**Updates from City Hall – February 2017**

This column is intended to provide the community with an ongoing series of updates about City of Capitola projects and activities of interest. If you have any suggestions for future topics, or feedback, please let me know at jgoldstein@ci.capitola.ca.us or by phone at 475-7300.

**Designs for New Library Developing**

 Schematic designs for the new Capitola library are currently being developed and reviewed. This work has included a review by the Santa Cruz Public Libraries staff of the projected programs and services to be provided at the library and related size requirements. Based on their recommendations, the City Council has reduced the size of the building from 12,800 square feet to 11,700 square feet. Members of the public can review the current schematics at a workshop on March 8. The City Council will be holding a public hearing on the plans on March 23.

 The new library will include space for a large children’s area, a community room, adult reading lounges, group study areas, teen areas, small meeting rooms, and electronic homework rooms. As shown on the graphics, the library will also include outdoor patios that tie into the existing playground and pedestrian access from Clares Street.

 The project architect, Noll and Tam, developed an interesting roof and ceiling plan that will provide simple roof lines and a dynamic ceiling that allows natural light throughout the building.

**New Council Member, Officials**

 In November 2016, City voters elected Kristen Petersen to join the City Council for her first four-year term and returned incumbent Council Member Ed Bottorff for another four-year term. Bottorff and Petersen join Michael Termini, Jacques Bertrand and Stephanie Harlan on the City Council.

 Petersen previously served on the City’s Historical Museum Board. She replaced outgoing Council Member Dennis Norton, who finished the maximum two consecutive terms.

 In that same election Peter Wilk was elected to the role of City Treasurer. Wilk served on the City’s Commission on the Environment.

 In December, Bottorff and Petersen were sworn in to office and the Council selected Stephanie Harlan as Mayor and Michael Termini as Vice Mayor for the next 12 months.

 Also in the November election Capitola voters passed Measure F with 81 percent voting in favor. The measure extends an existing quarter-cent sales tax for the City for an additional 10 years. The City intends to use those funds to help rebuild the Wharf and other infrastructure on the beach, as well as maintain the current high level of police services.

 **“The Nature of Capitola”**

“The Nature of Capitola” will be the first ever exhibition at the Capitola Museum devoted entirely to the beauty and history of the town’s natural resources.

 Capitola’s history is inextricably tied to the natural landscape. The town began as “Camp Capitola” because of the wonderful beach—which remains our biggest attraction. Without the beach, the town may never have been founded. While some features, such as the waves, beach, and cliffs remain timeless, Capitola’s fauna and flora have changed dramatically. Prior to the 1880s, Capitola was mostly open fields. There were hardly any trees, except for patches of native Live Oaks along Soquel Creek and Noble Gulch.

 Certain bird species depend on such open space. In the early 1900s, flocks of bluebirds fluttered through the fields, meadowlarks chirped from the fence posts next to cow pastures, and families of quail scurried through the grass. With urbanization and the planting of trees, these birds disappeared from Capitola, but others arrived to replace them. Mockingbirds, robins, and crows are among the newcomers.

 Even long-time residents are sure to learn something new through this exhibition. The opening reception for “The Nature of Capitola” will be Saturday, March 25, at noon. The Museum’s regular hours starting March 4 are Thursday through Sunday, noon to 4 p.m. The exhibition will remain up through next December.

**Zoning Code Update Continues**

The City of Capitola has been working on a comprehensive update to its Zoning Code for the past two years.  The Zoning Code regulates how land may be used; controls the type, size, and height of buildings; and establishes standards for design, parking, signage, and other matters of local importance.  The objective of the Zoning Code update is to promote high quality design, protect neighborhood character, and comply with current legal standards in a manner which is easier to understand, administer, and enforce.  The updated zoning code will also implement the goals, policies, and actions of the recently adopted General Plan Update.

 Through 2016, the City hosted 37 public hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council to review the draft Zoning Code.  Public Hearings resumed in January and are expected to continue through the spring.  Interested members of the public are encouraged to attend the hearing and share their ideas.  The draft Zoning Code, supporting information, and a schedule of public hearings can be found on the City’s website.

**Recreation Classes Offer Variety**

 The City of Capitola Recreation Department offers classes for people of all ages. Meet new people in a safe, non-threatening environment, try new activities, get in better shape, relax, explore the arts, develop work-related skills, and just plain have fun! Classes are affordable, convenient, and enjoyable, and we are proud of our highly qualified, professional instructors.

 Our entire brochure can be viewed online at cityofcapitola.org/recreation, or give us a call at 475-5935 or 475-6115 for a catalog, prices, and registration information. Check out our Capitola Recreation Facebook page for updates, instructor profiles, class photos and information about events around Capitola.

**A Clean Creek and Bay**

 During the winter it is especially important to keep pollution from washing down the storm drains. Please do your part to limit common sources of pollution:

* Dispose of pet waste in biodegradable plastic bags and throw them in the trash
* Limit use and apply minimal amounts of herbicides and pesticides during winter months
* Keep cars maintained
* If you see someone dumping anything into a storm drain, please report the incident immediately by calling the Capitola Public Works Department at 475-7300.

**Get Involved**

Capitola still has a few openings to serve on committees and commissions:

* Architectural and Site Review Committee – landscape architect
* Art & Cultural Commission – arts professional
* Commission on the Environment – one community member and one student
* Community Action Board -- alternate

Stop by City Hall to pick up an application to volunteer for one of these committees.