

THE MORNING AFTER

*Highlights from the
Ross Town Council Meeting
of December 9, 2010*

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December 10, 2010

Town Council Commends Police Chief Reis

The Council adopted a resolution commending Police Chief Jim Reis upon his retirement. Chief Reis has been with the Ross Police Department since 1977, and was promoted to Police Chief in 2008 after serving as Patrol Sergeant and Administrative Sergeant. The resolution states, "Police Chief Jim Reis will be remembered for his generous spirit and commitment to the Town, for always making himself available to the public, for his willingness to listen to residents and address their concerns, and for his calm demeanor, sense of humor and big heart, all of which will be sorely missed." The Chief received a heartfelt standing ovation, as well as a framed resolution and a few parting gifts.



The Town has been actively recruiting to fill the police chief position as soon as possible, and Town Manager Broad recently offered the position to a highly qualified captain and deputy chief from Marysville with over 20 years police experience. The Town received twenty-two applications during the recruitment process, interviewed five candidates, and offered the position to the top candidate, who, according to Council member Scot Hunter, is "very personable, and very professional." The offer is contingent upon a background investigation and medical review, which should be completed within a one-month period. If all goes well, the new chief should be ready to start sometime after the first of the year. Chief Reis will help orient the new chief.

Council Discusses Hiring of New Public Works Director

The Council discussed the job requirements and recruitment process for hiring an individual to replace Public Works Director and Building Official Mel Jarjoura upon his retirement in January. Town Manager Broad reported that he, Mayor Martin and Council member Strauss recently met with the top candidate from the Town Engineer recruitment process conducted in the spring of 2010 and determined the candidate is still interested in the position and well-qualified to serve as public works director. Some Council members and staff, however, expressed concern that the candidate is not experienced with the building codes and would not be ready to take on the duties of the building official. In response, Mr. Jarjoura said he would be available to work on a contract basis to process building permits and plan checks and train the new public works director. Town Manager Broad offered to discuss the matter further with staff and then bring the item back to a special Council meeting on December 13th.

Reorganization of Town Hall Offices Considered

Council member Rick Strauss presented ideas to reorganize Town Hall spaces to better serve the public and staff functions. This would include shifting existing Town Hall offices so that Building, Public Works, and Planning Department personnel would all be located in offices at the front of the building. The Town Hall chambers would be used as a conference room on an as-needed basis. Staff enthusiastically supported the proposed changes, which would improve the working environment in the short-term while the Town continued to explore options for new public facilities.



Council member Strauss also suggested implementing minor modifications to the front of Town Hall. A glass wall and door between the columns in front would improve circulation while preserving the historical character and entrance to Town Hall. The Council asked Council member Strauss to get cost estimates for the project and work with staff to determine office space and technology requirements.



Mayor Chris Martin's Report

On behalf of the Town of Ross I would like to express congratulations to Branson School's girls volleyball team and their coach Michelle Brazil for winning their second consecutive Division V State Volleyball Championship. This is quite an accomplishment. We are all very proud of you.

Approximately one week ago, the Independent Journal gave a glowing review to the Café on the Common, citing the excellent homemade scones, sought after Blue Bottle coffee and the exceptional lunch dishes. This is another reason to shop locally and support our Town's merchant community. Congratulations to Rana Madanat and Café on the Common.

Whenever the construction is completed and the Lagunitas Bridge is deemed ready for public use, there will be a very brief dedication. The Town will send out an email hours before the removal of the road barriers inviting to you participate at the Lagunitas Bridge opening celebration. We hope you will be able to attend this historic occasion and we thank Roseanna Lourdeaux for her efforts organizing the event.

This past October, the Council held its annual Retreat at the Marin Art and Garden Center. It was a productive meeting, allowing staff, council members, and citizens to freely exchange ideas and explore issues facing our community. I would like to propose that a second retreat be held in February to follow up with our goals, committee assignments, and other matters. Given the impending staff changes and a new Town survey that will be launched soon, February 2011 will be an opportune time to meet and review our priority objectives.

Council Discusses Potential Ross Survey

The Council approved a Ross survey prototype that is designed to get feedback from residents and stakeholders on what they think the Town is doing right and where the Town could improve. Designed by Ross resident Michael Thoma, the brief survey asks respondents to identify three issues the Town handled well over the past year, and three important issues the Town could have handled better. The questions are purposely open-ended, which Mr. Thoma says will invite responses that may surprise the Council and staff.

Mr. Thoma has generously offered to provide his services to the Town at no charge. He will collect and analyze the data, and present his findings at a community meeting. Survey responses will be kept confidential and only summary data will be published. He plans to distribute the survey by mail and through the internet to residents and stakeholders in January.

Frederick Allen Park Improvements Update

Project Planner Christine O'Rourke provided an update on the Allen Park Improvements, which are being funded with \$226,000 in Proposition 40 State grants. As of November 30th, the Town has expended approximately \$65,000 of the grant amount for tennis court resurfacing, drilling of a new well, tree removal and trimming, landscaping, project planning and construction management. Resurfacing of the tennis courts has been delayed due to cold and rainy weather, but the contractor plans to continue work throughout the winter whenever weather permits.

The Council reviewed bid prices to install a new patio made out of interlocking pavers in front of the tennis courts, new skirting for the base of the paddle court, and a screen for the portable toilet. The Council also discussed a request from the California Department of Parks and Recreation for the Town to review the current \$200 per 2-year key fee and set a "reasonable" key fee based on community input. The Ross Recreation board of directors will consider the issue at an upcoming board meeting.



Changes Approved to Ease Post Office Parking



The Council approved new parking regulations for post office parking spaces in order to free up available parking for post office customers. Three 15-minute parking spaces, intended for postal patrons only, will be established directly in front of the Post Office on Ross Common. Parking spaces in the rear Post Office parking lot will be designated in the following order: two “handicapped” parking spaces, closest to the post office; six 15-minute parking spaces designated for use by postal patrons only; four “unlimited” parking spaces designated for use by postal employees only; ten to twelve “unlimited” parking spaces retained for use by the general public; and one “handicapped” parking space closest to Lagunitas Road.

November Election Results

The Council adopted a resolution to officially declare the November 2010 election results. Voters passed Measure G to continue the Paramedics Service Tax for four years. While the measure needed to be approved by two-thirds of the voters, 74% voted in favor of the measure. Voters cast 1,133 ballots, representing a 67.6% voter turnout.

The Paramedic Services Tax will continue at the current rate of \$42 tax for the first year with a potential increase of \$3 a year for the remaining three years, up to a maximum of \$51. The Council will determine the actual increase by resolution each year.



Council Members Provide Update on Council Goals

Council member Rupert Russell reported he will be discussing the Town’s treatment of basements and attics in floor area calculations with the Advisory Design Review Group at its December 28th meeting. Mayor Pro Tempore Carla Small announced she will hold the first public meeting on the Town’s right of ways on January 11, 2011, from 10 A.M. to noon at Town Hall. Her goal for the meeting is to identify the Town’s right-of-ways and discuss major issues with community members. Mayor Chris Martin is completing a white paper on the Town’s public facilities, which will provide history and background information on the Town’s exploration of new and remodeled public facilities. Council member Scot Hunter continues to meet with the Marin Art & Garden organizations to identify management and financial challenges.

SmartMeter Alert

PG&E has begun installing SmartMeters at Ross homes. Although PG&E stands behind the safety, reliability and energy-monitoring benefits of SmartMeters, a number of Marin County residents remain concerned about health risks, accuracy and privacy. You can request a deferral of your SmartMeter installation by calling PG&E at 866-743-0263. You can also try hanging a sign on your electricity meter instructing the technician not to install a SmartMeter. The Council will discuss possible suspension or delay of SmartMeter deployment in Ross at its special Council meeting on December 13th.



Safety First!

Residents and their children are advised to use crosswalks and watch for traffic before crossing. Children have been observed crossing Lagunitas Road mid-block at Ross School, creating dangerous and potentially tragic conditions. The Police Department requests parents to instruct their children to use cross walks and never jaywalk.

New Building Codes Go Into Effect in January

The Council approved an ordinance adopting new State building and fire codes, which go into effect on January 1, 2011. One of these codes, the California Green Building Code, is the first statewide green building code in the country. New green building requirements include reducing indoor and outdoor water consumption, diverting 50% of construction debris from landfills, and installing low pollutant-emitting materials. Code provisions requiring low-flow plumbing fixtures, showerheads and toilets will not become effective until July 1st.



Planning Application Scoreboard

The Town Council took the following action on planning applications considered at last night's Council meeting. For more information on each planning application, you can view staff reports [here](#). The minutes of this meeting will be available on the website at www.townofross.org after approval at the January Council meeting.

Senior Planner Elise Semonian

Address	Applicant	Approved	Denied	Continued
21 Fernhill Avenue	Brian and Rachel Wells	X		
191 Lagunitas Road	Paris and Martha Royo	X		
3 Madera Avenue	Paul and Susanne Carek	X		
20 Upper Road West	Clifford and Adriana Booth			X
49 Glenwood Avenue	John and Michelle Battelle	X		
88 Wellington Avenue	Steve and Chris Simpson			X
33 Winship Avenue	Chris and Mary Ann Neumann			X

Upcoming Meetings

A Special Town Council meeting will be held on Monday, December 13, beginning at 5:30 p.m. The next regular Public Works Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 11, at 8:00 a.m. The next regular Town Council meeting will be held on Thursday, January 13, at 6:30 p.m. Agendas and staff reports are posted in advance of the meetings on the Town's website at www.townofross.org. All meetings are held at Town Hall unless indicated otherwise. You may email Town Council members by accessing the website [here](#).

The Morning After is published following each regular Council meeting by the Town of Ross and is written by Project Planner Christine O'Rourke, edited by Town Manager Gary Broad with support from Administrative Manager Linda Lopez, and reviewed by the Ross Mayor prior to publication. The newsletter is not an official record of the meeting's proceedings and does not cover all agenda items. No portion of this newsletter may be copied, reproduced or reprinted without advance written permission from the Town of Ross.