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A Message From City Hall

With the global COVID-19 pandemic, we are experiencing challenges our community has not faced in generations, if ever. Whether it is simply visiting with friends, going to work, or doing our weekly shopping, nearly every aspect of our lives has been affected.

As this is a global health crisis, the City is not addressing this challenge alone. In our region, the Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency is charged with leading our response to the pandemic. The County Health Officer is providing the City with direction and guidance about how best we can respond. We are in frequent communication with representatives from the County and other cities in the region to ensure our responses are coordinated and thoughtful.

That said, given the unprecedented nature of the challenge, it is inevitable there will be new scientific evidence and rules that require a rapid response. We will continue to review

the best available science and health directives, coordinate with our regional partners, develop rules and directives that fit our community, and communicate them to you in a timely manner.

At present, it is smart to wear cloth facial coverings when completing essential business out of the home, and it is always important to wash your hands frequently to prevent the catching and spreading of germs. Please remember that this is an evolving situation that requires all of us to exercise flexibility and understanding.

As a community, we are resilient and strong. We have pulled together to come through challenges in the past, and we are confident that we will do so now. We will continue to do our best to serve the community as we work through this together. In the meantime, please stay safe and healthy.

- Your Mayor, Councilmembers, and City Staff

City Services Available with City Hall Closed

The City of Capitola is committed to responding quickly and efficiently in the face of these extraordinary challenges. While we have closed City Hall to in-person visits, the City continues to strive to provide the high level of service our community expects. The City's website includes valuable information about how you can continue to obtain City services as we adjust our business practices. In addition, you can reach the City by phone at 831-475-7300.

The following City Facilities are Open to the Public:

Capitola Police Department

The following City Facilities are Closed to the Public:

City Hall (offices, Council Chambers, Community Room, & bathrooms)

Jade Street Park Community Center

Upper and Lower Village and Beach Parking Lots

All park playgrounds

The status of Capitola Beach, Wharf, & all parks is subject to change; call or check our website for their current status

How to Get Help:

This experience is unprecedented. If you are feeling overwhelmed, we strongly urge you to reach out to talk to someone.

The County has formed a COVID-19 specific call-center; available Monday through Friday, 8am to 6pm. Call (831) 454-4242. For COVID-19 information any time, dial 211 or text 211211.

How to Help:

The Community Foundation Santa Cruz County has set up a local COVID-19 Response Fund. You can also support local businesses by making purchases online and ordering to-go food.

If you have new personal protective equipment you would like to donate to our public safety employees, please call the City at 831-475-7300. If you would like to volunteer, call 831-427-5070.

Remote Access to Council Meetings

In accordance with the Shelter in Place Order from the Santa Cruz County Health Officer, and Executive Orders by the State Governor, City Council meetings are currently not physically open to the public. To maximize public safety while still maintaining transparency and public access, members of the public can watch meetings live online by clicking on “Meeting Agendas/Videos” on the City website homepage, or live on Spectrum Cable Television channel 8. Past meetings remain available to watch on CityofCapitola.org at any time. Meeting agendas for public viewing are now posted in the Capitola Village Kiosk and outside City Hall’s front lobby.

As always, the public can send emails to citycouncil@ci.capitola.ca.us to comment on agenda items prior to Council meetings taking place. The public can also mail or drop off written comments to the “after hours drop off” box at City Hall.

To comment during a Council meeting, please email publiccomment@ci.capitola.ca.us including the agenda item in the subject line. Emails received during the public comment period for any agenda item will be read for up to three minutes and shown on a screen.

Recreation Goes Virtual!

In an effort to continue our service to the community in these unprecedented times, Capitola Recreation is excited to announce our Virtual Recreation Center <https://www.cityofcapitola.org/recreation/page/virtual-recreation-center>.

In partnership with our Class Instructors, the Recreation Division is working to provide some of the classes the com-

munity knows and loves in an online format. Residents can sign up for sample classes as well as a full class series. City staff is also supporting participants who are less familiar with online tools to ensure this resource is wide reaching.

This is only a temporary substitute for the Community Center. We hope to provide to the community virtually until we can see you in-person again.

Eviction Moratorium Passed by Council

Over the past few weeks, many cities, including Capitola, adopted ordinances prohibiting residential and/ or commercial evictions while the Governor’s stay at home Order is in place. On March 26, Capitola adopted its Ordinance which prohibited residential and commercial evictions for financial reasons related to COVID-19.

On April 6, the Judicial Council, the rulemaking arm of the California court system, issued eleven temporary emergency rules. Emergency Rule 1 prohibits any California court from issuing a summons on any unlawful detainer (eviction) lawsuit unless the Court finds that the eviction is necessary to further public health and safety.

The rule is in effect until 90 days after the Governor’s stay at home order is lifted. As written, this rule appears to apply to commercial and residential evictions for reasons other than COVID-19. Emergency Rule 2 stays all foreclosures, also unless the Court finds they are required to further public health and safety, for the same time period. The effect of these rules is that residential and commercial evictions and foreclosures, unless they are necessary to further public health and safety, are prohibited from now until 90 days after the Governor lifts the stay at home Order.

Short-Term-Rental Rules Under Health Order

On April 2, the County of Santa Cruz issued guidance about how short-term rental property owners should comply with the Health Agency’s Shelter in Place Order. The guidance applies to all vacation rentals in the County, including Capitola, and applies to hotels, bed and breakfast establishments, Airbnb, VRBO, and other platforms. Short-term rentals are not considered essential businesses and therefore must close unless they are being used for the following purposes:

- Providing housing for traveling emergency, medical, and public safety personnel
- Providing housing for other essential workers
- Providing housing for families attending to the critical medical needs of local relatives

Vacation rentals should not be used by their owners to shelter in place if they have to leave another county to come here. All vacation bookings not currently in effect should be cancelled through May 3, 2020. Current vacation rental occupants are encouraged to return home unless they have no other place to go or are unable to safely travel.

Community Development Updates to Services

The Community Development Department, which includes both the Planning and Building divisions, oversee all development and land use projects in the City.

The Shelter in Place Order only allows construction on “essential projects”, which are specifically defined in the order. All other construction projects have been halted.

The department will continue to take in and process applications for any project, however Building permits will only be issued for projects that are considered essential and allowed to continue under the Order. The following is a list of essential construction projects:

-Projects immediately necessary to the maintenance, operation, or repair of Essential Infrastructure;

-Projects associated with Healthcare Operations, including creating or expanding Healthcare Operations;

-Affordable housing that is or will be income-restricted, including multi-unit or mixed-use developments;

-Public works projects if specifically designated as an Essential Governmental Function by the lead governmental agency;

-Shelters and temporary housing, but not including hotels or motels;

-Projects immediately necessary to provide critical non-

commercial services to individuals experiencing homelessness, elderly persons, persons who are economically disadvantaged, and persons with special needs;

-Construction necessary to ensure that existing construction sites that must be shut down under this Order are left in a safe and secure manner, but only to the extent necessary to do so; and

-Construction or repair necessary to ensure that residences and buildings containing Essential Businesses are safe, sanitary, or habitable to the extent such construction or repair cannot reasonably be delayed;

-Infrastructure projects including, water, sewer, gas, electric, road and highway, public transportation infrastructure, and telecommunications systems infrastructure.

Building and planning staff are available by phone or email to assist you. Since staff is working remotely, all applications for projects must be submitted electronically. The City is providing building inspections daily for essential projects, as defined above. The City will not provide building inspections for non-essential projects until the termination of the Order.

Historical Museum Resources Can be Found Online

The Capitola Historical Museum is temporarily closed, but has increased its online presence. The Museum often posts on Facebook, and three new interviews were added to the Museum’s YouTube channel early this year. Patrick McCormick tells about working for the City Planning Department in the 1970s, including some interesting stories on how Capitola came to have the mall. Eddie Ray Garcia, who was with Public Works for 30 years, shares a few of his many experiences, including trying to keep people out of the Rispin Mansion. Sylvia Prescott Forsyth tells of her family’s fascinating history in the area since the early 1900s. To view these and many others, search “Capitola Historical Museum” on YouTube. The popular book, *A Companion to Capitola*, is available on the Museum’s website page as a pdf; it is a handy alphabetical guide to people, places, events, and interesting facts from Capitola history.

Remember, though the Museum is closed, anyone with a local history question is welcome to send an email (capitolamuseum@gmail.com) or leave a phone message at 831-464-0322.

Public Works Continues to Serve Capitola

Public Works Crews are focusing on keeping public facilities that remain open clean and disinfected. This include daily cleaning of the public restrooms at Esplanade Park and Jade Street Park, the pay stations, City Hall offices, and the Police Department. Crews also continue to remove trash from beach, Esplanade, and all parks, and regular street and park maintenance.

Capital improvement projects that are permitted to continue include final stages of work on the new sidewalks along Park Avenue and continued work on the Capitola branch library. Emergency repairs to the wharf due to January damage will be completed by the beginning of May. Two new

projects are currently bidding. These include street, sidewalk, and bicycle improvements to Brommer Street and storm damage repairs to Park Avenue. Both of these projects should be completed this summer.

The Jetty and Flume restoration project will be constructed in the fall and early winter. The environmental review document was recently released for public comment and is scheduled for completion in May. Environmental clearance is essential in securing a \$2 million dollar State grant, received thanks to the supportive efforts of Assemblyman Mark Stone. The wharf project is slated for construction in 2021.

City of Capitola

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Capitola PD Responds to COVID-19

The Police Department lobby remains open to the public for administrative services and walk-in requests for police services. Social distance requirements limit access to the lobby to one person at a time.

New signs have been posted in the Village and Esplanade explaining the current beach, parking, and social distancing rules. Violators of the Order will receive a misdemeanor citation.

A Capitola COVID Operations Team was formed on April 9. The team utilizes motorcycle, bicycle, and foot patrol to proactively enforce health order requirements in target-

ed areas throughout the City. Proactive patrols will be conducted on an hourly basis to provide visibility, outreach, and enforcement.

The Police Department is responding to all calls for service as usual. Officers utilize personal protective equipment when interacting with members of the public. Should staffing shortages occur as a result of COVID-19, plans are in place to adjust the Capitola Police patrol deployment schedule to maintain essential police emergency services in the City.

Council Designates Emergency Grant Funds

On Thursday, April 9, City Council voted to designate \$10,000 of emergency funding to help the City better respond to the COVID-19 public health crisis. These funds were set aside by Council during last year's budget process to respond to potential future emergencies. Council agreed the COVID-19 pandemic, and its local effect on the Capitola community, was an appropriate circumstance to use that funding.

After a discussion of possible uses, City Council directed staff to spread the 10,000

dollars across four initiatives. Specifically, Council allocated money to pay for personal protective equipment for Police, Public Works, and other City employees. Funds were also used to pay for a much needed update to the City website to better communicate with the public. Next, funds were used to offset registration fees for new virtual online recreation classes. Lastly, Council allocated funds for sanitation stations that will be installed in a few key locations throughout the City.