

CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA PLANNING COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, September 25, 2025

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL - CHAMBERS

The following Commission members were present: Mel Ahlborn, Stefan Karapetkov, Michael LePage, and Stephanie Locke

The following Commission members were absent: Erin Allen

PUBLIC APPEARANCES

Members of the public are entitled to speak on matters of municipal concern not on the agenda during Public Appearances. Each person's comments shall be limited to 3 minutes, or as otherwise established by the Chair. Persons are not required to provide their names, however, it is helpful for speakers to state their names so they may be identified in the minutes of the meeting. Under the Brown Act, public comment for matters on the agenda must relate to that agenda item and public comments for matters not on the agenda must relate to the subject matter jurisdiction of this legislative body. If a member of the public attending the meeting remotely violates the Brown Act by failing to comply with these requirements of the Brown Act, then that speaker will be muted.

The following members of the public appeared before the Commission: None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 1) ADU Ordinance Workshop:** Conduct a public workshop to gather feedback on a revised draft ordinance amending Title 17 relating to Accessory Dwelling Units

Evan Kort, Senior Planner, presented an overview of the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Ordinance, focusing on the challenge of reconciling streamlined State ADU laws with the protection requirements of the California Coastal Act and the City's certified Local Coastal Program (LCP), which heavily emphasizes scenic and visual resources and community character. Senior Planner Kort defined an ADU as a residential unit providing complete independent living facilities, contrasting it with a Junior ADU (JADU), which is limited to 500 square feet and requires owner occupancy. To navigate the regulatory conflicts, such as the State requirement to allow at least an 800-square-foot unit regardless of local floor area limits, Senior Planner Kort proposed three permit tracks: Type One (Building Permit only), Type Two (Administrative CDP/staff review for LCP-compliant development), and Type Three (Discretionary review by the Planning

Commission, primarily triggered by utilizing the State's floor area bonus). Senior Planner Kort noted that while State law generally waives parking requirements due to the City's proximity to transit, the Coastal Commission encourages jurisdictions to require off-street parking in areas of high visitor demand to protect public coastal access, leading to the designation of the Coastal Access Parking Area in the draft. Senior Planner Kort concluded by confirming that the City's existing ADU ordinance, certified as part of the LCP in 2018) is still technically in effect until the LCP, is formally modified.

Public Comment:

Scott Fradin
Ian Martin
Kent Seavy
Nancy Twomey
Alan Lehman
Linda Leeb
Erik Dyar
Erin Rose
Joe Denucci
Nancy Twomey

The Commission generally reached consensus in favor of the more detailed draft ordinance (Attachment A) over the simplified, streamlined version (Attachment B). Commissioners expressed that the detailed version, which was 25 pages long compared to 7 pages for Attachment B, was important to cover all potential gray areas and provide clearer guidance.

The Commission also spoke to significantly expanding the areas where ADUs would be required to provide off-street parking, moving beyond the immediate beach-adjacent areas defined in the draft. Staff presented the proposed Coastal Access Parking Area, which included properties west of North Carmelo Avenue and west of North San Antonio Avenue, and noted that the Coastal Commission suggested such expansions should be supported by data documenting high visitor demand for public on-street parking. Commissioner Locke recommended extending the Coastal Access Parking Area to the entire City, citing citywide parking challenges and the need to preserve spaces.

Commissioner Ahlborn similarly recommended that staff approach the Coastal Commission to request requiring off-street parking for all approved ADUs citywide, noting that the whole City is within the coastal zone and impacted by parking.

In the context of the forthcoming pre-approved ADU plans (Program 13C in the Housing Element), the Commission supported public input that the pre-approved plans should not be limited to "faux historical styles." Commissioner Ahlborn agreed with the suggestion to include modern architecture, emphasizing that it is part of Carmel's historic context and heritage.

The Commission also considered fire safety measures in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. Commissioner Ahlborn recommended prohibiting all new ADU construction in these high-risk areas, noting that the zone covers nearly 50% of the City and citing precedent from other coastal cities, like Ventura.

The Commission reaffirmed its recommendation to allocate the City's additional water supply to ADUs as a priority, recognizing their contribution to housing. Additionally, Commissioners inquired about incorporating an ADU amnesty policy into the ordinance. Staff explained that the draft already includes a provision (R1) stating that permits cannot be denied solely due to a non-conforming zoning condition, which aligns with State requirements.

2) Housing Element: Provide an update on the 6th Cycle Housing Element Amendment

Marnie Waffle, Principal Planner, presented an update on the Housing Element Amendment, confirming that the goal is to finalize the revised document and submit it formally to the State's Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) by the end of 2025, with Planning Commission review of the full draft targeted for the regular October meeting and City Council review in November. This amendment explores alternative affordable housing strategies designed to replace and disperse the 149 affordable units originally sited on the three city-owned parking lots. The proposed diversified strategies, developed with significant efforts from the AHA committee, include a Hotel to Residential Conversion Program, adjusted ADU projections, a new Live Work Housing Strategy, working with Local Churches interested in housing, and implementing a Mixed Income Incentive Program focusing on mixed-use projects downtown. Principal Planner Waffle added that Staff is simultaneously working on implementing existing Housing Element programs, noting that the Reasonable Accommodation Policy is complete, the Planning Commission's recommendation for the Water Allocation Policy is scheduled for City Council review in October 2025, and a contract for Objective Design Standards will also go before the City Council at the October 2025 meeting.

Public Comment:

None

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Anna Ginette, Director of Community Planning and Building, gave a report and answered questions of the Commission:

- **Office Closure:** The Community Planning and Building office will be closed Monday, September 29, 2025. Staff will be attending a planning conference in Monterey organized by the American Planning Association. Principal Planner Marnie Waffle will be leading a mobile workshop walking tour titled "Carmel-by-

the-Sea Integrating New Housing in a Small Coastal Community".

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

3) Next Regular Meeting: October 8, 2025

ADJOURNMENT

7:15 PM

CORRESPONDENCE

APPROVED:

Signed by:

Michael LePage

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Michael LePage, Chair

ATTEST:

Signed by:

Shelby Gorman

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Shelby Gorman, Commission Clerk