

**SANTA CLARA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
2603 Santa Clara Drive
Thursday, July 9, 2026**

Present: Shelly Harris
Kristen Walton
David Clark
Joby Venuti
Tyler Gubler

Absent: Logan Blake
Josh Westbrook

Staff: Jim McNulty, Planning and Economic Development Director
Cody Mitchell, Building Official
Debbie Andrews, Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order

Vice Chair Shelly Harris called the Santa Clara City Planning Commission meeting to order on July 9, 2026, at 5:31 PM.

2. Opening Ceremony

A. Pledge of Allegiance: Commissioner Clark

3. Conflicts and Disclosures

No conflicts or disclosures were reported by any Commissioners.

4. Working Agenda

A. Public Hearing

- 1. Consideration and possible action on a proposed Rezoning and Amended Site Plan Review for the property located at 2998 Santa Clara Drive (Parcel#SC-159-A-1-A, described as 0.10 acres). The applicants, Heather Taylor and Barbara Parks, propose to Rezone the property from the Historic District/R-1-10 Zone to the Historic District Mixed Use HD/MU Zone to allow for office/retail space intended for an art gallery.**

Jim McNulty, Planning and Economic Development Director, presented the application on behalf of applicants Heather Taylor and Barbara Parks. The proposal seeks to rezone the property at 2998 Santa Clara Drive from the Historic District/R-1-10 Zone to the Historic District/Mixed Use Zone to allow for office and retail space intended for an art gallery. The

property is a 0.10-acre lot within the Historic District, featuring an existing single-family home built in 1935 with approximately 940 square feet of main-floor usable space and a basement to be used for storage. The building footprint would remain unchanged, with exterior improvements aimed at restoring the structure's period cottage character, including replacement of asphalt shingles with natural cedar shake roofing and repair or replication of existing doors and windows consistent with Historic District Design Guidelines.

Mr. McNulty noted the project had previously been reviewed and approved by the Heritage Commission on June 18, 2026, with the Commission expressing enthusiasm for the proposal and confirming its compliance with Historic District Design Guidelines. City staff found the application consistent with the Neighborhood Commercial Land Use designation in the 2025 General Plan, which encourages small-scale commercial uses, walkable environments, and adaptive reuse of historic structures. No public comments in support or opposition had been received following notice to all property owners within 300 feet.

Mr. McNulty outlined the Site Plan's key elements, including drought-tolerant landscaping with a drip irrigation system, low-mounted downward-directed exterior lighting, retention and cleanup of existing brick pillar fencing, and placement of mechanical equipment and refuse screening at the rear of the building. Project signage was noted as a future item requiring separate Heritage Commission approval.

Regarding parking, city code requires a minimum of three spaces, including one ADA-accessible van space. The proposed Site Plan accommodates one space (ADA) along the eastern driveway, with two spaces adjacent to the north property line. As a result, the applicants intend to utilize a parking easement agreement with the adjacent northern property owners to allow use of an additional five feet of their lot. Mr. McNulty acknowledged that the Historic District Design Guidelines discourage locating parking in front of buildings, ruling out that alternative, and that Chapter 17.74 of the City Code encourages flexibility in parking requirements within the Historic District/Mixed Use Zone. Building Official, Cody Mitchell, noted that staff's review through the Technical Review Committee (TRC) was supportive, and that comparable small businesses in the Downtown Historic District, such as the Yellow House and Mimi & Coco Kids, are similar and rely on on-street parking.

Commissioner Venuti, whose professional background is in development, raised concern that as configured, a vehicle parked in the ADA space would block egress for the other two spaces, and that parking space number one required backing the full length of the driveway to exit. He questioned whether more workable layouts had been considered. The applicant, Barbara Parks, explained that the existing outbuilding straddling the rear property line is to be demolished with the written consent of the neighboring property owners, who have agreed to bear no cost for removal of their portion. This demolition, combined with the full-length easement, would provide sufficient room for vehicles to maneuver and turn around at the rear of the site. Mr. McNulty and Mr. Mitchell confirmed that there is no code prohibiting the current configuration, and that City staff had deliberated extensively before settling on the presented layout as the most consistent with Historic District Design Guidelines.

Commissioner Walton inquired whether the parking arrangement raised any legal concerns regarding blocking the drive aisle, and whether it set a problematic precedent. Mr. McNulty

clarified that the flexibility provisions apply specifically to the Historic District/Mixed Use Zone only, and do not extend to other Commercial Zones in the City

Commissioner Clark commended the quality of the application materials, credited to the applicants' architect and son-in-law, Cory Taylor, who participated remotely. Commissioner Clark raised two conditions he considered essential: first, the parking easement agreement be executed and recorded by both parties; and second, that a signed and notarized letter authorizing demolition of the shared outbuilding be obtained from the neighboring property owners and provided to the City before moving forward. Mr. McNulty confirmed both items could be added as conditions of approval in the project recommendation to City Council.

Commissioner Venuti asked whether, once rezoned, a future owner could use the property for a different commercial purpose. Mr. McNulty confirmed the zoning would run with the property, and any future use would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis against parking and other code requirements, with more intensive uses unlikely to qualify given the property size.

Mr. Mitchell noted the building had been on the market multiple times and had previously been evaluated for demolition by other interested parties who concluded restoration costs exceeded the property's value. He expressed that staff's willingness to work flexibly with the applicants was in part a recognition of their commitment to preserving a historic structure that might otherwise be lost.

The Public Hearing was opened. Cory Taylor expressed enthusiasm for the project and commitment to preserving the home and its surrounding environment. No additional public comments were received. The Public Hearing was closed.

2. Consideration and possible action on Chapter 17.08, Definitions. The proposed code amendment would allow for new definitions to be included in city code.

Mr. McNulty presented a proposed code amendment to add three new definitions to Chapter 17.08 of the City Code: owner occupied, primary residence, and secondary residence. He explained that these definitions arose from the adoption of the R-1-4 zone earlier in the year, which included a deed restriction requiring owner-occupied housing for a minimum of ten years. The lack of a formal definition for "owner occupied" in the City Code prompted staff, in consultation with City Attorney, Matt Ence, to draft the three related definitions.

The proposed definitions are as follows:

- Owner Occupied: A housing unit in which the individual who owns the housing unit, solely, jointly, or severally with others, has legal or equitable title to the property and lives therein as the individual's primary residence.
- Primary Residence: A residence where an individual's habitation is fixed and to which, whenever absent, the individual intends to return. Temporary absences for military service, church service (not to exceed three consecutive years), or other similar circumstances—provided advance city approval is obtained—shall not terminate primary residence status. An individual returning from a temporary absence

must reside at the residence for a minimum of six consecutive months before another temporary absence may be approved.

- Secondary Residence: A dwelling or residential property that is not an individual's primary residence, including vacation homes and short-term nightly rentals.

Mr. McNulty noted that the definitions had been reviewed and well received by the City Council, and that they were consistent with State Code and practices observed in comparable municipalities. Commissioner Harris, drawing on a background in lending, affirmed that the definitions appropriately distinguished between owner-occupied, non-owner-occupied, and secondary/investment properties.

The Public Hearing was opened. No members of the public offered comment. The Public Hearing was closed.

B. Public Meeting

1. None.

5. General Business

A. Recommendation to City Council

- 1. Recommendation to City Council for consideration and possible action on a proposed Rezoning and Amended Site Plan Review for the property located at 2998 Santa Clara Drive (Parcel#SC-159-A-1-A, described as 0.10 acres). The applicants, Heather Taylor and Barbara Parks, propose to Rezone the property from the Historic District/R-1-10 Zone to the Historic District Mixed Use HD/MU Zone to allow for office/retail space intended for an art gallery.**

Motion: Commissioner Clark moved to forward a recommendation to the City Council for approval of the Rezoning and amended Site Plan for the property at 2998 Santa Clara Drive, Rezoning from the Historic District/R-1-10 Zone to the Historic District Mixed Use Zone for use as an art gallery, subject to all staff-recommended conditions, the addition of a condition requiring the recorded parking easement agreement, and the addition of a condition requiring a signed and notarized authorization from the adjacent property owners permitting demolition of the shared outbuilding. Commissioner Gubler seconded the motion. The motion carried 3–2, with Commissioners Venuti and Walton voting in opposition due to unresolved concerns regarding the parking configuration.

- 2. Recommendation to City Council for consideration and possible action on Chapter 17.08, Definitions. The proposed code amendment would allow for new definitions to be included in city code.**

Motion: Commissioner Clark moved to forward a recommendation of approval to the City Council to adopt the proposed definitions of owner occupied, primary residence,

and secondary residence under Chapter 17.08 of the City Code. Commissioner Walton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

6. Discussion Items

A. None.

Mr. McNulty advised that a meeting would be required on July 23, 2026, to accommodate a pending application. The Yocum family, owners of the Ranch at Santa Clara wedding and event center, have applied for a rezoning from Open Space to Planned Development Commercial, along with a Project Plan and Development Agreement. Key issues include road access across BLM land, where the BLM has specified a 28-foot asphalt roadway with 10-foot borrowed ditches on each side, and secondary access across Santa Clara Field Canal Company property, which is privately owned and limited to a maintained gravel surface.

Mr. McNulty also noted that the Anderson family, who recently purchased property from Kelly Graff, has submitted plans for a residential subdivision and light industrial uses adjacent to the City shop, which will require a public street connection. Commissioners discussed the coordination of road standards across multiple property owners and government entities. Commissioner Clark raised the question of whether the City had authority to impose unified road standards across the various parcels. Mr. McNulty indicated that the Development Agreement being negotiated by City Attorney, Matt Ence, would address these issues, and that the applicants' engineer had been engaged directly with the BLM, whose process can extend several years.

7. Approval of Minutes

A. Request for Approval of Meeting Minutes: June 11, 2026

The Planning Commission reviewed the minutes from June 11, 2026. No comments or corrections were noted.

Motion: Commissioner Clark moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Venuti seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Gubler abstained.

8. Adjournment

Motion: Commissioner Walton moved to adjourn.

Commissioner Harris adjourned the meeting at 6:24 PM.



Jim McNulty
Planning Director

Approved: August 13, 2026

