

City of Capitola Special Planning Commission Meeting Minutes



Thursday, October 19, 2023 – 6:00 PM

City Council Chambers
420 Capitola Avenue, Capitola, CA 95010

Chairperson: Susan Westman

Commissioners: Courtney Christiansen, Paul Estey, Gerry Jensen, Peter Wilk

1. Roll Call and Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at 6:03PM. In attendance, Commissioners Estey, Jensen, Wilk, Vice Chair Christiansen, Chair Westman.

2. Oral Communications

A. Additions and Deletions to the Agenda

None.

B. Public Comments

Goran Klepic, a member of the public, commented about illegal dumping at the McDonalds and CVS parking lot on 41st Ave.

C. Commission Comments

None.

D. Staff Comments

Director Herlihy commented that we do not have a CCTV operator tonight and thus, there is a fixed camera view that only captures 3 of the 5 commissioners.

Leila Moshref-Danesh, representing the City Attorney's Office, gave an update on AB1033, a recent law that was signed into law regarding ADUs.

3. Public Hearings

A. Citywide Housing Element Update

Permit Number: 23-0019

APN: Citywide

Housing Element Update 6th Cycle

Environmental Determination: Addendum to General Plan EIR

Applicant: City of Capitola

Representative: Bret Stinson, RRM Design, and Veronica Tam, VTA, Inc.

Director Herlihy gave a recap and update to the City of Capitola Housing Element. Tonight, staff is seeking a recommendation from the Planning Commission to give to the City Council for adoption. Final submittal to the HCD will occur following the City Council adoption.

Veronica Tam, VTA, Inc., provided an update regarding the recent response from the HCD, including specifics regarding the "Missing Middle" group in the affordable housing conversation,

Special Planning Commission Meeting Minutes – October 19, 2023

sites capacity issues, complications to development on publicly owned sites, and environmental constraints within site selection.

Commissioner Wilk asked how sites capacity limitations to residential use percentages would affect our RHNA numbers. Ms. Tam responded that there are buffers in place to ensure that RHNA numbers are still met even if a certain portion of sites don't reach their full residential use percentages.

Director Herlihy then provided a timeline of commitments over the next several years that will support housing development as mandated by the Housing Element, gave the staff recommendation, and concluded her presentation.

Chair Westman opened the public hearing.

Les Forster, a Capitola resident, asked a question regarding the interpretation of ADUs. He wondered if ADUs were classified as only on foundations, or if tiny homes on wheels would qualify. Director Herlihy offered clarification regarding the definitions within the City's ADU ordinance.

Chair Westman closed the public hearing and returned the item back to the Commission for questions to staff.

Commissioner Wilk asked a question regarding the procedural details of the City's Housing Element certification by the HCD.

Vice Chair Christiansen asked about the State-owned sites that were identified within the Housing Element inventory.

Commissioner Estey provided his concerns about the commitment timelines for 2024. He also responded to YIMBYs request to look at other cities' strategies for tackling their Housing Element goals. He recommended looking at and including similar strategies.

Commissioner Estey then asked regarding the EIR addendum and his concerns regarding the impact that developing over 1300 housing units will have on City Services. Chair Westman shared her opinion on why this was left out of the EIR.

Leila Moshref-Danesh commented that since the City is not changing any land-use or zoning regulations as part of the Housing Element, the impact will be limited. Commissioner Estey wondered whether or not the local water and sewer service systems are capable of handling such an increase in population as is prescribed by the RHNA.

Commissioner Wilk and Chair Westman offered clarification to Commissioner Estey.

Collette Morse, of Morse Planning Coalition, added to Leila's answer and offered a rationale for the inclusion of an EIR addendum.

Commissioner Jensen asked about how the consolidated sites will be implemented to achieve the target numbers. Veronica Tam provided an answer.

Commissioner Jensen commented on how he sees that CEQA categorical exemptions to development projects can add up over time, and when added together, these developments may have a significant environmental impact.

There was then a discussion about the RHNA calculations for this and future Housing Element cycles.

Chair Westman gave her overall interpretation of population growth as it relates to a host of socioeconomic issues.

Vice Chair Westman asked about the prohibitive costs of new water connections, and Director Herlihy provided a response including anecdotal evidence from the City of Monterey.

Special Planning Commission Meeting Minutes – October 19, 2023

Motion to direct staff to update the resolution, modify the draft to incorporate HCD and staff recommendations, and provide a positive recommendation to the City Council to adopt the 6th cycle housing element: Vice Chair Christiansen

Seconded: Commissioner Jensen

Voting Yea: Commissioner Estey, Commissioner Jensen, Commissioner Wilk, Vice Chair Christiansen, Chair Westman

4. Director's Report


Director Herlihy provided an update regarding the EIR from the County regarding rail trail segments 10 and 11 and the Commission asked several questions about what to expect from this development.

5. Commission Communications

Chair Westman recommended that the Commissioners all watch the upcoming City Council meeting to stay informed on the proposed rail trail project.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 PM to the next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting on Thursday, November 2nd at 6:00 PM.

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