



City of Malibu News

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City Council Takes Steps to Assist Residents with Recovery from Woolsey Fire

(Malibu, CA) - On Monday, February 11, the Malibu City Council held a public hearing to consider amendments to the Malibu Municipal Code and to the Local Coastal Program to make it faster and easier for residents who lost homes during the Woolsey Fire to rebuild, and several items meant to facilitate rebuilding activities.

“After the devastating losses we suffered during the Woolsey Fire, the City Council and staff are absolutely committed to helping residents recover and rebuild as quickly and safely as possible,” Mayor Jefferson “Zuma Jay” Wagner said. “These are small, but important, practical steps to assist our community and we will continue to seek out more ways to help residents rebuild the community.”

The Woolsey Fire was largest wildfire ever to hit Los Angeles County, destroying more than 500 homes in Malibu and charring nearly 100,000 acres in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. The City’s top priority is helping residents and the community rebuild.

The Council reviewed the Planning Commission’s recommendations to modify standards and procedures to facilitate the rebuilding of structures damaged or destroyed by the Woolsey Fire and provide relief for the victims of the fire.

The Council voted to change the definition of temporary structures to allow a wider variety of temporary dwelling units, rather than only trailers, to be placed temporarily on burned out properties so that residents have more options live in while rebuilding. Those could include Conex trailers, double-wides, camper trailers, and other types of units, as long as they meet certain requirements. Approvals to maintain such units permanently as accessory dwelling units are possible. Property owners should consult City staff for details.

The Council voted to allow up to two such temporary dwelling units with a combined maximum size of up to 1,200 square feet. The Council also voted to extend the time allowed to keep a trailer or other temporary dwelling unit on a property from six months to four years.

Community members had asked to be allowed to install temporary power poles at burned properties to maintain landscaping, security gates and pool maintenance prior to placing a temporary housing structure on the property. Staff clarified that permanent power to accommodate those uses can be approved on a case-by-case basis. City staff will work with each applicant to determine the best and safest application.

The Council also discussed a proposal by the Planning Commission to allow property owners to install large water storage tanks for firefighting purposes as part of their post-fire rebuilding work. Community members cited the lack of water, or water pressure during the Woolsey Fire for firefighting activities by the Fire Department and private citizens, and the additional resource such tanks could provide in protecting homes during future wildfires. The Planning Department staff reported that most water storage tanks would not require a Coastal Development Permit, depending on site-specific conditions.

Additionally, the Council voted to expedite and incentivize Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) upgrades, and voted to make it easier to implement erosion control plans and remove damaged trees from burned properties as part of the rebuilding process.

To see the complete staff report from the February 11 City Council meeting, visit <https://www.malibucity.org/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/02112019-1271?packet=true>.

To see the video of the entire meeting, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJBiqxSFyAE&t=24s>.

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