



City of Sebastopol Planning Department

Date: May 12, 2026
Agenda Item: 7B
To: Sebastopol Planning Commission
From: Jane Riley, AICP, Interim Planning Director
Subject: Planning Commission Policies and Upcoming Planning Commission Work

Policies:

Attached please find three (3) new Planning Commission Policies for the Commission's review and adoption. The policies are centered around three topics: Time and Place of Planning Commission Meetings; Process and Conducting of Planning Commission Meetings; and Planning Commission Quorum and Attendance.

Training Opportunity:

This agenda item also includes discussion of the electronic Planning Commission's Handbook produced by the Institute for Local Government (ILG), which can be found [here](#). Staff recommends that the Planning Commission incorporate the use of this resource as a part of their training, and discuss how it should be utilized and which section topics would benefit from additional training and discussion at meetings.

Open Discussion:

The last part of this agenda item is envisioned as an open discussion for the Commission to discuss their upcoming work plan items and what they would like to see on future agendas.

Attachments:

1. Time and Place of Planning Commission Meetings
2. Process and Conducting of Planning Commission Meetings
3. Planning Commission Quorum and Attendance

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
TIME AND PLACE OF MEETINGS
PLANNING COMMISSION POLICY
NUMBER XXX
ADOPTED BY THE PLANNING
COMMISSION OF THEIR MEETING OF xxxxxxxx

PLANNING COMMISSION POLICY NUMBER XXX

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 XXX
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PLANNING COMMISSION POLICY NUMBER XXX
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. Due to the length of recent Planning Commission Meetings, 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.

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.
 - If there is a presenter, the Chair will ask the presenter to present the item.

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- 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
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PLANNING COMMISSION POLICY NUMBER XXX

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 substantive matter requires a simple majority vote of the members present, provided a quorum exists. Failure to receive a majority vote results in denial of the pending matter.
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. This option remains available at any time.

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 a public body or agency;
 - v. Immunocompromised family member;
 - vi. Physical or family emergency; and/or
 - vii. Military service obligations.
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.

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- 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.