

New flood zone regulations subject of special Capitola council meeting

CAPITOLA — The City Council will discuss new flood zone requirements with a representative from the Federal Emergency Management Agency at a special meeting Aug. 8.

The meeting is being held to clarify the issues since the council is expected to take formal action at its regularly scheduled meeting Aug. 9.

The city has an ultimatum from the federal agency to approve the new flood zone guidelines or be faced with severe restrictions on new construction. The Planning Commission, which passed the guidelines to the council without a recommendation, maintained FEMA is "holding a gun to our heads."

Frank Thomas, assistant administrator

in FEMA's Office of Loss Reduction, has told the city that if the new guidelines aren't approved by the city by Aug. 15, Capitola would become ineligible for future federal disaster assistance. The elimination of FEMA's participation would also make it difficult for property owners in flood-prone areas to even getting loans.

Meanwhile, if the city gives in and adopts the new flood zone guidelines, it could mean a future Capitola Village built

on stilts. Any new construction or remodel involving more than 50 percent of the existing building would have to meet the requirements.

The new flood zone sets preventive standards in case of a 100-year flood. The new zone would require raising floor levels eight feet. It encompasses all of Capitola Village and adjoining areas to Soquel Creek.

The special council meeting will be held at 7 p.m. in the chamber at City Hall.