

Updates from City Hall

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.

Disaster Preparedness and Planning

The devastation and loss of life as a result of the recent hurricanes and flooding in other parts of the Country is tragic. While we should all try to think of ways we can help victims of those disasters, we should also try to do what we can to prepare for a disaster that impacts our local community.

From earthquakes to wildfires, floods and tsunamis, there are many kinds of events that will impact our region at some point in the future. The City is committed to providing advanced warning when possible via media, social media, and traditional emergency warning systems.

As we experienced this past winter, services and utilities that we rely upon every day often become unavailable for a temporary or prolonged amount of time. Fortunately, citizens and their families can prepare in advance, so that if a disaster strikes, everyone will know what to do to remain safe. Here are some tips that can help you to become better prepared.

- Develop a family disaster plan and review it with household members frequently
- Register your cell phone for emergency notifications (www.scr911.org)
- Learn how to open garage doors manually
- Locate fire extinguishers
- Install smoke alarms throughout your home
- Prepare two ways to escape your home & practice with all family members
- Confirm emergency exits if you live in an apartment complex
- Keep your pets in mind when planning for emergencies
- Establish a location to reunite with family members after evacuating
- Create an emergency supply kit

Capitola Free Tree Program

The City of Capitola is providing up to two free trees to Capitola residents through Energy-Saving Trees, an Arbor Day Foundation program that helps conserve energy and reduce energy bills through strategic tree planting.

Starting September 5, Capitola residents can reserve their free trees at www.arborday.org/capitola. An online tool helps customers estimate the annual energy savings that will result from planting trees in the most strategic location near their homes or businesses. Customers can reserve up to two free trees and then are expected to care for and plant them in the location provided by the online tool. The types of trees offered include the following: Chinese elm, Chinese pistache, Crape myrtle, and London plane.

The program will continue until all 120 trees are reserved. Orders will be processed on a first-come, first-serve basis. Trees will be 5-gallon container varieties and will be available for pick-up at Capitola City Hall on November 4, 2017.

Where do Your Taxes Go?

The City of Capitola receives revenues from a variety of sources, however, sales tax, property tax and transient occupancy tax (hotel tax) accounted for approximately about \$11 million of the City's \$15.5 million general fund revenues in 2016.

Interestingly, while \$11 million in tax revenue may sound like a large number, in fact it is a small portion of the overall taxes generated within the Capitola City limits. For example in 2016,

- Sales Tax – There was approximately \$45 million sales tax generated within Capitola. Of that amount, the City received \$7.9 million or around 18% of the total.
- Property Tax - There was approximately \$22 million in property taxes generated within the City, of which the City received \$1.7 million, or about 7.47%.
- Income Tax – While the City does not have access to income tax records, one way to estimate the total income tax generated within the City limits is to use the median per capita income in the City (\$38,414) times the population (10,162) and assume an effective income tax rate of 15%. Under those assumptions, the “average” resident paid roughly \$5,700 in income taxes, while all City residents combined paid approximately \$58 million in income taxes. Of that amount, the City receives no revenue.
- Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT or Hotel Tax) – This is a 10% tax charged on hotel and short term rentals. Of the \$1.5 million in TOT generated in 2016, the City receives 100% of the total, which makes TOT the only tax generated in the City that the City retains in full.

You may notice that corporate taxes are not included above, primarily because there is no way for the City to accurately estimate how much Capitola contributes to the taxes paid by the various corporations that operate within the City.

So, while the calculations above are only approximations, and no corporate taxes are included, of the roughly \$126 million in known taxes generated within Capitola, the City receives about 8.7% of the total.

Capitola Local Government Academy – Now Accepting Applications

Every few years the City puts on a Local Government Academy. The Academy consists of a series of evening workshops intended to offer residents an overview of how local government works. The program is designed to promote civic participation, help residents better understand how our City works, and frame the City's role in the larger community.

This year, the Local Government Academy will consist of five sessions beginning December 6, 2017 and will run through February 28, 2018. Each meeting will be approximately 2 hours in length, beginning at 6:00 p.m. Most of the meetings will be held on Wednesdays, at City Hall at 420 Capitola Avenue. There is no cost to participate.

The topics that will be covered include: Capitola history; responsibilities and functions of City departments; overview of the role of local other local public agencies; and ideas on how participants can contribute locally.

Applications are available on-line at www.cityofcapitola.org or email l Laurent@ci.capitola.ca.us
The deadline to apply is November 20, 2017.

Library Update

The design of the new Capitola Branch Library is entering its final phases. The architects have completed the detailed design work, which was presented to the City Council on September 28, 2017. Building design refinements have been made and the project remains on budget. The current schedule calls for the existing library to close late in Spring of 2018, and the new library opening in Fall of 2019. The new library will include an open reading area, a children's area, a teen study area, several meeting and computer rooms, and a community room.