



City Council Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 06, 2025 at 6:00 PM

33 Church Street, Sutter Creek, CA 95685

The Agenda can be found on the City's Website: www.cityofsuttercreek.org

The City of Sutter Creek City Council Meeting is available on YouTube at

<https://www.youtube.com/@CityofSutterCreek>.

1. Call to Order and Establish a Quorum for Regular Meeting

Present: Council members Riordan, Sierk, Gunselman, Swift, Feist

Absent: None

City Treasurer: Victoria Runquist

Staff: Tom DuBois - City Manager, Aaron Wolcott - City Clerk, Jim O'Connell - Chief of Police, Will Watson - Project Manager, Derek Cole - City Attorney, Mason Peters - Finance Supervisor

2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

3. Public Forum

Justin Howard addressed the Council regarding routine speeding on Gopher Flat Road, a 25 mph residential area. He stated that many families and children use the road to walk downtown or get to school and that there have been multiple near-misses. He requested the Council to authorize a speed study, install speed tables, and consider temporary radar feedback signs to improve safety.

Police Chief Jim O'Connell announced that Officer Daniel Rigo was selected as the Amador County Peace Officer of the Year for 2025. He highlighted Officer Rigo's work, including 733 traffic stops, 130 arrests, and 178 criminal reports in the last year, as well as his role in organizing National Night Out.

Al Bierce expressed concern that the free public greens bin at the fire station is scheduled to be removed in two months due to its reported annual cost. He asked if the City could do anything to help keep the service, which is used by many residents.

4. City Manager's Report

City Manager Tom DuBois provided updates on some key City activities. All Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) work is finished for the year. The repaving of Sutter Hill Road is approved for next year. The striping plan and bike/pedestrian plan will be on the next meeting's agenda. A grant was submitted for the Monteverde Store, and an RFP for a new city auditor has been posted. A budget review will occur at the next council meeting.

The Henderson repair project has experienced delays due to difficulties removing an iron pipe encased in concrete. Design meetings for the new wastewater treatment plant are set to begin soon

For economic development, a kickoff event for the new entrepreneurship center is scheduled for October 22nd.

The city is actively recruiting for a City Clerk. DuBois also noted the dissolution of the Amador County Recreation Agency (ACRA) and that the City is planning for next summer's pool management.

5. Presentations

6. Approval of Minutes

A. City Council Minutes of September 15, 2025

Council member Riordan requested additional information for item 7B given the importance of the wastewater treatment plant for the future of the City. The City Clerk agreed to create an addendum for that item.

Motion to approve the Minutes from September 15, 2025 by Mayor Gunselman, second by Council member Riordan.

AYES: Council members Sierk, Gunselman, Swift, Feist, Riordan

ABSENT:

NOES:

MOTION CARRIED 5-0

7. Consent Agenda

None

8. Ordinances and Public Hearing

A. Appeal of Planning Commission's Denial of the Application of Ten Fifteen LLC for a Conditional Use Permit to Use Real Property Located at 23 Main Street as a Short-Term Rental.

City Contract Planner, Erin Ventura, presented the appeal, noting the Planning Commission denied the permit because it could not make finding A, "that the proposed use of the property is desirable to the public convenience or welfare". She noted that the Commission had also discussed possible issues with other findings as well.

During the Public Hearing, eleven members of the public spoke in opposition, citing concerns that a short-term rental would disrupt the historic, residential character of Main Street, create noise, and remove a house from the long-term rental market. Multiple residents, including a member of the Planning Commission, emphasized that Main Street is a historic, residential area. They argued that allowing a short-term rental would be a commercial encroachment that would fundamentally change the character of the neighborhood. Concerns were raised about the potential for noise and parties from transient guests. One neighbor stated they were worried about the "revolving door" of different people and the potential for disruptions that are common with vacation rentals. A key point of opposition was the removal of a home from the long-term rental market. Several speakers noted the shortage of affordable long-term rentals in Sutter Creek and argued that converting a residential home into a short-term rental exacerbates this problem.

Planning Commissioner, Laura Damiani, clarified their denial largely based on preserving the historic district but included concerns regarding other findings beyond just Finding A which was in the motion. She stated that the commission felt that allowing a short-term rental was not in the best interest of the public welfare because it would negatively impact the historic nature of the neighborhood among other concerns. Planning Commissioner, Robert Trudgen expressed concern that the Planning Commission did not have clear guidance from the City on the direction of the City with regard to Short-Term Rentals and requested that the Council take this matter up in a more concise manner.

The applicant, Eric Lundgren, stated that tourism supports the local economy and that allowing guests to stay in historic homes deepens their connection to the town. He noted his family's deep connection to the home and desire to continue to maintain the home while also contributing to the local economy.

City Council members discussed the application at length. Council members Riordan, Sierk, Feist and Swift all noted the historic nature of Main Street and felt that this element set the application apart from other short-term rental applications that have come to the City for approval in the past. There was a lengthy discussion about the findings described under City Code 18.60.040 and the concern that determining the findings was somewhat subjective. Given the historic nature of the neighborhood, opposition from neighbors, and the previous decision of the Planning Commission to deny the application, the Council ultimately decided to deny the appeal.

Motion to deny the appeal of the Planning Commission decision to deny a Conditional Use Permit to operate a Short-Term Rental at 23 Main Street based on the inability to make findings A, B, & E of City Code 18.60.040 by Council member Sierk, second by Council member Riordan.

AYES: Council members Sierk, Gunselman, Swift, Feist, Riordan

ABSENT:

NOES:

MOTION CARRIED 5-0

- B. Appeal of Planning Commission's Denial of the Application of Pamela Haydnmyer for a Conditional Use Permit to Use Real Property Located at 30 Bryson Drive as a Short-Term Rental.

Contract City Planner, Erin Ventura, presented the appeal for a three-bedroom home in an R2 (multifamily) zoning district, which the Planning Commission had also denied based on Finding A. There were no members of the public who chose to speak during the Public Hearing.

The applicant, Pam Haydnmyer, explained she built the home but now needs to care for her husband with dementia and sought the permit as an option for maintaining the home while she is away. She noted the property is adjacent to commercial buildings and has already discussed the short-term rental option with her neighbors.

Council members noted that the location was fundamentally different from the previous item, as it is in a multifamily zone near commercial properties and not within the historic district. Councilmember Riordan moved to approve the permit.

Motion to approve a Conditional Use Permit to operate a Short-term Rental at 30 Bryson Drive by Council member Riordan, second by Council member Feist.

AYES: Council members Sierk, Gunselman, Swift, Feist, Riordan

ABSENT:

NOES:

MOTION CARRIED 5-0

9. Administrative Agenda

- A. City Tree Ordinance

The Council agreed to move this item to a future meeting agenda.

- B. Short Term Rentals

The Council discussed the need to review the City's approach to short-term rentals. The consensus was that the City's current process for approving or denying short-term rentals is too subjective and that a clear, objective ordinance is needed.

The council agreed that a formal ordinance is necessary to provide clear guidelines for staff, the Planning Commission, and applicants. The desire is to move away from the current case-by-case, subjective decision-making process. The goal is to have a set of objective criteria that can be applied consistently to all applications.

To give the City time to develop a new ordinance, the Council directed staff to prepare a temporary moratorium on accepting new applications for short-term rentals. This moratorium will be brought to the Council for discussion and a vote at a November meeting. The idea is to pause new applications so that the City can focus on creating a well-thought-out ordinance without the pressure of new permit requests.

The council identified several key components that they want to see included in a new ordinance:

- **Cap on the Total Number of Rentals:** There was a strong consensus that there should be a limit on the total number of short-term rentals allowed in the city. This is to prevent an over-saturation of vacation rentals and to preserve the residential character of neighborhoods.
- **Density Limits:** In addition to an overall cap, the Council would like to establish density limits within specific neighborhoods. This would prevent any one neighborhood from having a disproportionately high concentration of short-term rentals.
- **Permit Cycling and Renewal:** The Council discussed the need for a process to manage the permits. This could include a system where permits are not permanently tied to a property but are instead subject to renewal. They also discussed the possibility of a lottery or a waiting list for new permits once the cap is reached.
- **Differentiation Between Hosted and Non-Hosted Rentals:** There was a discussion about whether the ordinance should treat hosted rentals (where the homeowner is present) differently from non-hosted rentals (where the entire home is rented out).

The immediate next step is for staff to draft a temporary moratorium for the Council to consider in November. Following that, staff will be tasked with drafting the new short-term rental ordinance, which will then be brought to the City Council for review and approval. The Council emphasized that they want this to be a public process with ample opportunity for community input.

C. ACRA Update and Discussion

The Council received an update from City Manager Tom DuBois and Council member Sierk regarding the impending dissolution of the Amador County Recreation Agency (ACRA). The possible dissolution will require the City to find a new manager for the City pool and involves the auditing and return of development impact fees from ACRA. Council member Sierk explained that she needed direction from Council regarding how to vote on the dissolution on behalf of the City.

During public comment, Bradley Booker, from Amador Trail Stewardship, urged the Council to consider restructuring ACRA rather than dissolving it completely. He argued that the dissolution is not a done deal and should be reconsidered.

The Council determined more information is needed before providing direction on the matter.

10. Mayor and Council Member Reports

None.

11. City Attorney's Report

None.

12. Information and Correspondence

- A. Letter from Resident 1: re STR appeal
- B. Letter from Resident 2: re STR appeal

13. Closed Session - the meeting was adjourned into closed session at 8:58PM

- A. Conference with Labor Negotiator Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.6
Agency Negotiator: Tom DuBois, City Manager
Employee Organizations: Sutter Creek SEIU
- B. Conference with Real Property Negotiators
Property: APN 044-020-109-000
Agency negotiator: City Manager and City Attorney
Negotiating parties: Sutter Creek Investment Company, LLC
Under negotiation: Terms of payment and security conditions

14. Report from Closed Session

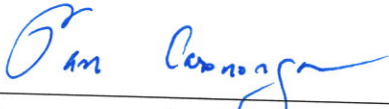
- Item 13A - The item was moved to a future meeting.
- Item 13B - There was no reportable action.

15. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30PM.

The next regularly scheduled meeting is October 20, 2025

Meeting Minutes Approved on October 20, 2025



Pam Caronongan, City Clerk