



City of Sebastopol Planning Commission Staff Report

Meeting Date: September 8, 2026
Agenda Item: 6A(i)
To: Planning Commission
From: Eli Arreola, Associate Planner
Subject: Planning Commission Meeting Procedure Revision Discussion and Onboarding New Commissioners
Recommendation: Review report and provide direction for staff

Background:

The Rules of Order and Procedure for the Conduct of Planning Commission Meetings (Attachment 1) underwent a comprehensive update in 2023 to address a number of issues, including terminology, flexibility of the agenda order, size/structure of the Commission (reduced to 5 from 7 + 1 alternate); titles, hybrid meetings, and remote attendance. The revisions were adopted by the Planning Commission on June 13, 2023.

Earlier this year, new issues were identified and updated versions of the Time and Place of Meetings (Attachment 2), Process/Conducting of City Planning Commission Meetings (Attachment 3), and Quorum and Attendance (Attachment 4) Policies were adopted by the Planning Commission to address these issues.

Additionally, at the previous Planning Commission Meeting, August 25, 2026, the Commission identified the need for onboarding procedures for new commissioners to establish a standard set of onboarding materials for all new commissioners.

Open Discussion:

This portion of the agenda item is envisioned as an open discussion for the Commission to discuss and identify if there are sections of the 2023 Rules of Order and Procedure for the Conduct of Planning Commission Meetings outside of the Time and Place of Meetings (Attachment 2), Process/Conducting of City Planning Commission Meetings (Attachment 3), and Quorum and Attendance (Attachment 4) Policies that the Commission would like to update, revise, or request clarification.

Staff also invites the Commission to engage in a discussion regarding the creation of a procedure for the onboarding of new commissioners. Staff has developed the following list of materials that should be delivered to new commissioners, and requests Commission input on the existing list and any additional materials that would be helpful to new commissioners:

- Copy of Rules of Order and Procedure for the Conduct of Planning Commission Meetings
- Link to the City Zoning Ordinance
- Links to/Copies of various Citywide Planning documents, including but not limited to:

- Sebastopol General Plan
- Housing Element
- Active Transportation Plan
- Objective Design Standards
- Reimagining the Core Concept Plan and Report
- Link to Brown Act Language
- Link to the Institute for Local Government's The Planning Commissioner Handbook

Staff requests that the Commission provide direction to staff regarding where the onboarding procedure should be included, or if it should be a standalone procedure.

Public Comment:

No public comments have been received as of the writing of this staff report.

Recommendation:

Staff requests that the Planning Commission provide direction on the following two items:

1. If there are sections of the Rules of Order and Procedure for the Conduct of Planning Commission Meetings that the Commission would like to update, revise, or request clarification on, please advise staff of the section and specific request.
2. Provide staff with direction on how and where to incorporate new Commissioner onboarding procedures.

Attachments:

1. 2023 Rules of Order and Procedure for the Conduct of Planning Commission Meetings
2. Time and Place of Meetings Policy
3. Process/Conducting of City Planning Commission Meetings Policy
4. Quorum and Attendance Policy

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
ADOPTING RULES OF ORDER AND PROCEDURE FOR THE CONDUCT OF PLANNING
COMMISSION MEETINGS

THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SEBASTOPOL DOES RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The rules of conduct of the Planning Commission of the City of Sebastopol meetings shall read as follows:

RULE 1. TIME AND PLACE FOR HOLDING REGULAR MEETINGS.

Regular meetings of the Planning Commission shall be held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month, beginning at 6:00 p.m. The meeting time may be revised by the Planning Director to accommodate necessary business. However, if any such Tuesday falls on any day designated by law or by the City Council as a day for public holiday, such regular meeting shall be cancelled.

The Planning Director, with advance consultation with the Chair, shall prepare an agenda for each meeting with regarding to the scheduling of various items, both as to the meeting date at which items are to be scheduled and the specific scheduling within the meeting agenda. Agendas shall be in conformance with these Rules of Order, and shall be issued to Commissioners and shall be made available to the public no later than 72 hours preceding such meetings.

Meetings shall be held in a location designated by the Planning Director. Such meeting locations shall be within the City Limits of the City of Sebastopol, and may include remote meeting participation as may be available. Regular meetings may be canceled upon the determination by the Planning Director that a quorum will not be present, or that there is not sufficient business to conduct a meeting. All meetings of the Planning Commission shall be open to the public, unless a majority of the Commission present requests otherwise and the City Attorney expressly approves the legality of a non-public meeting. Meetings shall adjourn by or before 10:30 p.m., but may extend past that time by majority vote of Commissioners present.

RULE 2. QUORUM AND ATTENDANCE.

Three members of the Planning Commission shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, but a smaller number may adjourn from time to time until a quorum is present and those present may obtain the attendance of the absentees. Action granting approval of any substantive matter must be taken by a simple majority of members present voting in favor, at such times as a quorum is present. A failure to so approve results in automatic denial of the pending matter.

The absence, temporary or permanent, of any Commissioner previously recorded as present, shall be noted in the minutes for purposes of determining the presence of a quorum at all times. The unexcused absence of any Commissioner for three or more consecutive meetings shall be considered as constituting a vacancy and shall be reported to the City Council pursuant to Municipal Code Chapter 2.24.

RULE 3. AGENDA AND ORDER OF BUSINESS.

(a) The Agenda shall be posted at the City Hall bulletin board at least 72 hours before a regular Planning Commission meeting. In connection with any special meeting of the Planning Commission, the notice calling the meeting and Agenda shall be posted 24 hours prior to the special meeting.

(b) No action shall be taken on any item not appearing on the posted Agenda unless the item is added to the Agenda as follows:

(1) Upon a determination by a majority vote of the Planning Commissioners present that an emergency situation exists, as defined in Government Code Section 54956.5.

(2) Upon a determination by a two-thirds vote of the Planning Commission, or, if less than two-thirds of the members are present, a unanimous vote of those members present, that the need to take action arose subsequently to the Agenda being posted.

(3) The item was posted for a prior meeting of the Planning Commission, and at the prior meeting the item was continued to the meeting at which action is being taken.

(c) Dates for public hearings shall be set by the Planning Director.

(d) Where a matter requires a formal public hearing prior to final action by the Planning Commission, no person shall be heard thereon except at the time of the public hearing.

(e) The business of the Planning Commission shall be taken on for consideration and disposition generally in the following order. In setting the agenda, the Planning Director, in consultation with the Chair, may alter this order for purposes of meeting management. The Commission may alter this order of business by direction of the Chair, or by vote of a majority of those present.

(1) Call to order

(2) Roll call.

(3) Approval of Minutes.

(4) Public input from members of the public wishing to address the Planning Commission on items of interest to the public that are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Planning Commission but are not on the agenda of the subject meeting. Subject to the direction of the , each speaker may address the Planning Commission for up to three minutes. If there are more than 10 speakers, the may further limit the time of individual speakers or the total time on a particular issue. No action may be taken on the item of interest to the member of the public unless the item appeared on the Agenda in accordance with applicable provisions of Rule 3.

(i) Consent Calendar, generally consisting of those items determined in advance by the Planning Director and Chair to be of a non-controversial nature. Any item requested by any Commissioner or any member of the public in attendance shall be removed from the consent list and placed on the regular agenda. The consent list may be adopted by unanimous voice vote, under a single motion.

(6) Items given partial consideration at a previous meeting, and continued, tabled, or otherwise held over for additional review.

(7) Agendized items of previous meetings, not considered thereat.

(8) New items involving public applications and Commission action.

(9) Items involving procedural or administrative matters, staff reports not connected with a specific public application to be heard during that meeting, and Commission discussion items.

(10) Informational items (Planning Department reports, and Planning Commissioner Announcements, Future Commission Agenda items, written communications, etc.)

(11) Adjournment

(i) Special meetings and study sessions, absent emergency situations, will normally be scheduled by the Commission upon seven days advance notice. The substantive issues considered at any such meeting shall be limited to those announced in the call for such meeting.

(j) During any regular meeting, members of the public may be heard on any matter listed on the agenda at such time as the Chair determines appropriate, except in the case where the public has already been heard on the item and the public hearing has been closed.

RULE 4. ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

(a) At its first regular meeting of each year after the City Council appoints/reappoints any Planning Commissioners due to term expiration, or at the next regular meeting where a quorum is present, the Commission shall elect by affirmative vote Chair and Vice Chair, who shall take office beginning at the following Planning Commission meeting.

(b) The Chair and Vice Chair shall serve until their successors are elected, or until removed by action of three or more Commissioners.

(c) In the event of a vacancy in the position of Chair or Vice Chair, the vacancy shall be announced and confirmed at a regular meeting of the Commission, and the Commission shall generally fill such vacancy by election at the next following regular meeting at which a quorum is present, unless agreed otherwise by the Commission to postpone such election.

RULE 5. APPEALS.

If the appellant in any appeal or request for review to the Planning Commission is a Commissioner, that person may not serve as Chair during the hearing and consideration of the appeal.

RULE 6. PREPARATION OF MINUTES.

The Planning Director shall have responsibility for preparation of the Minutes, and any directions for changes in the Minutes shall be made only by a vote of the majority of those present.

RULE 7. Chair.

The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Planning Commission. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair shall preside. In the absence of both the Chair and Vice Chair, the Planning Director shall call the Planning Commission to order whereupon a temporary Chair shall be elected by the Commissioners present to serve until the arrival of the Chair or Vice Chair or until adjournment.

RULE 8. POWERS AND DUTIES OF CHAIR.

(a) Participation. The Chair or Vice Chair or such other member presiding may move, second, and debate from the chair, subject only to such limitations of debate as are imposed upon Commissioners by these rules and shall not be deprived of any of the rights or privileges of a Commissioner by reason of his or her acting as the Chair.

(b) Duties. The Chair shall preserve order at all meetings of the Planning Commission. Such officer shall state each question coming before the Planning Commission, announce the decisions of the Planning Commission on all subjects, and decide all questions of order; subject, however, to an appeal by the Planning Commission, and a majority vote of the Planning Commission on any question of order shall govern and determine conclusively such question of order. In addition, the Chair may appoint such subcommittees as are deemed desirable, consisting of not more than two Commissioners, to review defined subject areas and to make reports and/or recommendations to the full Commission.

(c) Signing of Documents. The Planning Director shall sign all resolutions and other documents necessitating signature.

RULE 9. RULES OF DEBATE.

(a) Getting the Floor. Every Commissioner desiring to speak shall first address the Chair, gain recognition by the Chair, and shall confine himself or herself to the question under debate.

(b) Questions to Staff. Every Commissioner desiring to question the City Staff shall, after recognition by the Chair, address his or her questions to the Planning Director, or any staff person designated to be present for such purposes, who shall be entitled to answer the inquiry himself or herself or to designate a member of his or her staff for that purpose.

(c) Interruptions. A Commissioner, once recognized, shall not be interrupted when speaking unless called to order by the Chair, or unless a point of order or a personal privilege is raised by another Commissioner, or unless the speaker chooses to yield to a question by another Commissioner. If a Commissioner, while speaking, is called to order, he or she shall cease speaking until the question of order is determined and, if determined to be in order, may proceed. Members of the City staff, after recognition by the Chair, shall hold the floor until completion of their remarks or until recognition is withdrawn by the Chair.

(d) Points of Order. The Chair shall determine all points of order subject to the right of any Commissioner to appeal to the Planning Commission. If an appeal is taken, the question shall be: "Shall the decision of the Chair be sustained?" A majority vote of the Commissioners then present shall conclusively determine such question of order.

€ Point of Personal Privilege. The right of a Commissioner to address the Planning Commission on a question of personal privilege shall be limited to cases in which the Planning Commissioner's integrity, character, or motives are questioned or where the welfare of the Planning Commission is concerned. A Commissioner raising a point of personal privilege may interrupt another Commissioner.

(f) Privilege of Closing Debate. The Chair shall have the privilege of closing debate, after all other Commissioners have been given an opportunity to speak.

(g) Calling for the Question. Any member may call for the question, however a majority of the Commission may vote to continue debate.

(h) Limitation of Debate. Generally, no Commissioner shall be allowed to speak more than once upon any particular subject until every other Commissioner desiring to do so shall have spoken. Each Commissioner speaking on any one item on the Agenda shall generally be limited to 10 minutes per item to state their opinions and views.

RULE 10. REMARKS OF COMMISSIONERS AND SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE.

A Commissioner may request through the Chair under the privilege of having an abstract of his or her statement on any subject under consideration by the Planning Commission entered in the Minutes. If the Planning Commission consents thereto, such statement shall be entered in the Minutes.

RULE 11. PROTEST AGAINST PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION.

Any Commissioner shall have the right to have the reasons for his or her dissent from, or his or her protest against, any action of the Planning Commission entered in the Minutes. Such dissent or protest to be entered in the Minutes shall be made in the following manner: "I would like the Minutes to show that I am opposed to this action for the following reasons."

RULE 12. RULES OF ORDER.

Except as otherwise provided herein, by City Ordinance, by other rules adopted by the Planning Commission, or by applicable provisions of state law, the procedures of the Planning Commission shall be governed by the latest revised edition of Roberts Rules of Order. The Planning Commission rules, or any one thereof, may be suspended by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Commissioners present.

RULE 13. FAILURE TO OBSERVE RULES OF ORDER.

Rules adopted to expedite the transaction of the business of the Planning Commission in an orderly fashion are deemed to be procedural only, and the failure to strictly observe such rules shall not affect the jurisdiction of the Planning Commission or invalidate any action taken at a meeting that is otherwise held in conformity with law.

RULE 14. ADDRESSING THE PLANNING COMMISSION.

(a) Submittal of Materials to the Planning Commission. Persons wishing to submit written materials to the Commission at the meeting shall provide such materials to the Planning Director at the beginning of the consideration of the agenda item.

(b) Manner of Addressing the Planning Commission. Each person desiring to address the Planning Commission shall step up to the microphone, state their name and address for the record, state the subject they wish to discuss, state whom they is representing if they represents an organization or other person, and, unless further time is granted by majority vote of the Planning Commission, shall generally limit their remarks to up to three minutes per item.

(c) A project applicant shall generally be allowed up to ten minutes initially, and may request up to three minutes in rebuttal to conclude the public hearing. The applicant's rebuttal must be authorized by the Chair, and shall be in response to and within the scope of the testimony presented at the hearing by

members of the public, if any. For purposes of this rule, the project applicant shall include the applicant's architect, attorney, facilitator, and all other representatives of the applicant who have been or will be performing work on the proposed project.

(d) An appellant, other than the project applicant, shall also generally be allowed up to ten minutes initially and up to three minutes in rebuttal. The appellant's rebuttal must be authorized by the Chair, and shall be in response to and within the scope of the testimony presented at the hearing by the project applicant and proponents of the project. For Appeals, the order of presentation shall be as follows: the appellant shall testify initially followed by the project applicant. The project applicant's rebuttal shall precede the appellant's rebuttal. All remarks shall be addressed to the Planning Commission as a whole and not to any member thereof. No questions shall be asked of a Commissioner or a member of the City staff without the permission of the Chair.

(e) After Motion. After a motion has been made or a public hearing has been closed, no member of the public shall address the Planning Commission from the audience on the matter under consideration without first securing permission to do so by the Chair.

(f) Special Time Limitations. Notwithstanding any other provision of these Rules, if seven or more persons wish to speak on an item, or if 20 or more persons have requested to speak on any combination of items, each speaker's remarks may be limited to two minutes at the discretion of the Chair.

RULE 15. RULES OF DECORUM.

(a) Commissioners. When the Planning Commission is in session, Commissioners must preserve order and decorum, and a Commissioner shall neither by conversation nor otherwise delay or interrupt the proceedings or the peace of the Planning Commission nor disturb any Commissioner while speaking or refuse to obey the orders of the Chair. Commissioners shall not leave their seats for more than five minutes during a meeting without first obtaining the permission of the Chair.

(b) Employees. Members of the City staff and employees shall observe the same rules of order and decorum as are applicable to the Planning Commission.

(c) Persons Addressing the Planning Commission (whether in person or participating remotely)

(1) No person other than a Commissioner and the person having the floor shall be permitted to enter into discussions, either directly or through a Commissioner, without permission of the Chair.

(2) No questions shall be asked a Commissioner except through the Chair.

(3) All remarks shall be addressed to the Planning Commission as a body and not to any one member thereof.

(4) Any person making impertinent, slanderous, or profane remarks, or who becomes boisterous while addressing the Planning Commission, shall be called to order by the Chair and, if such conduct continues, may at the discretion of the Chair, be barred from a further audience before the Planning Commission during that meeting.

(d) Members of the Audience.

(1) Any person in the audience (or at the Planning Commission dais) who engages in disorderly conduct such as excessive hand clapping, stamping of feet¹ whistling, using profane language, yelling, and similar demonstrations, or who disturbs the peace and good order of the meeting, or who refuses to comply with the lawful orders of the Chair shall be guilty of an infraction and upon instructions from the Chair, with the consent of the majority, through the Planning Director, it shall be the duty of the Sergeant at Arms to remove any such person from the Meeting room and to place him or her under arrest.

(2) No person shall be permitted to interrupt the individual Commissioners or the Planning Director when the Planning Commission is in session.

(e) Persons Authorized to be Within Seating Area. No person except Commissioners and City staff and recognized representatives of the news media shall be permitted within the seating area of the Commission without the consent of the Chair.

(f) Enforcement of Decorum. The Planning Director or other designee shall assist the Chair in maintaining decorum during a meeting. The Planning Director may contact the Chief of Police or such member or members of the Police Department as he or she may designate, to assist with the purpose of maintaining order and decorum at Planning Commission meetings. Any Commissioner may move to require the Chair to enforce the rules and the affirmative vote of a majority of the Planning Commission shall require him or her to do so.

RULE 16. VOTING PROCEDURE.

Any vote of the Planning Commission, including a roll call vote, may be registered by the members by answering "Aye" or "Yes" for an affirmative vote or "Nay" or "No" for a negative vote upon his or her name being called by the Planning Director. Unless a member of the Planning Commission states that he or she is not voting, silence shall be recorded as an abstention, and roll call votes shall be recorded in the minutes.

RULE 17. DISQUALIFICATION FOR CONFLICT OF INTEREST.

(a) When any Commissioner identifies a conflict of interest with any matter coming before the Planning Commission, they shall notify the Planning Director as soon as possible once they are aware of said conflict.

(b) Any such Commissioner who is disqualified from voting on a particular matter by reason of a conflict of interest shall publicly state or have the Chair state the nature of such disqualification in an open meeting. Where no thoroughly disqualifying conflict of interest appears, the matter of disqualification may, at the request of the Commissioner affected, be decided by the other Commissioners. A Commissioner who is disqualified by reason of a conflict of interest in any matter shall not remain in his or her seat during the debate and vote on such matter, but shall request and be given the permission of the Chair to step down from the dais and leave the meeting room. If the Commissioner is participating in the meeting remotely, the video and audio for that Commissioner shall be turned off and muted during the course of said item. A Commissioner stating such disqualification shall not be counted as part of a quorum and shall be considered absent for the purpose of determining the outcome of any vote on such matter.

RULE 18. FAILURE TO VOTE.

Every Commissioner is entitled to vote unless disqualified by reason of a conflict of interest. A Commissioner who abstains from voting in effect consents that a majority of the quorum may decide the question voted upon.

RULE 19. TIE VOTE.

Tie votes shall be lost motions and may be reconsidered.

RULE 20. CHANGING VOTE.

The vote of a Commissioner may be changed only if he or she makes a timely request to do so immediately following the announcement of the vote by the Planning Director and prior to the time that the next item in the order of business is taken up.

RULE 21. RECONSIDERATION.

(a) A motion to reconsider any action of the Commission may be made only prior to adjournment of that meeting, or prior to final action on the matter, whichever is later.

(b) A motion to reconsider may be made by any Commissioner who voted on the prevailing side of the action to be reconsidered, and may be seconded by any Commissioner. If an action was decided as a matter of law, without a majority of those present affirmative or negative, any Commissioner may make such a motion.

(c) A motion to reconsider is considered substantive, and hence requires a majority of those present to carry.

RULE 22. PROCEDURE ON AGENDA ITEMS REQUIRING A MOTION.

The following procedure shall generally be followed in connection with any Agenda item requiring a motion:

- (a) Chair reads the title.
- (b) Commissioner statements of any conflict of interest.
- (c) Explanation of item by staff, if called for by the Chair.
- (d) Questions to staff by Commissioners.
- (e) Statement by Applicant, if any.
- (f) Questions of Applicant by Commissioners.
- (g) Public to be heard subject to the limitations set forth herein.
- (h) Close of public discussion.
- (i) Chair to ask for a motion and second.
- (j) Motion and discussion by the Planning Commission.

(k) The maker of the motion to have a chance for further discussion.

(l) Chair to restate the motion.

(m) Vote on the motion.

RULE 23. STUDY SESSIONS AND INFORMAL MEETINGS.

The Planning Commission, subject to notice and other requirements imposed by law, may hold study sessions and informal meetings at such times as may be designated either at a regular meeting or a special meeting. At any such study session or informal meeting, the Planning Commission shall not take any formal or binding action upon any formal motion, resolution, ordinance, nor any other action required by law to be taken by the Planning Commission. Such study sessions or informal sessions shall be devoted exclusively to the presentation, exchange of information, and direction to staff and the applicant by the Commission.

RULE 24. COMMUNICATIONS BY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS.

The Planning Commission may adopt an official resolution or other written statement regarding a planning or land use matter pertaining to the scope of the Commission's authority, but shall not transmit such official resolution or any other correspondence on any matter of City policy to any non-City Agency, Board, or Commission without a vote of the Planning Commission to do so, nor without the prior approval of the City Council that such communication be so transmitted.

RULE 25. PRESENCE OF CITY STAFF AT PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS.

The Planning Director, and in their absence, their authorized representative, shall attend and be present during all Planning Commission meetings and give necessary service and advice.

RULE 26. RECORD OF MEETINGS.

All public meetings of the Planning Commission shall be recorded in the form of minutes prepared by Planning Department staff. Such minutes shall be part of the records of the Planning Commission. The use of audio or video recording by members of the public is permitted so long as it is not disruptive of the meeting.

RULE 27. EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS

(a) During the pendency of any quasi-judicial proceeding, no member of the Planning Commission may engage in ex parte communications with applicants, appellants or members of the public with respect to the matter which is the subject of the proceeding unless that member of the Commission:

(1) Places on the record the subject and substance of any written or oral ex-parte communication concerning the matter and the identity of the person, group, or entity with whom the communication took place.

(2) Makes any written communication part of the record.

(b) A member of the Planning Commission may conduct site visits pertaining to the matter which is the subject of the proceeding if the site visit and the date of the site visit are placed on the record. Any

communications during the site visit with applicants, appellants, or members of the public with respect to the matter shall be disclosed in accordance with Section (a) of this Rule.

(c) Disclosures required by Section (a) and (b) of this Rule shall be made before public testimony on the matter has commenced so that persons will be given a reasonable opportunity to respond to the ex parte communication or site visit.

(d) Once the public hearing has commenced, no member of the Planning Commission shall engage in any ex parte communication with applicants, appellants, or members of the public with respect to the matter which is the subject of the proceeding. However, a member of the Planning Commission can seek specific information or data from any individual relative to the matter if such request and the response to the request are made on the record.

(e) Written communications on a matter before the Commission, including e-mails, should be sent to the Planning Department staff, not to individual Commissioners. Commissioner receipt of such communications shall not constitute a violation of these Rules, provided the procedures set forth in this Rule are observed. Prior to the date of the hearing, the staff shall forward all written communications received no later than noon of the day of the meeting to Planning Commissioners. Late written communications may be provided to the Commission at the hearing, but may or may not be reviewed by the Commission. All written communications will be made part of the public record.

RULE 28. INTERPRETATION AND MODIFICATION OF THESE RULES.

These rules shall be interpreted liberally in order to provide for the optimum in the free interchange of information and public debate without an unnecessary waste of time or duplication of effort. These rules may be amended by resolution upon the approval of a majority of those present.

SECTION 2. Any resolution adopting, amending, or relating to Planning Commission Rules of Order, is hereby repealed in its entirety.

SECTION 3. The Planning Director shall certify to the adoption of this Resolution, and thenceforth and thereafter the same shall be in full force and effect.

Approved this 13th day of June, 2023 by the following vote:

Aye:

No:

Abstain:

Absent:

Certified: _____

Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
TIME AND PLACE OF MEETINGS
PLANNING COMMISSION POLICY
NUMBER 001
ADOPTED BY THE PLANNING
COMMISSION AT THEIR MEETING OF MAY 12, 2026

PLANNING COMMISSION POLICY NUMBER 001

Time and Place of Meetings

Purpose

To establish the regular meeting schedule and procedures for Planning Commission meetings to ensure transparency and consistent public access.

Policy

Regular meetings of the Planning Commission shall be held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 6:00 p.m. unless otherwise noticed.

The Planning Director, in consultation with the Chair, may revise the meeting time when necessary to accommodate business. If a meeting falls on a public holiday designated by law or by the City Council, the meeting shall be cancelled.

The Planning Director, in consultation with the Chair, shall prepare the meeting agenda and determine the scheduling of items. Chair and Staff shall meet regularly to determine the final agenda. Chair and staff shall prepare forward agendas for distribution to the Commission from City staff in one-way communications to keep the Commission informed of tentative meeting dates/agenda items.

It is recommended that agenda and agenda packets be posted and distributed to the Commissioners and made available to the public one week prior to a Planning Commission meeting, but no later than 72 hours prior to the meeting.

Meetings shall be held within the City Limits of the City of Sebastopol, in a location designated by the Planning Director. Remote participation may be provided when available.

Regular meetings may be cancelled by the Planning Director in consultation with the Chair if:

- A quorum will not be present
- There is insufficient business for the Commission

In the event there is insufficient official business for the Commission, but a quorum would be present, the Planning Director, in consultation with the Chair, should consider scheduling training sessions or educational presentations designed to enhance the Commission's knowledge, preparedness, and effectiveness.

If known, cancelled meetings shall be published as soon as cancellation is determined and notification submitted immediately to the Commissioners.

Meetings shall adjourn by 9:30 p.m. unless extended by majority vote of Commissioners present.

All meetings shall be open to the public unless otherwise permitted by law.

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
PROCESS/CONDUCTING OF
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS
PLANNING COMMISSION POLICY
NUMBER 002
ADOPTED BY THE PLANNING
COMMISSION OF THEIR MEETING OF MAY 12, 2026

PLANNING COMMISSION POLICY NUMBER 002

Process/Conducting of City Planning Commission Meetings

Prior to starting the meeting, the Planning Commission Chair will ask Information Technology (IT) and City staff if we are ready to proceed with the meeting. IT and City staff will indicate yes or ask for more time. IT or City staff will state "Meeting is being recorded," and the Planning Commission Chair will then start the meeting.

- Planning Commission Chair will call meeting to order: "I am calling this meeting of the Sebastopol City Planning Commission (of Date) to order at [time]."
- Planning Commission Chair will ask the City Admin Staff to take roll call (in alphabetical order).
- Planning Commission Chair will ask if there is any remote participation from Planning Commissioners (See Quorum and Attendance Policy)
- Planning Commission Chair will call for any statements of conflicts of interest from Commissioners. If a conflict is declared, the Commissioner will state it publicly, depart the meeting for that specific agenda item, and Commissioner shall return once the item is concluded.
- If needed to facilitate public involvement or to accommodate staff or Consultant availability, the Chair may propose moving agenda items if there are no objections from the Commission Majority. In no case shall an agenda item be heard prior to its agendized start time.

Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda:

Planning Commission Chair will say the following:

This is an opportunity for members of the public to speak on matters within the jurisdiction of the Planning Commission that are not otherwise on the agenda. It is strongly encouraged that written comments be submitted to the Planning Commission by sending them by email to: planning@cityofsebastopol.gov with Public Comment Written in the Subject Line.

Planning Commission Chair will open for public comment, switching between in chambers and going out to Zoom.

- 3-minute time limit per speaker (If warranted, at the discretion of the chair, it may be limited to 2 minutes if there are no objections from the Commission Majority.)

Planning Commission Chair will close public comment at the conclusion of members of the public wishing to comment.

After public comments, the Planning Commission Chair may clarify a statement and/or ask staff or an applicant to clarify any statements or ask that the member(s) of the public contact City staff directly outside of the meeting for a response, but will not discuss the item. Should the Commission wish to discuss an item, they will provide direction to staff to include the discussion as a future agenda item.

Items on the Agenda:

- Planning Commission Chair will read the agenda item title.
- Planning Commission Chair will ask City staff to introduce the item or the presenter in charge of the item.
 - Staff will then present the item, and then the Planning Commission Chair will ask for questions from the Commissioners of City staff.

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
PROCESS/CONDUCTING OF
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS
PLANNING COMMISSION POLICY
NUMBER 002
ADOPTED BY THE PLANNING
COMMISSION OF THEIR MEETING OF MAY 12, 2026

- If there is a presenter, the Chair will ask the presenter to present the item.
- Planning Commission Chair will ask for questions from the Commissioners of the presenter or additional questions to staff
- Planning Commission Chair will open for public comment or public hearing (depending on the type of agenda item), switching between in chambers and going out to Zoom.
 - 3-minute time limit per speaker (If warranted, at the discretion of the chair, it may be limited to 2 minutes if there are no objections from the Commission Majority.)
- After public comment/public hearing, the Planning Commission Chair will return to the Planning Commission for Discussion and/or Deliberations, as well as any additional clarifying questions to staff or the Presenter
- After all Commissioners' comments or if there are no additional comments, the Planning Commission Chair will ask for a motion and then a second to the motion.
- Planning Commission Chair will ask City staff to take the vote.
- City staff will restate the motion for clarity and call the vote of each Commissioner (in alphabetical order)
- City staff will announce the vote:
 - Commissioner(s) (Name(s)) Ayes
 - Commissioner(s) (Name(s)) Noes
 - Commissioner(s) (Name(s)) Absent
 - Commissioner(s) (Name(s)) Abstain
- City staff will then announce the results of the Motion (Pass or Fail).

Subcommittee Updates:

The Planning Commission Chair will ask if there are any subcommittee updates.

The Planning Commission will then report out on any Subcommittee meetings they have attended.

Planning Director's Report:

The Planning Commission Chair will ask for a Planning Department/Director's report. The Commission may ask routine or clarifying questions of staff related to an item that has been reported out on, but will not discuss the item. Should the Commission wish to discuss an item, they will provide direction to staff to include the discussion as a future agenda item.

Adjournment:

Planning Commission Chair will then adjourn the Planning Commission meeting to the next regular meeting.

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
QUORUM AND ATTENDANCE
PLANNING COMMISSION POLICY
NUMBER 003
ADOPTED BY THE PLANNING
COMMISSION OF THEIR MEETING OF AUGUST 25, 2026

PLANNING COMMISSION POLICY NUMBER 003

Quorum and Attendance

To establish quorum requirements and attendance expectations to ensure the Planning Commission can conduct business effectively and in compliance with applicable laws.

Policy

1. Three members of the Planning Commission shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.
2. Approval of any agenda item requires a majority vote of the members. Failure to receive a majority vote results in denial of the pending matter. For example, if three members are present, approval requires a “yes” vote from all three members.
3. Absences shall be recorded in the meeting minutes. Three consecutive absences constitute removal and shall be reported to the City Council per the Municipal Code.

Ways to Participate

Planning Commission members may participate in meetings in person or remotely, subject to the Ralph M. Brown Act (California Government Code § 54950 et seq.) and any applicable local rules.

- In-Person Participation (Preferred/Default): Members are expected to attend meetings at the designated physical location open to the public.
- Remote Participation under the Brown Act:
 - Traditional Brown Act Teleconferencing: All teleconference locations must be identified in the meeting agenda and open to the public. Commissioners must notify staff prior to the publication of the agenda in order to participate in this manner. No justification is needed to participate in this manner, as long as the remote location is listed on the agenda.

A member may participate remotely without identifying their location, posting the agenda, and opening the location to the public if all of the following rules are followed:

1. The member publicly provides a brief explanation of the “just cause” for participating remotely (i.e., makes a brief statement at the start of the meeting);
 - a. “Just cause” consists of any of the following:
 - i. Childcare or other caregiving;
 - ii. Contagious illness;
 - iii. Other physical or mental condition or illness;
 - iv. Travel on official business for the City or a different state or local public body or agency;
 - v. Immunocompromised family member;
 - vi. Physical or family emergency; and/or
 - vii. Military service obligations.

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2. The member participates by both audio and video (e.g., Zoom); and
3. A quorum of members of the body participate in person from a single noticed location.
 - Remote participation must still allow full public access and comment opportunities. Technical disruptions may prevent action on agenda items.
 - Disability-related accommodations for remote participation are handled separately under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and may not count against "just cause" limits.