



City of Sebastopol Planning Department

Date: September 22, 2026
Agenda Item: 7A
To: Sebastopol Planning Commission
From: Eli Arreola, Associate Planner
Subject: Planning Commission Quorum and Attendance Policy Discussion

Background:

Attached is the Planning Commission Policy on Quorum and Attendance that was adopted by the Planning Commission on August 25, 2026. The policy was brought back to the Commission on August 25th after the Commission requested clarification on several items included in the Policy at the May 12, 2026, Planning Commission meeting.

On August 25, 2026, the Commission discussed the possibility of members missing multiple nonconsecutive meetings, and how to handle that. A motion was made to adopt the policy as presented by staff. Direction to staff on non-consecutive member absences was not included in the motion.

At the September 9, 2026, meeting, the Commission again discussed addressing nonconsecutive member absences. However, staff could not confirm a consensus amongst the Commission directing staff to pursue the matter further.

Discussion:

The language in question is included in the Planning Commission Policy on Quorum and Attendance under Policy (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.

This is in reference to Sebastopol Municipal Code (SMC) Section 2.24.030, which states: Any member of the Commission who fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the Commission shall be considered automatically removed, and a vacancy shall be deemed to have occurred unless a showing of good cause is presented to the City Council. The City Council shall be the sole judge as to whether or not good cause is shown.

Addressing non-consecutive Planning Commissioner absences would require a code amendment, amending SMC Section 2.24.030 to add a certain number of non-consecutive absences within a timeframe as a reason for removal from the Planning Commission.

Staff is asking if there is a consensus amongst the Commission to bring an agenda item back for a formal discussion.

Attachments:

1. Planning Commission Policy Number 003 Quorum and Attendance

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.