

City of Capitola

Special Planning Commission Meeting

Minutes



Wednesday, November 19, 2025 – 5:00 PM

City Council Chambers

420 Capitola Avenue, Capitola, CA 95010

Chairperson: Paul Estey

Commissioners: Matthew Howard, Nathan Kieu, TJ Welch, Courtney Christiansen

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1. **Roll Call and Pledge of Allegiance** - *The meeting was called to order at 5:01 PM. In attendance: Commissioners Howard, Kieu, Christiansen, and Chair Estey. Arrived 5:06 PM: Commissioner Welch.*
 2. **Additions and Deletions to the Agenda** – *Associate Planner Sesanto announced that two emails had been received for Item 5A.*
 3. **Oral Communications**
 - Goran Klepic
 - Raffa Sonnefeld
 4. **Planning Commission/Staff Comments**

Director Herlihy reminded the Commission of the Town Hall on November 20 at 6:00 PM at New Brighton Middle School.
 5. **Public Hearings**

A. Capitola Mall Properties

Project Description: Amendments to Capitola Municipal Code Title 17: Zoning Code and the General Plan Land Use Element for Capitola Mall properties located between Clares Street, 41st Avenue and Capitola Road. The proposed amendments implement the 6th Cycle Housing Element of the General Plan to facilitate residential development on Capitola Mall. The Zoning Code is part of the City's Local Coastal Program (LCP) and amendments require certification by the California Coastal Commission before taking effect in the Coastal Zone.

Recommended Action: Review draft amendments to the General Plan Land Use Element and Zoning Code and General Plan and provide feedback.

Director Herlihy and Planning Consultant Ben Noble presented the staff report.

Jamas Gwilliam, Merlone Geier representative, Eric Phillips with the City Attorney's office, and Ryan Call of Urban Field Studio answered questions from the Commission.

Public Comment:

- Raffa Sonnefeld
- Daniel Alvarez
- Janine Roth
- Jamas Gwilliam
- Terre Thomas

The Commission reviewed draft amendments to the General Plan Land Use Element, Zoning Code, and General Plan and provided the following feedback on the draft mall requirements.

Perimeter Zone: 125 feet from all perimeter streets.

Hotel: Minimum 85 rooms and 3,500 sf meeting space

Commercial: 40,000 sf minimum

Open Space: 2.5% for qualifying developments.

Parking: Utilize MGP suggested parking for qualifying developments

Land Uses: Remove personal services as permitted uses.

Affordable Housing: Keep flexible. Allow standalone affordable housing.

Financial Analysis: Keep as a requirement.

Application checklist: create a checklist and make sure to include financial analysis and phasing

6. Director's Report

Director Herlihy thanked the Commission for their time.

- 7. Adjournment** – The meeting adjourned at 7:48 PM. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission is on December 4, 2025, at 6:00 PM.