

August 10, 2026

Dear Commissioners,

This is a comment on a non-agenda item for the Planning Commission meeting to be held today.

I object to the recent ministerial action by the Planning and Development Department that allowed Goodland Guns owned by Ashton Enterprises LLC to move into 7443 Hollister Ave. I live between this location and the Ellwood Mesa Open Space with my family in the home that we have owned for 16 years. I personally know parents whose children attend Here We Grow Early Learning Center, an infant daycare and preschool, that is next door to where Goodland Guns is now located.

A ministerial decision equated the firearms retail business, an unlisted type of business in the City Zoning Codes, with a general retail business, thus giving it right of use in this neighborhood's "community commercial" zone. Consequently, this action is causing the community harm.

The General Plan explicitly dictates that the City's actions must "provide for a compatible and holistic mix of land uses... to protect and enhance the health, safety, and welfare of Goleta's residents, workers, and visitors while preserving the unique character of the community."

The categorically distinct, special firearms business license was issued by the City of Goleta on June 4, 2026 (67 days ago), there was no public notice requirement, and there is no avenue for public appeal. I demand that city officials use their own authority to review the rightfulness of a ministerial zoning clearance for Goodland Guns. I implore the Goleta City Council to exercise its power to pass immediate emergency ordinances, given that an apparent administrative loophole is causing real community harm.

If finding no administrative remedy, a Writ of Mandate can be filed by an affected party against the City administration in Superior Court by September 2 (90 days from the license issuance.)

It appears to be an abuse of discretion by the Planning Department to knowingly permit a gun store to move next door to an operating preschool without considering the impact that the presence of a gun store might have on this adjacent highly sensitive location.

The preschool is losing a substantial income as some families with heightened anxiety about safety leave the program. If the preschool goes out of business, it is likely that the landlord's financial prospects with that property will be affected by the gun store's presence.

Consequently, Goodland Guns, before it has opened its doors for business, already is a public nuisance. It is a legal nuisance, because its operation has caused a substantial and unreasonable interference with the preschool's business on their leased property, and it endangers the safety,

welfare, and comfort of the staff and children in the preschool, Ellwood Elementary School and community in the surrounding residential area.

I submit this as a comment on a non-agenda item for today's Planning Commission Meeting and will await responses after the meeting. I include a copy of an email letter I sent on August 4, 2026, to the Mayor, City Council, City Manager, and the Planning and Development Review Director. I am awaiting answers to questions that were not addressed in the City's document entitled "Questions and Answers regarding Firearms Sales" initially released on August 7. <https://www.cityofgoleta.org/your-city/finance/business-license-program/firearms-retail-relocation-q-a>.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary Nishimoto", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mary Nishimoto



## Goodland Guns: a call for public review of licensing and compatibility with existing neighborhood and zoning

Tue, Aug 4, 2026 at 3:10 PM

To: skasdin@cityofgoleta.gov, dlopez@cityofgoleta.gov, rnisbet@cityofgoleta.org

**Dear Ms. Lopez, City Clerk,** please forward this time-sensitive letter to Mayor Paula Perotte, the City Councilmembers, Robert Nisbet (City Manager), and Peter Imhof (Planning and Development Review Director). Thank you.

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Dear Mr. Kasdin,

Please know that I appreciate you coming to the community meeting at Santa Barbara Shores Park yesterday to give us an update on what you have been able to do after you received such short notice on Thursday about the firearms business, GOODLAND GUNS, moving into our neighborhood at 7443 HOLLISTER AVE GOLETA, CA 93117, APN 079-554-002. I hope you will express publicly your reactions, both personally and as our City Council representative, to learning about the questionable land use permitting after administrative approval. I have highlighted in **red** questions that I hope the City administration will address promptly.

It is alarming that the city considers selling firearms and ammunition to be equivalent to selling sporting goods. Anyone walking into Goodland Guns and Play It Again Sports, an actual sporting goods establishment of comparable size, would see the difference. It is negligent of the City of Goleta to fail to notify the public of a firearms-selling business moving next door to a preschool. This appears to be a purposeful effort of the City to push this through without transparency. It doesn't pass the sniff test.

**Was Dan Ashton/Ashton Enterprises LLC/Goodland Guns granted a Zone Clearance Modification (it may be Case No. 23-0002-ZCM)?** A ZCM is a request to change or bend a specific zoning rule (a modification) with a final administrative building permit approval (a zoning clearance). It means Goodland Guns was allowed an official exception to standard property rules.

Whether or not it was a ZCM, the City granted a final clearance stamp on the application for the 7443 Hollister location with no public notification to residents and businesses in the immediate neighborhood when the decision was pending or when administratively approved. **Given that the public was given no notice, if a deadline to appeal has passed, will the City extend the deadline?**

It is egregious that Goodland Guns is required to possess a Federal Firearms License (under Ashton Enterprise, LLC, expires August 1 2029) and a *special* Goleta Business Permit to sell firearms, **and yet this highly regulated commercial operation** falls into the municipal category of a general retail business, **because there is no category specifically for firearms commerce in the City Plan and Ordinance Code.**

According to accessible information online from the City of Goleta, the **business license for Goodland Guns expires 9/30/26** and the application for renewal is pending. This is for the address 5731 Hollister Ave where the business owner, Dan Ashton, currently operates. I demand as a neighborhood resident that the City delay approving the renewal to operate next door to a preschool at the 7443 Hollister location until the local community's grievances are publicly and meaningfully addressed by the City. There are many neighbors that support this demand. **If the approval has been granted for the 7443 Hollister location, then why is that information not immediately accessible for the public to appeal within time allowed? If the Goleta Firearms Business License has been approved, what was the date of the approval?**

**What does it take to amend the city code so that firearms businesses are identified as an explicit commercial category?** Now that the City of Goleta is aware of this "loophole," it must elevate protections for residential areas as quickly as possible for local public health and safety.

Please see <https://www.rutgers.edu/news/researchers-link-firearm-dealer-openings-increases-local-shootings>

**The operation of a firearms business must not be permitted in the *community commercial* zone** within the City.

**On what grounds did a retail firearms and ammunitions business pass scrutiny of compatibility with the language on zoning in the existing ordinance code?:**

(§ 17.08.010):

The purposes of the Commercial Districts are to:

"A. Designate adequate land for a full range of residential- and business-serving commercial uses and services, consistent with the General Plan, to maintain and strengthen the City's economic resources, and meet the needs of local community for goods and services;"

In the City Code of ordinances, there is specific intent (bold emphasis):

"CC Community Commercial. This District is intended for relatively small commercial centers that provide **convenience goods and services to the surrounding residential neighborhoods while protecting the residential character of the area** through implementation of the Community Commercial (C-C) land use designation in the General Plan."

And in the Goleta General Plan/Coastal Land Use Plan there is an emphasis to prevent the intrusion of uses that would be detrimental to the preservation of the existing character of neighborhoods::

"LU 3.3 Community Commercial (C-C). [GP] The Community Commercial category is intended to allow relatively small commercial centers that provide **convenience goods and services to serve the everyday needs of the surrounding residential neighborhoods while protecting the residential character of the area. Uses that may attract significant traffic volumes from outside the Goleta Valley are discouraged.** Mixed-use, including residential, development at densities up to 20 units per acre may be permitted. **All community commercial development shall be designed to facilitate and promote pedestrian circulation in and to the area,** as well as to link these areas to other activity centers. Noise levels and hours of operation may be regulated to avoid any potential conflict with adjacent residential uses. The size of any mixed-use developments shall be consistent with street and utility capacities. The Fairview Shopping Center and Calle Real Center are included in this designation. (Amended by Reso. 23-60, 11/07/23; Reso. 23-69, 12/05/23; and Reso. 24-19, 4/02/2024)"

It must be recognized that 7443 Hollister Ave. is within the designated sub-area of Goleta called the **"Southwest Residential Community"** in the Goleta General Plan/Coastal Land Use Plan. The plan emphasizes conservation of existing residential neighborhoods. An intent of the plan is to prevent intrusion of uses that would be detrimental to the preservation of the existing character of neighborhoods.

How did the City assess the compatibility between Goodland Guns and the residential character of the area given that there is a preschool next door, a preK-6 grade elementary school within sight and 0.6 miles from 7443 Hollister Ave., and the adjacent pedestrian and bike path that was specifically improved by the City for children to safely use between school and home?

If deadlines to appeal the City's decisions have passed, how can they be extended? This is in the light of the City's failure to notify the public of its actions with adequate time for the public to comment and appeal.

Can you obtain copies of all public records kept by the City of Goleta Planning and Environmental Review Department and Business License Program regarding the commercial business transition of Goodland Guns (Ashton Enterprises, LLC)? Please request all administrative zoning clearances, staff correspondence, land use determinations, conformity reviews, and public notification exceptions generated between January 2023 and the present date concerning the following parcels:

Old Location: 5731 Hollister Ave, Goleta, CA 93117

New Location: 7443 Hollister Ave, Goleta, CA 93117 (APN: 079-554-002)

Please make these records available through your office as quickly as possible, pursuant to the California Public Records Act (Government Code Section 7920 et seq.). Concerned citizens of Goleta would otherwise face a longer wait period to receive the records, and this is a very time-sensitive matter.

Stuart, thank you for your attention and concern. I expect you are receiving correspondence and calls from many concerned in the community. I hope you will urge the City to work with the residents and business owners to creatively problem solve and remedy this.

I look forward to your reply and the administration's response to my questions very soon.

Sincerely,

Mary Nishimoto

