. Eleven local non-profits are requesting help in the form of construction, landscaping and clean-up projects. We are in the middle of developing the website for sign-ups (LendAHandSebastopol.org). *"Donate your elbow grease. Show our non-profits some love!"*
- **Tabling at the Peacetown Concerts.** Mr. Music was gracious enough to offer two tables each Wednesday night for local non-profits to come set up their literature and share their mission with the happy crowd. From fund-raisers to volunteer recruitment to completion of surveys, 21 different non-profits were able to meet with several hundred attendees at our popular summer concert series and spread the word. Kudos to the master communitarian, Mr. Music, and his delightful team for giving our non-profits such a joyful opportunity!
- **Networking Meetings.** Upwards of 40 non-profits attended the first meeting which included a talk by Joseph McIntyre of Ag Innovations about 3 Key Tools for Non-Profit Resiliency. The summer meeting was a workshop on Facebook Ads presented by Julia Pereira of On Time Social. The third meeting was canceled due to the fires. We sent out a survey to 180 local non-profits and have identified topics and optimal scheduling for future meetings as the Sebastopol Library joins us in facilitating this networking get-together.



And then came the Fires!



Sebastopol was astoundingly lucky to be out of the path of the inferno. We also were blessed to have top notch first responders, and to be able to offer help for evacuees.

In the months since the fires, Cittaslow Sebastopol has stepped forward to assist the local non-profits and churches to assemble needed paperwork to apply for FEMA reimbursement. So far it looks like \$50,000 of government aid will be coming back into our town to offset the expenses of our charitable organizations.

And how charitable they were!

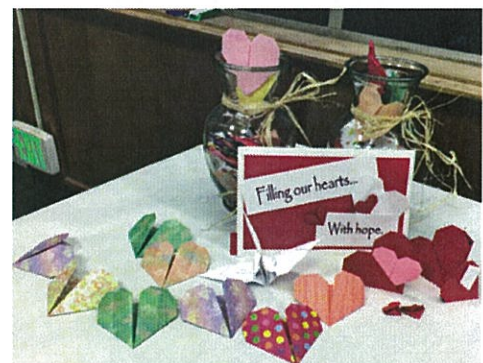
Sebastopol's citizens stepped forward with amazing generosity. Here is a small sampling of the many ways our town jumped in to aid our neighbors:

- **190 people showed up at the Sebastopol Community Center that first day to pitch in** as dazed evacuees started streaming in, many having left in the middle of the night with just their robe and slippers, the cat and their cell phone.
- **501 evacuees were housed at Analy High School with over 250 volunteers assisting** with tasks as varied as setting up cots and creating a mobile shower, to high school students providing childcare while other volunteers organized and monitored a pet area.
- **Ceres Community Project donated over 1000 volunteer hours, delivering >12,000 meals** throughout Sonoma County.
- **Our Fire Department contributed 22 volunteer firefighters and 3 engines, putting in close to 1700 hours** to help quell the flames.
- **Community Market donated over \$30,000 worth of food.** All the other grocers in town and many local restaurants were generous beyond belief with their contributions.
- **The Chamber of Commerce and the Barlow teamed up with local merchants and 125 volunteers to create a one-day Pop-Up Store** where evacuees could come and get new clothes and shoes so they had appropriate garments to wear as they returned to work.
- **Hessel Church housed evacuees as well as the Red Cross Team.** It continues with recovery efforts, helping evacuees sift through the rubble, fix cars, and find new housing.

The Gratitude Open House

Council Member Neysa Hinton contacted us shortly after the firestorm had subsided and asked us to consider hosting an event to simultaneously honor all those who helped while giving our townspeople a chance to thank first responders and volunteers in person.

With only 10 days' lead time, Council Member Sarah Gurney was able to secure co-sponsorship by the Sebastopol Center for the Arts such that they were willing to donate their space. Together with the City of Sebastopol, Cittaslow Sebastopol produced the Gratitude Open House on November 5. Approximately 250 people attended, making thank you cards, recording video shout-outs and creating origami hearts of gratitude.



Maria Bija's Kindred Choir led a flash mob sing-along, and Mayor Glass and the City Council offered praise and thanks to everyone who gave so generously during this very distressing time. The Open House closed with a heartwarming sing-along of John Lennon's *"Imagine"* led by Analy High School's Choir Director, Andy DelMonte.

Shared Community Calendar

In partnership with the Sebastopol Community Cultural Center and the Sebastopol Center for the Arts, Cittaslow Sebastopol was able to launch the shared Community Calendar this summer.

This calendar is available for free to any website that would like to display it and become known to their followers as the go-to place for finding out what's happening in 95472.

So far the calendar is appearing on the websites of:

- The City of Sebastopol
- The Sebastopol Community Cultural Center
- The Sebastopol Downtown Association
- Experience Sebastopol (the City's visitor website)
- The Sebastopol Kiwanis Club
- Cittaslow Sebastopol

One advantage of the shared Community Calendar is that event producers can fill out one form yet have their event displayed on multiple websites.

Anyone can submit an event. Simply go to any version of the Community Calendar and click on the "Submit an Event" link at the bottom of the page. As long as the event is in 95472 and generally involves culture or entertainment, or is a community event or benefit open to everyone, it will meet criteria for posting. (No sales or on-going classes, nor religious activities or political rallies.)

Events must be reviewed before they are published. This requires daily monitoring. With 2-3 submissions a day, that works out to 15-30 minutes.

Management of the Calendar also entails answering questions and encouraging new embedders and

The screenshot shows the website ci.sebastopol.ca.us with a navigation bar for City Government, Our Community, Local Business, and Connect With Us. The main heading is "Community Calendar" and "Sebastopol Upcoming Events".

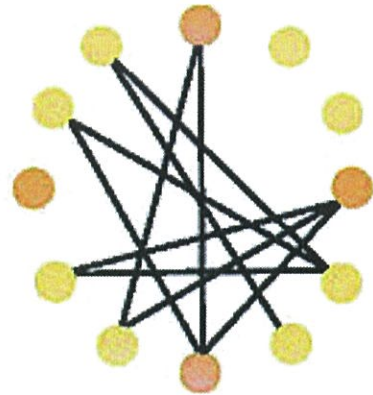
- Tour d'Organics**: Food & Drink, Nature/Outdoors, Tour, Walks/Runs/Rides. August 13 @ 6:30 am - 5:00 pm. A cycling and culinary experience like no other! The Tour d'Organics gives you VIP access to so... [Find out more >](#)
- August Garden Day – Sebastopol City Hall & Library Landscape**: Volunteer Workday. August 16 @ 10:00 am - 12:00 pm. Our monthly Garden Day has grown into a fun, interactive and educational day of community action... [Find out more >](#)
- Peacetown Summer Concert**: Food & Drink, Music. August 16 @ 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm. Anne Sampson and Haute Flash Quartet! This summer will mark the sixth year of our Peacetown Summer... [Find out more >](#)
- Ceres Community Project Volunteer Orientation**: Volunteer Orientation. September 18 @ 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm. Ceres Community Project invites you to register for this Volunteer Orientation at our Sebastopol... [Find out more >](#)
- "Form & Color: It's Wild Out There"**: Photography by Dave Strauss. Visual Arts. September 15 @ 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm. Opening Reception Saturday, September 16, 2017, 3:00-5:00pm Exhibit open through January 14, 2018... [Find out more >](#)
- Grace**: Theater. September 23 @ 8:00 pm. Grace is a tragicomedy that explores human assumptions about how God, goodness, faith and causal... [Find out more >](#)
- Wings, Wine and Wetlands A Benefit for the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation**: Food & Drink. September 24 @ 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm. Enjoy the amazing bounty of our spectacular Laguna: fine wine and champagne, unique brews, and de... [Find out more >](#)

Sebastopol Area Time Bank

What began as a pilot project has now blossomed to an active time bank with 160 members. Over 2800 hours have been exchanged since opening to the public in October of 2016.

In addition to allowing individuals to give and receive services, members of the Time Bank have been able to earn hours supporting community projects.

For instance, in April of 2017 they joined with Planning Director Kenyon Webster to help with weeding and clean-up of the Laguna Skatepark. In November 2017, Time Bank members were crucial to preparing food and the posters acknowledging acts of kindness in the Gratitude Open House.



Organizational memberships

The Time Bank is conducting a pilot study to test the feasibility of offering organizational memberships. When they need additional help, selected nonprofit organizations will join and be able to supplement their own volunteers with time bankers. We are still in the middle of this study. Looking forward to the results in June!

Eco-Tourism through the Arts

This year marked the first year of a concerted effort to advertise the City's visitor website. We specifically placed ads in the program for the Center for the Arts' Art Trails, as well as having brochures at all the artists' studios. Art Trails was rudely interrupted by the fires, so there is not a way to measure efficacy there. We look forward to the increased exposure at the Sebastopol Documentary Film Festival in March and Art at the Source in June.

Unplanned Projects

This year certainly brought many unexpected community needs to the fore. Certainly there were our activities relating to the fire: helping the non-profits with FEMA and putting on the Gratitude Open House. But then there were simply issues that happened spontaneously and needed addressing. Below are a few here we jumped in just because it was the right thing to do:

The Housing Shortage

In light of skyrocketing housing expenses, the City Council created a Housing Sub-Committee co-Chaired by (at the time) Mayor Una Glass and Vice Mayor Patrick Slayter. They put on public workshops every two weeks over the spring to hear from experts on the pros and cons of various policy decisions.

In its role as the "ears" of the City, Cittaslow Sebastopol assisted the community by publicizing these events and helping to boost attendance.



Pedestrian Safety Initiative

A fatal pedestrian collision in Sebastopol sidelined our "Barriers to Walking" survey which was oriented to illicit ideas that might help our citizens overcome obstacles to walking. We set that survey to the side in favor of focusing on pedestrian safety. Since January, with the assistance of Chief Conner, Larry McLaughlin and Mary Gourley, we have been meeting with Sargent Dave Harston of the Sebastopol Police Department to review traffic and safety trends, past interventions, and pedestrian safety interventions that have been implemented successfully in other parts of the U.S. Having joined the Walk-Friendly Community network in 2016, we not only have baseline data from our multi-department audit, but also have access to evidence-based education and enforcements programs that have been successfully implemented in other communities. As we conclude this review, we will be making a proposal for Pedestrian Safety initiatives later in the spring, likely including a driver education campaign and a pedestrian education campaign. Stay tuned!

Public Transit Focus Groups and Survey

Council Member Sarah Gurney asked Cittaslow Sebastopol to assist with gathering community input about possible improvements to the local Route 24 Sebastopol Shuttle as well as connections to Santa Rosa and SMART.

Working with Sonoma County Transit and Sonoma County Transit Authority, Cittaslow Sebastopol brought in the Sebastopol Senior Center and together with the City co-sponsored two focus groups:

- One during the afternoon at Burbank Heights and Orchards (40 in attendance)
- One at night at the Library (12 in attendance)

The purpose was to identify major themes from these smaller groups to help create multiple choice answers for a larger, community-wide survey.



Top requests for improvement were to:

- Extend hours into later in the afternoon (the current service runs until 3:30)
- Extend Saturday hours and add Sunday service (there is currently no bus service on Sunday)
- Add stops at Andy's produce, the Rialto (directly in front for those who have mobility challenges) Ragle Park, Harmony Farm Supply, Fircrest and the Laguna.
- Improve connections with routes going to Santa Rosa, and to Cotati, for SMART
- Make sure all buses have ramps for wheelchairs, walkers and shopping carts.
- Extend the seasonal bus to the beach to operate in other months as well
- Add more covered shelters.

Additionally there were some very creative ideas for increasing ridership. Later this year Sebastopol will be receiving the first electric bus in the Sonoma County fleet. Sonoma County Transit has indicated that they would be very interested in working together on a campaign to launch the bus and improve daily census. These focus groups yielded great testimonials and prompted the idea of further crowd-sourcing promotional ideas, even graphics or a slogan,

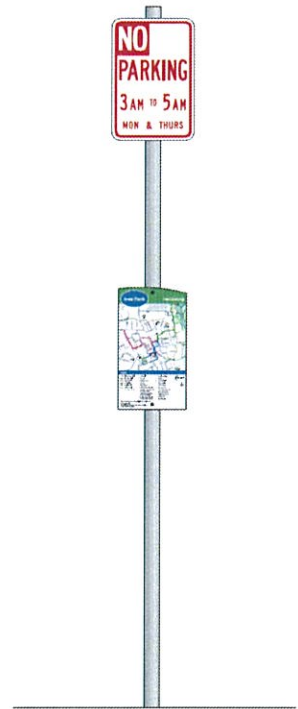
Cittaslow Sebastopol is currently running an online and paper survey to get service feedback and creative input from the entire community.

The on-going saga of Cal-Trans and the PedLine

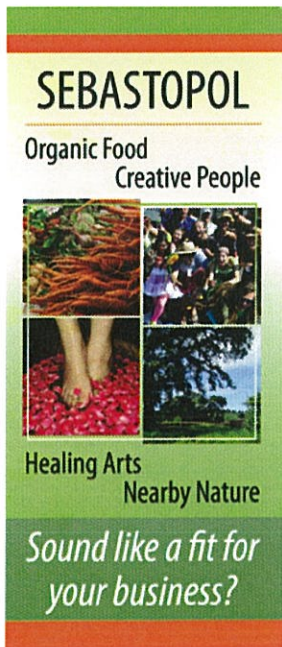
If it isn't pavement improvements it's sidewalk construction.... The installation of sidewalk markers for the PedLine—four, self-guided, color-coded walking tours—has been postponed yet again. When this latest delay became evident, we decided to move forward without the markers and to create a PedLine.org website as well as "Park Once and Walk" Mini-Maps that can be installed in the parking lots to encourage visitors (and locals) to use the Ped Line as a navigational aid.

Working with Public Works, Engineering, and Studio L'Image (the graphics company in charge of the City's Wayfinding signage program), Cittaslow Sebastopol has identified existing lamp posts where these 10" x 18" maps can be installed. They will not only encourage walking, but can point people to the PedLine.org website which is optimized to show the Ped Lines on a mobile phone and use GPS to have the owner's exact location appearing on the map.

These signs are still in draft stage and will be brought to the City Council for final approval. While there is no telling when Cal Trans will actually have the sidewalk project completed, at least we can move forward with the "virtual Ped Line" and simply add the markers-on-the-ground whenever the timing works out. (We will be carrying over funds for the markers, but intend to have all of the other elements completed before the end of this fiscal year.)



Community Impact Report (CIR) Subcommittee



After a review of numerous CIRs, including those provided by Planning Director Webster, the Sub-Committee determined the following:

- Sustainable development involves attention to environmental, economic and social impacts. The CEQA/EIR process handles the environmental impact. The sub-committee does not yet have a way of assessing social and financial impacts.
- Priority to encourage economic vitality and to welcome businesses.
- Does *not* want to require an added expense of consultant fees and a formal report.
- Prefers a less formal questionnaire/checklist filled out by the business/developer that allows the project to describe itself in terms of the priorities and Action Steps outlined in the General Plan (Sebastopol's vision of its preferred future).

To promote economic vitality and help further the vision of the General Plan, Cittaslow Sebastopol worked with the CIR subcommittee and City staff to create a "Sound Like A Fit?" brochure. Pending Council approval, plans are underway to create a resource folder for all businesses that inquire about establishing themselves in Sebastopol.

This brochure would be included in the folder along with a list of useful phone numbers and websites, the Chamber membership brochure and the Chamber's map of Sebastopol.