



Public Comment for Thursday agenda items

From Leslie Nielsen <lpbeach21@gmail.com>

Date Wed 1/8/2025 10:04 AM

To City Council <citycouncil@ci.capitola.ca.us>; Gautho, Julia <jGautho@ci.capitola.ca.us>

Capitola City Council,

Re: Agenda Item 8C - Process to Fill a Vacant Council Seat, and Agenda Item 8D - City Council Reorganization for 2025

As I will be attending the meeting remotely this week, I submit the following public comments for your consideration.

Item 8C. While an election is clearly the least controversial and most democratic approach to filling the seat, the time and budget trade-offs are not insignificant. I believe this task can be managed in a democratic way that continues the momentum of improving collaboration amongst the City Staff, City Council, and Community using a transparent process versus the swift appointment of a named person.

The time required to get this done using a process that includes the community by having them involved in a committee approach or being present for application reviews, interviews, etc. will go a long way towards building trust. It will also ensure the newly appointed member can hit the ground running having been properly vetted in a public and transparent manner.

I am confident you can define a community inclusive process that doesn't have to be a huge time sink, and that the extra effort over a mere appointment will have a great payback for all constituent groups.

8D. It struck me as odd that item 8C was to define the approach to be used to select a council member, and that item 8D was to take action and appoint Mayor and Vice Mayor seats before the new member was identified. Please consider allowing the Vice Mayor to act in the Pro Tempore capacity covering the duties of the Mayoral position until a full council is seated, and postpone this action. Given the new council member will be a vetted and deemed qualified candidate, they should be a participant in selecting governing positions.

This logic may also warrant a discussion on postponing Items 8E and 8F.

Item 4 D.

Best regards,
Leslie Nielsen



Outlook

Capitola City Council vacancies-Agenda Item 8-D,E

From Concerned Citizens Of Capitola <concernedcitizensofcapitola@gmail.com>

Date Wed 1/8/2025 10:47 AM

To City Council <citycouncil@ci.capitola.ca.us>; Gautho, Julia <jGautho@ci.capitola.ca.us>

Cc Welch, Troy (TJ) (noworries4TJ@mac.com) <noworries4TJ@mac.com>

Council Members,

We recognize that Vice Mayor Joe Clark is the likely Council Member to assume the vacant role of Mayor, thereby creating a vacancy of Vice Mayor on the Council. Our concern is with the possibility that Council Member Alexander Pedersen is the nominee for Vice Mayor simply due to his tenure on the Council. In an effort to provide honesty and transparency, Concerned Citizens of Capitola believes that Council Member Pedersen should be removed from consideration for the Vice Mayor position given the number of ethical issues he presents at this time. In fact, there is a growing number of residents that is considering a recall of Council Member Pedersen because of these ethical concerns, which include:

- **Misuse of public funds**-Two months before Council Member Pedersen's appointment to the City Council, he was awarded a \$15,000. outcome based community grant from taxpayer money for his non-profit organization Blue Circle or Fair Wages. This grant was outcome or performance based specifically for improving the health and wellness in Capitola. Council Member Pedersen cashed \$5,000. Of those funds, but then decided the money does not support his non-profit organizations mission and purpose, so he did not cash the checks for the remaining \$10,000. The question that comes to mind is if that is the case why did he take the funds in the first place? and secondly why did Council Members Kristen Brown and Margaux Morgan award him the grant? The next question is, what did he do with the \$5,000 he kept that was supposed to benefit the health & wellness of the City of Capitola? That is unknown since he has not presented the required presentation yet. Letters from Council Member Pedersen to the city disclose that he asked the City to schedule his presentation at the latest date possible in June 2025. It should be noted there is nothing on his non-profit website indicating he has done anything for Capitola.
- **Use of false City address**-Aside from having a non-profit company, Council Member Pedersen also has a handyman business. A few months prior to running for Capitola City Council, Council Member Pedersen was a resident of Aptos. However, he used a residential address on Fanmar Way in Capitola as his business address. An address that he never resided at or ran his business from.
- **Intentionally violating Capitola Municipal Code**-Council Member Pedersen is our representative to the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC), and in his capacity on the RTC is has voted for and approved motions that are in direct violation of Capitola Municipal Code 8.72-The Greenway code. This code was established in 2016 after Capitola residents overwhelmingly passed Measure Y. He should be removed as the City of Capitola RTC representative.
- **Stockton Bridge**- In addition to intentionally violating Municipal code 8.72 on the RTC, Council Member Pedersen has also made the request to widen the historic Stockton bridge to accommodate the RTC bicycle pedestrian path, again in direct conflict of City municipal code 8.72.

- **Fair Political Practice Commission (FPPC) investigation**-Council Member Pedersen is currently being investigated for ethical violations by the FPPC.

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Due to these ethical concerns, Concerned Citizens of Capitola respectfully request that Council Member Alexander Pedersen not be considered for the position of Vice Mayor.

In addition, since he has not kept his sworn oath to uphold Capitola City law, we believe he should also be removed from the appointment to the RTC and replaced with a Council Member that will uphold Capitola law and the will of the people.

Respectfully,
TJ Welch on behalf of
Concerned Citizens of Capitola