

Agenda Report Reviewed by:  
City Manager: *JM*

**CITY OF SEBASTOPOL  
CITY COUNCIL  
STAFF REPORT**

**Meeting Date:** January 21, 2019  
**To:** Honorable Mayor and Honorable City Councilmembers  
**From:** Councilmember Sarah Gurney  
**Subject:** Receipt of Presentation from Volunteers from Sebastopol Walks and Sebastopol Runs and Approval of City Sponsorship of the Sebastopol Walks and Sebastopol Runs Programs for 2020; Request for Assistance with Publicity  
**Recommendation :** That the Council approve sponsorship for both programs and assist with publicity  
**Funding:** Currently Budgeted: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No XX N/A  
Net General Fund Cost: N/A  
Amount: \$0

Account Code/Costs authorized in City Approved Budget (if applicable) N/A (verified by Administrative Services Department)

**INTRODUCTION:** This item is to request that the City Council Receive a Presentation from Sebastopol Walks and Runs Volunteers, Approve City Sponsorship for the Sebastopol Walks Program (in its 12th Year) and for the new Sebastopol Runs Program, and Assist with Publicity

**BACKGROUND:**  
For 11 of the last 12 years, Sebastopol Walks has organized and conducted more than 120 walks around town, with more than 3,000 participants. Sebastopol Walks has introduced people to the fun of exploring town on foot, learning about the social/cultural/political history of the community, and discovering what makes Sebastopol such a great place to live and visit. Locals, locals with out-of-town guests, residents from other Sonoma County cities, out-of-county and international visitors have enjoyed the walks. Intended as a community-building experience, the walks have also become a tourist attraction.

The inspiration for the walks was a booklet called Sebastopol Walks written by Richard Nichols, its first edition funded by the City. For the second edition, then Mayor and now City Councilmember Sarah Gurney organized three progressive dinner walks, featuring local restaurants, and raised enough money for the booklet’s second printing. Funding for the third edition came from the sales of the book, including at Copperfields Books. The local store has sold over 1000 copies. The booklet has been the number one holiday best seller for several years. It’s an inexpensive gift and/or souvenir and has been presented to many Sister City/other visitors to City Hall.

Originally, the four-member core group of volunteers assumed leadership for all of the walks. Community leaders were recruited to share the responsibilities, thus expanding the core group. Then, the current Mayor and Council Members were also invited to create and lead new routes, often highlighting City governance, City service delivery, and opportunities for the future. New 2020 Volunteer Amie Windsor has offered to lead two additional walks focusing on themes, locations, and distances enjoyable for kids.

The WALKS Program has emphasized the value of exercise for good health. Already in existence when Sonoma County Health Action started the iWALK campaign, Sebastopol WALKS was highlighted as the demonstration

program. It has inspired several other local walking programs: for example, one at the Senior Center; iMOSEY through the local Health Action Chapter; at least one private women's group; and a sister program in Novato. It is the only Health Action iWALK activity still in existence.

Expanding this year, the WALKS Program has inspired a new Sebastopol RUNS Program, also led by a core group of volunteers. Geoffrey Skinner, Joan Schwan, and Amie Windsor, all experienced runners, want to share with others the joy of running and improving physical fitness and stamina. They will show that our hilly town is "runnable."

The RUN events will vary in distance, to attract new and accomplished runners, and hopefully younger participants for whom the walks are too stop-and-go and slow. The events will provide a social component missing in Sebastopol. For years, other Sonoma County communities have had businesses, organizations, and groups leading runs on a regular basis while Sebastopol hasn't.

**DISCUSSION:**

The 4-person volunteer team [Geoffrey Skinner, Richard Nichols, Kathy Oetinger, and Council Member Gurney] who has successfully led Sebastopol Walks for 11 years is returning for another season of walks for 2020 after their successful 2019 season. A second volunteer team [Geoffrey Skinner, Joan Schwan, and Amie Windsor] will initiate the inaugural season of runs for 2020.

The groups propose 12 walks and 10 runs from February through November. As before, Walk events will be held on the last Saturday of each month, meeting at The Plaza at 9 AM, departing at 9:15 AM, and returning around noon. The new RUNS will feature events at the same date, time and place, with their own themes and routes.

The anticipated 2020 calendar of events is attached. The events vary in length and difficulty, based upon the routes chosen by the morning's leaders.

Some walks will be mainly for exercise to show participants how to connect places in town by foot and others will be informational. Some are new routes and new subject matter; others are updated versions of favorites. The runs are first-time events that will feature both known and new destinations and demonstrate connectivity.

The WALKS and RUNS will build interest in Sebastopol as a health-oriented community and help people experience the connectivity of our network of streets, sidewalks, paths, trails and alleys. Participants will learn that they can get around town without driving their car and that they can enjoy the outdoors walking and running. They will learn about Sebastopol's social, cultural, and political history as well as municipal educational components.

The group seeks City sponsorship, in part in order to secure insurance coverage. The City has served as sponsor for each prior year. The group also requests minimal help with publicity: posting on the City's Facebook page, website and community newsletter; placing flyers in the lobby at City Hall; installing the banner on the Gazebo at the Plaza; etc.

**Fiscal Analysis**

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

**Public Notice:**

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

**RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends that the City Council Receive a Presentation from the volunteer organizers and leaders of Sebastopol Walks and Sebastopol Runs, Approve Continued City Sponsorship of the Sebastopol Walks Program in its 12th Year and the new Sebastopol Runs Program, and Assist with Publicity for all 2020 events, as requested.

**Attachment:**

Schedule for 2020

*It's Our 12th Year*

# SEBASTOPOL WALKS

# SEBASTOPOL RUNS

**February 29, 2020**

## *Noteworthy Benches Walk*

Saturday, 9 a.m. to 12:30pm  
4.5 – 5 Miles, Brisk Walk Pace

Come meet in the Downtown Plaza and learn about community members whose generous efforts are reflected in a variety of benches around town. This new walk features personal tales about public spaces in Sebastopol.

Celebrating our 12th year of Sebastopol Walks, we're happy to be gathering at 9:00am in the Plaza along with Sebastopol Runs, a new running/jogging event (see listing at right)—same time, same place each month.

Bring snacks, water, good walking shoes, and rain gear for light rain (if forecast). Heavy rain cancels.

Leader: Sarah Gurney, Council Member

**February 29, 2020**

*New This Year!*

## *Five Bridges Run*

Saturday, 9 a.m. Start from the Plaza  
4.5 Miles – Easy

Come run with us! Join us for a series of social runs/jogs along some of our town's nicest routes. Enjoy good company, explore routes you may not have tried before, and be inspired by your fellow runners. All ages and paces welcome—whether you're a seasoned marathoner or just starting out. Most runs will be 3 to 6 miles, with options to tailor them.

Our first run is a 4.5-mile easy, flat run out the Joe Rodota Trail, across the Laguna and back. Heavy rain cancels. Leader: Geoffrey Skinner.



Bus to Forestville – Walk to Town, November, 2019

**MARCH 28 Saturday, 9AM**

### *iDon't Scofflaw*

Leader: Patrick Slayer, Mayor

### *The Coffee Stop Run*

Leader: Amie Windsor

**April 25 Saturday, 9AM**

### *Springtime Tree Walk*

Leader: Virginia and Chris Anderegg

### *A Kids' Walk*

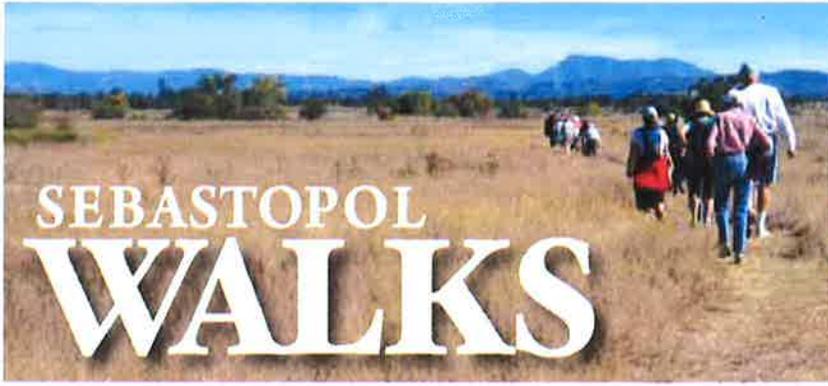
Leader: Amie Windsor

### *The All Parks Run*

Leader: Geoffrey Skinner



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**May 30 Saturday, 9AM**

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*Art Walk*

Leader: Richard Nichols

*Art Run*

Leader: Joan Schwan

**June 27 Saturday, 9AM**

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*Gardens That Make A Difference Walk*

Leader: Simon Lowings

*School's Out for Summer! Run*

Leader: Amie Windsor

**July 25 Saturday, 9AM**

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*iEAT2walk*

Leader: Nesa Hinton, Mayor

*Hidden Gems Run*

Leader: Joan Schwan

**August 29 Saturday, 9AM**

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*Local Walk TBD*

Leader: Una Glass, Vice Mayor

*Run Through Ragle*

Leader: Joan Schwan

**September 26 Saturday, 9AM**

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*Laguna Exploration Walk*

Leader: Geoffrey Skinner

*Laguna Trails Run*

Leader: Amie Windsor

**October 24 or 31 Saturday, 9AM**

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*Halloween Kids' Walk*

Leaders: Amie Windsor

*Sculptures and Neighborhoods Walk*

Leaders: Diana Rich & Max Caruso

*Tour de Sebastopol Run*

Leader: Joan Schwan

**November 28 Saturday, 9AM**

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*Bus to Forestville, Walk Back*

Leader: Marsha Sue Lustig

*Bus to Forestville, Run Back*

Leader: Geoffrey Skinner