
Face-off for Pacific Grove mayor

By KELLY NIX

TWO FORMER Pacific Grove City Council colleagues will square off against each other for the mayor's seat in the Nov. 3 general election.

Mayor Nick Smith and former P.G. city councilman Luke Coletti, who served on the panel from 2020 to 2024, were the only two residents to seek the position of mayor. The filing deadline was Aug. 6.

Elected mayor in 2024, Smith said he has worked to promote respectful,

practical, and solutions-focused leadership for the city.

"My priorities are fiscal stability, repair and maintenance of infrastructure, protection of our coastline and natural resources, and preservation of the character that makes Pacific Grove special," Smith said in his candidate statement. "During my term, we have completed many street and sidewalk repair projects enhancing the beauty and safety of the city and safe

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routes to school.”

The mayor touted some of the council’s accomplishments under his leadership, including the adoption of a climate action plan, completion of the housing element, and transitioning the city from an at-large election system to district-based elections.

Roundabout

Also in 2025, Smith proposed raising the amount of taxpayer-funded pay for city council members, arguing that it was not only time for an increase (since the last raise in 1998), but that it would induce more residents to run for city council.

Diametrically opposed to the increase was Coletti, who formed a group to fight it, arguing that voters — not councilmembers — should be allowed to decide on pay increases for the council.

The issue came to a head June 2, when voters soundly rejected a measure backed by the city council that would have increased the pay.

Smith and Coletti also disagree on a proposed roundabout at the busy intersection of Cedar Street, Congress Avenue, and Sunset Drive. When they were on

the council together, Smith voted for the roundabout, estimated to cost \$10 million or more, while Coletti voted against it.

Coletti said he’s running for mayor because he wants to preserve and protect the residential character of the community and the “unique quality of life” that Pagrovians share.

For more than a decade, Coletti said, he’s advocated for residents to make government more responsible, accountable and transparent.

“I believe in serving the community, not myself,” he said in his candidate statement. “For example, I do not believe taxpayers should pay for my medical insurance.”

Transparency, reform

Coletti noted that he’s authored more than a dozen city ordinances and policies regarding transparency, government reform, land use and fiscal responsibility. As mayor, he said, he would “represent the interests of residents, protect the natural environment, pursue affordable housing opportunities, promote youth recreation and reestablish the cultural arts commission.”

Coletti also said he wants to prioritize the upkeep of Pacific Grove’s business districts and electrical infrastructure, maintain roads and sidewalks, improve access to public restrooms, and enforce speed limits.