



**City of Sebastopol**

**CITY OF SEBASTOPOL CITY COUNCIL  
AGENDA ITEM REPORT FOR MEETING OF: April 7, 2026**

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**To:** Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers  
**Requestor:** Jane Riley, Interim Planning Director  
**Responsible Department:** Planning  
**Subject:** Planning Commission Attendance Review – Commissioner Alex Kanzler

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**RECOMMENDATION:** City staff recommends that the City Council:

1. Determine whether good cause has been shown for Commissioner Alex Kanzler’s absences from the February 10, February 24, and March 10, 2026 Planning Commission meetings.
  - o If good cause is found, direct that Commissioner Kanzler be reappointed to the Planning Commission.
  - o If good cause is not found, declare a vacancy on the Planning Commission effective immediately.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Sebastopol Municipal Code (SMC) Section 2.24.030 states that any member of the Planning Commission who fails to attend three consecutive meetings shall be considered automatically removed, unless a showing of good cause is presented to the City Council. The Council has sole discretion to determine whether good cause exists.

Planning Commissioner Alex Kanzler was absent from the February 10, February 24, and March 10, 2026 meetings. These absences trigger the automatic removal provision unless the Council finds good cause. This agenda item provides an opportunity for the Council to hear from Commissioner Kanzler and determine whether good cause exists under the Municipal Code.

**BACKGROUND:**

Alex Kanzler was currently serving on the Sebastopol Planning Commission, having been appointed in September 2025 with a term scheduled to expire December 31, 2027.

**Relevant Municipal Code Provision (SMC Section 2.24.030):**

“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.”

Commissioner Kanzler was absent from the following consecutive Planning Commission meetings:



**City of Sebastopol**

- February 10, 2026
- February 24, 2026
- March 10, 2026

**DISCUSSION:**

The Municipal Code grants the City Council sole authority to determine whether absences constitute “good cause.” The Code does not define the term, leaving the determination to the Council’s discretion.

Commissioner Kanzler has been notified of this agenda item and given an opportunity to present information to the Council. Information that has been submitted is attached to this report for information. The Council may also consider public comment regarding this matter from either Mr. Kanzler or any member of the public.

Once the Council has reviewed the information, it may:

1. Determine that good cause exists, allowing Commissioner Kanzler to be re-appointed; or
2. Determine that good cause does not exist, and declare a vacancy on the Planning Commission.

**STAFF ANALYSIS:**

Commissioner Kanzler’s three consecutive absences meet the threshold for automatic removal under SMC Section 2.24.030. The Council’s determination of good cause should consider:

- The nature and seriousness of the reasons for the absences;
- The Commissioner’s prior attendance record;
- The impact of the absences on Planning Commission operations;
- Any mitigating circumstances justifying the absences.

Staff has reviewed relevant policies and found no additional criteria for evaluating good cause beyond what is provided in the Municipal Code. The Council should exercise its discretion based on the information presented.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this agenda item. Any subsequent appointment to the Planning Commission would follow standard procedural and budgetary processes for recruitment of applicants.

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:**

**Option 1 – Good Cause Found:**



## City of Sebastopol

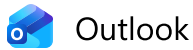
That the City Council approve that good cause has been shown for Commissioner Alex Kanzler's absences from the February 10, February 24, and March 10, 2026, Planning Commission meetings, and direct that he be reappointed to the Planning Commission.

### Option 2 – Good Cause Not Found:

That the City Council finds that good cause has not been shown for Commissioner Alex Kanzler's absences from the February 10, February 24, and March 10, 2026, Planning Commission meetings, and declare a vacancy on the Planning Commission effective immediately.

### ATTACHMENTS:

1. Notice of Absence to Commissioner Alex Kanzler
2. Sebastopol Municipal Code Section 2.24.030
3. Alex Kanzler's Response to Notice



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**Missing 3 PC meetings and Municipal Code Section 2.24.030**

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From Jane Riley <jriley@cityofsebastopol.gov>

Date Mon 3/16/2026 1:23 PM

To alex [REDACTED]

Cc evert [REDACTED] Victoria Henkel <vhenkel@cityofsebastopol.gov>

Hi Alex, I hope this finds you well.

I regret that I have some not-great information to share with you: because you have missed 3 concurrent Planning Commission meetings (February 10, February 24, March 10), your role as a Planning Commissioner has ended automatically unless the City Council finds good cause. Sebastopol Municipal Code 2.24.030 says:

"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."

Please note that you will not be able to participate in the March 24 meeting as you are not currently a Commissioner. Please also note that the Code does not allow the Planning Commission to limit or stop this action; it grants sole authority to the City Council.

I assume that you would like to present a showing of good cause to the City Council, and we have tentatively scheduled that for the next available CC meeting which is April 7th. Please confirm that you wish to make this request not later than the end of this week. If you do *not* wish to present a showing of good cause to the City Council, or if the April 7th date does not work for you, please let me know that by the end of the week as well.

Thank you, Alex, and I'm sorry to have to bring this to your attention. Please feel free to call if you want to talk it through.

Best,

Jane Riley, AICP

Interim Planning Director

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## **2.24.030 Vacancy and removal.**

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. (Ord. 1141, 2022)

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**The Sebastopol Municipal Code is current through Ordinance 1161, passed December 2, 2025.**

Disclaimer: The City Clerk's Office has the official version of the Sebastopol Municipal Code. Users should contact the City Clerk's Office for ordinances passed subsequent to the ordinance cited above.

[City Website: www.ci.sebastopol.ca.us](http://www.ci.sebastopol.ca.us)

[Hosted by General Code.](#)

Dear City Council, Planning Commission and City Staff,

\*\*apologies I don't have email addresses for Commission Harper or Commission Koelemeijer. If someone could forward this on, it'd be appreciated.

In regards to my absence at PC meetings and being subject to municipal code 2.24.030., I wanted to share comments, timeline and explanation of events.

I have enjoyed serving on the Planning Commission and believe I had made valuable contributions. I'd love to continue serving, if I'm wanted.

1. As a Planning Commission, I should know the code, I recognize this. As I've only been on PC since Sept 2025, I need some time to get fully versed.
2. Since I became a commission, the meeting schedule has been haphazard. For example, there were 7 meetings between my appointment to the PC on 9/16/2025 and the end of the year, 2025. 3 meetings were cancelled and one was a special "walking tour" meeting. I hadn't gotten in the cadence of meetings, and it wasn't factored into my work/personal travel schedule going into Q1 2026.
3. January meetings were puzzling. I was nominated for and voted into the role of PC vice chair on Jan 13<sup>th</sup>. This vote was then voided for a procedural reason and during the Jan 27 meeting a new vote was taken for a newly nominated vice chair. I acquiesced. From my appointment to the PC on 9/16/2025 through January 2026 I had perfect meeting attendance.
4. Feb 10, I sent an email to Staff Member Henkel advising my absence for that evenings' meeting and included comments on agenda items that I asked to be forwarded to fellow commissioners. I cannot verify if my comments were forwarded. I did not receive a reply from Staff member Henkel. I was out-of-country celebrating 10<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary with my wife.
5. Feb 23, I sent a message to Chair Fernandez advising my upcoming travel commitments and included comments for agenda items for Feb 24 meeting. Chair Fernandez responded via text and suggested I touch base with staff member Henkel regarding absence. I had done this ahead of the Feb 10 meeting and received no reply, which is why I wrote to Chair Fernandez on this go-around. I was in Atlanta Georgia for business.
6. March 2, I received a message from staff member Henkel inquiring about my absences. Chair Fernandez informed her of my travel. I replied the same day with my specific travel schedule, mentioned I wasn't sure if I should be communicating with her or Chair Fernandez, and advised that my travel conflicts were limited in

nature. Staff member Henkel replied simply with “OK perfect, thanks for the dates”. No mention made of excused vs. unexcused absences, code 2.24.030, etc.

7. March 10. Absent due to business trip to Chicago and Minneapolis. As noted above, both Chair Fernandez and Staff Henkel were aware.
8. 3/16, Interim planning director Jane Riley informs me that I’m in violation of 2.24.030 and I’m off the PC.

I document all of this to display that throughout my absence I made substantial efforts to be communicative, contribute to the PC via comments, and follow procedure to the best of my knowledge. I’m troubled that at no point during the communications with either staff member Henkel or Chair Fernandez from Feb 10<sup>th</sup> through March 2<sup>nd</sup> code 2.24.030 was mentioned. While I’m ultimately responsible, and I take responsibility, I do feel a “heads up” to a new member of the PC would have been a collegial thing to do.

As hyper informed members of this community you know the perilous circumstances facing the wine industry. I’ve had clients, partners and friends go out of business. As the public face and head of my small family business I have a fiduciary responsibility to travel across the country to prominent wine markets and sell wine. It’s truly existential at this point. I’d assume these are excused absences. These visits require a lot of coordination and are planned months in advance. If I had been more aware of the PC calendar, I would have made more of an effort to factor it in, but my experience through 2025 lead me to believe the PC meeting calendar was quite variable.

Regarding my ten-year wedding anniversary: I assume this would be an unexcused absence per city municipal code and I do not seek excuse. To be transparent, I also would not have forgone this trip had I had been aware of 2.24.030. Just being honest here.

As mentioned above, I’d love to continue serving on the Planning Committee. If my services are welcome, I’ll work with staff, counsel or commission to proceed with reinstatement.

Sincerely,

-Alex Kanzler

Alex Kanzler

