

**RIO DELL PLANNING COMMISSION  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 9, 2025**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Commissioner Knight called the special meeting of the Rio Dell Planning Commission to order at 5:00 p.m.

Present were Commissioners Knight, Arsenault, and Millington. Absent were Commissioners Angeloff and Gurney (excused).

Others present were Community Development Director Caldwell, City Manager Knopp, and City Clerk Dunham.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

Approve Minutes of August 26, 2025, Regular Meeting

A motion was made by Millington/Arsenault to approve the minutes of the August 26, 2025, regular meeting. Motion carried 3-0.

**PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS**

Commissioner Knight called for public comment on any matter not on the agenda. No public comment was received.

**SCHEDULED MATTERS/PUBLIC HEARINGS/STUDY SESSIONS**

Adopt Resolution No. PC 188-2025 Recommending that the City Council Approve the Amended Safety Element to Incorporate the County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP)

Community Development Director Caldwell provided a staff report and explained that the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) must be updated by the County every five (5) years to maintain eligibility for FEMA funding and to help guide policies and projects that reduce the impact of natural disasters. He said that Rio Dell, along with seven (7) other cities, the county of Humboldt and 15 special districts participated in the 2025 multi-jurisdiction LHMP for Humboldt County. He explained that the districts all have what is called an Annex that specifically spells out their responsibilities in the event of an emergency.

He said that the big issue is that by adopting the LHMP and incorporating it by reference into the City's Safety Element, the City would qualify to receive disaster funding at both the State and Federal level.

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He noted that the plan objectives include:

- Risk Assessment: Identify natural disaster risks and vulnerabilities
- Mitigation Strategies: Develop long-term strategies to protect people and property
- Implementation: Formulate plans to put mitigation strategies into action

He said that the changes to the plan are minor and referred to the revised language on page 21 of the packet which stated that the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have determined the Hazard Mitigation Plan is eligible for approval pending adoption by participating jurisdictions, including a link to Volume 1 of the Hazard Mitigation Plan, and Volume 2 which included Rio Dell's Annex.

Commissioner Millington asked for clarification that FEMA did not contribute to the 2022 Rio Dell Earthquake disaster.

Community Development Director Caldwell explained that economically disadvantaged communities such as Rio Dell typically get penalized during natural disasters because they can't meet the threshold to qualify for FEMA funding because the cost of housing per unit here is not the same as some of the more prosperous cities. In addition, the city only receives 75% reimbursement at the State level.

City Manager Knopp explained that the federal threshold is one issue and the Hazard Mitigation Plan adds two things for Rio Dell on a practical level. One is accessing federal funding through FEMA grant funding and the state funding which is an important part of the plan. He said that it allows the city to become AB 2140 compliant so once adopted and incorporated into the City's Safety Element, the City can apply to the State for earthquake reimbursements that go beyond the 75% state threshold level, to potentially 100%. He stressed the importance of moving this forward because none of the jurisdictions in Humboldt County are currently AB 2140 compliant.

He said that the value-added benefit is that over time the threats posed to the community are being examined including the extreme wildfire situation.

Commissioner Millington mentioned the California Brace and Bolt Program and said that she was under the impression that part of those funds were through FEMA. She asked if the damages were assessed throughout California or just Rio Dell to meet the threshold for FEMA funding.

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City Manager Knopp explained that the determination is made by Cal OES and historically they have tried to group as many of the associated costs together. He commented that around 2010, there was an earthquake in Crescent City that damaged the harbor there and that only became federally declared because the same tsunami damaged some of the harbor equipment in Santa Cruz. By lumping those damages together, they were able to meet the required threshold and both communities then received assistance.

He said in summary, adoption of the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) allows for planning and making jurisdiction aware of the threats and eligible for FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funding. If compliant with AB 2140, the City is eligible, (but not guaranteed) for 100% reimbursement rather than 75% for city damaged infrastructure.

Community Development Director Caldwell further explained that the idea behind the Safety Element and the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan is to define risks and to have policies or mitigation measures to avoid those risks.

A motion was made by Arsenault/Millington Knight to adopt Resolution No. PC 188-2025 *Recommending that the City Council Approve the Amended Safety Element to Incorporate the County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP)*. The motion carried 3-0.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m. to the September 23, 2025, regular meeting.

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Patrick Knight, Vice-Chair

Attest:

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Karen Dunham, City Clerk