



THE MORNING AFTER

Town of Ross Monthly Newsletter

Includes highlights from the
Ross Town Council Meeting of May 23 and June 13, 2013

Town of Ross

Volume 7, Issue 6

June 14, 2013

Important Wildland Fire Safety Message - Create your Defensible Space Zone



Ross Valley Fire Department personnel will soon be out in the neighborhoods reminding homeowners of the requirement for property owners to create defensible space around their homes.

The Defensible Space area is the area where you've modified the landscaping to give your home the best chance to survive during a wildfire – greatly improving the odds for firefighters who are de-

fending your neighborhood. "Defensible Space" area should be a minimum of 100 feet of clearance around your home (or up to your property line). If your home is on a slope or subject to high winds, extend the distance of this zone to the area recommended for your property.

You can reduce your fire risk by completing the following:

- Remove – dead and dying grass, shrubs and trees
- Reduce – the density of vegetation (fuel) and ladder fuels, those fuels extending from the ground to the tree canopies.
- Replace – hazardous vegetation with fire resistive, landscape vegetation in-

cluding low growing groundcovers and flowering plants.

A small ember landing on a little pile of flammable material may ignite and quickly spread to your home. The Fire Department suggests spending a morning getting rid of flammable things outside your home.

Following are a few of the items you should take a look at:

- Keep your rain gutters and roof clean.
- Get rid of dry grass, brush and other flammable materials around your

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Ross 4th of July Celebration



Come one, come all to the annual Ross 4th of July Celebration. The festivities will begin at 11:00 am with our one of kind parade followed by a picnic lunch under the trees on the Ross Common. The Woodlands Food Tent will be offering a tasty selection for lunch, the PTA will continue their tradition of \$1 beverages and "Master of Fun" Ed Dong, will be on hand to lead the

kids in some good old fashioned games. Contact parade leader Tom Fishburne at tom.fishburne@gmail.com if you wish to participate in the parade.

A big thank you to the Ross Historical Society, Ross Property Owners Association (RPOA), and the Ross PTA for sponsoring this event!

- Liz Welsh

The Morning After is Changing!

Beginning July 2013, The Morning After will have a fresh new look.

Stay informed and up to date. Join the Town's email list.

Email

**llopez@townofross.org
to join.**



Rupert Russell
Mayor

I was late to the Council meeting last night due to attending my son's graduation from Redwood High School. I cut short my family celebrations so that I could attend properly to my duties as Mayor of our Town. I apologize to the Town, however, for being temporarily absent from my duties on this one occasion. I am proud, however, that, for the duration to date of my having been on the Council and for the last year as Mayor, in spite of my be-

The Mayor's Report



ing a full-time working corporate law attorney (and among the busiest at my law firm in the City), I have been able to serve and be fully committed to the interests of Ross at the same time. The standard of commitment and achievement of Mayors of our Town prior to me has been extremely high, and the immediate former Mayors that I have served with, Carla Small and Chris Martin, set the bar very high indeed, but I would like residents in the Town as a whole to know that it is possible to be both a committed hard-working professional and carry on the public duties of a member of our Council and Mayor. Indeed, I would encourage others that are interested in serving our Town to be willing to step forward in the future and get involved, without being deterred by the fear that the responsibilities

of the Town are too distracting or too time-consuming. Since the last regular Council meeting the big news for the Town was that at a Special Meeting the Council passed by a 4-1 majority a balanced budget, including suspending the fire apprentice program. This last item generated a lot of discussion, especially with the firefighters' union writing to residents to encourage a different outcome. This was not an easy decision, but the cost of the fire apprentice program alone was \$228 per household and there was not the ability to fund that additional expense at the present time. No firefighters lost their jobs as a result of the decision; it was merely a decision not to fill vacant positions. Ross now has the same standard of fire service as all other municipalities within the Ross Val-

ley Fire Department. If the Town's finances improve, we may consider restoring this program in the future. However, in the near term maintaining a balanced budget is ever more challenging, as already the Town is in active negotiations with respect to the Town's police and is part of the current negotiations with the firefighters being conducted by the Ross Valley Fire Department, and the outcome of these 2 negotiations could well have a significant negative impact on the Town's finances. However desirable a location Ross is, our Town remains financially constrained, so it will continue to be important that our Council be willing to make the hard decisions in order to be prudent and responsible stewards of the funds available to provide services to the community.



Defensible Space Zone - Continued from page 1

- home – and don't forget leaves, pine needles, and bark walkways. Replace with well maintained landscape vegetation, and landscape rocks.
- Clear all flammable materials from your deck. This includes brooms and stacked wood. Also, enclose or board up the area under your deck to keep it from becoming a fuel bed for hot embers.
- Limb-up trees 10 feet from the ground (1/3 the height for smaller trees).
- Move wood piles and garbage cans away from your

home. Keep wood piles away from the home a distance two times the height of the pile.

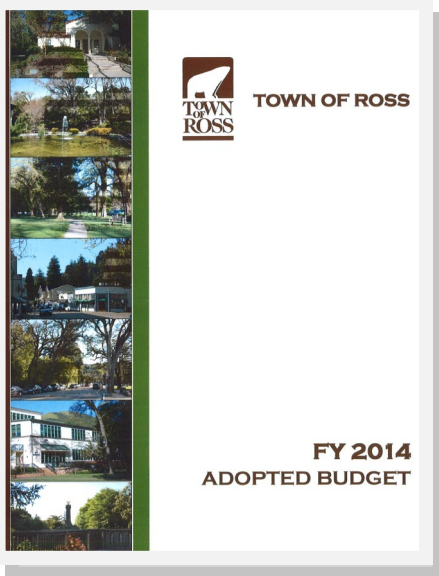
- Use fine mesh metal screen (1/4" or less) to cover eaves, roof and foundation vents to prevent windblown embers from entering.
- Inspect and clean your chimney every year. Trim away branches within 10 feet of the opening of the chimney. Install a spark arrester with 1/2" or smaller screen.
- Maintain fire engine access to your home by clearing

vegetation 10 from the sides of roads and driveways and 14' vertically.

For more information go to the Ross Valley Fire Department "Defensible Space" page on the website under the "Prevention" tab - <http://www.rossvalleyfire.org/prevention/defensible-space> - for additional information.

If you have any questions or would like to schedule an appointment for an inspection of your property, please contact Ross Valley Fire at (415) 258-4686.

Council Adopts FY 2014 Budget



The Town Council adopted the Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14) budget. The budget includes funding for core public services including police and fire. Fire services are provided by the Ross Valley Fire Department Joint Power Agency (RVFD).

The primary revenues supporting services in rank order include property taxes, the public safety parcel tax, permits and licenses, investments and rents and sales, and franchise fees. Primary expenditures in rank order includes: Ross Valley Fire Department, Ross Police Department, general government, public works and building and debt service. The budget sets the FY14 parcel tax rate at \$850/parcel. The budget includes funds for fire

apparatus equipment replacement, new sound system at Town Hall with half the funds to come from the Ross Property Owner’s Association, post office parking lot improvements, road pavement repairs and maintenance and related matters.

In addition, for the first time the Council was provided a “Budget in Brief” document that summarizes the budget information and a Long Range Financial Forecast which forecasts revenues and expenditures over the next five years. These documents along with the adopted budget are available on the Town website at www.townofross.org.

Temporary Police Reserve Officer Hired

The Ross Police Department has an officer that is a member of the US Army Reserves who was recently deployed to active service. To help cover during his absence, we have hired a temporary, part-time Reserve Police Officer. The new officer is Bill Drolla.

Officer Drolla has 27 years in law enforcement including service as a San Francisco Sheriff Deputy and Police Officer for the San Rafael Police Department. He retired from San Rafael in 2010. We welcome Officer Drolla to the Town of Ross.



Officer Bill Drolla

Please Clean Up After Your Pet

Just a friendly reminder to please clean up after your pet. Doggie bags are available along the Post Office parking lot pathway. Ross

Municipal Code Section 8.04.180 states “it shall be unlawful for the owner or person having control of any animal to suffer or permit such

animal to defecate upon any public property unless the person immediately removes and disposes of the feces in a sanitary manner.”

We appreciate everyone doing their part to help keep Ross clean for all to enjoy!

Council Allows Temporary Signage for Special Events

At the request of several organizations, the Town Council agreed to allow temporary signage to be posted for the Ross Valley Farmers Market, the Marin Community Farm Stand, and the Summer Concert Series held at the Marin Art & Garden Cen-

ter. The signage is currently not allowed under the Ross Municipal Code. Since these events are taking place now, the Council decided to put in place a moratorium for these organizations’ signage. As part of the moratorium, the Council agreed to: allow the organizations up to five signs;

signs cannot be placed in the public right-of-way and if they are, they will be removed; and referred this matter to the Public Works Committee for future review and consideration of a permanent solution including a new ordinance for review by the Council.





Senior Planner
Elise Semonian

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, visit www.townofross.org/pages/town_council/staff_reports.html. The minutes of this meeting will be available on the website at www.townofross.org after approval at the July 2013 Council meeting.

Address	Applicant	Council Action	Vote (for/against/abstain)
83 Bolinas Avenue	Ross Commons Holding Group	Continued to July meeting	--
55 Winship Avenue	Scott Raskin & Suzy March	Approved	4-0-1 (Brekhus recused)
12 Woodside Way	David & Maria Fortney	Approved	3-1-1 (Hoertkorn recused, Brekhus opposed)
63 Laurel Grove Avenue	Brad Oldenbrook	Continued to July meeting	--



The Farmers Markets are back!

ROSS VALLEY FARMERS MARKET
Thursdays 3:00-7:00 p.m.
May 30th to September 26th (except July 4th)
Downtown Ross, Post Office parking lot

MARIN COMMUNITY FARM STAND
Tuesdays 11:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.
June 11th to October 27th
Marin Art & Garden Center

What's Next...

- The Advisory Design Review Group will meet on Tuesday, June 25, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.
- Marin Art & Garden Center Summer Concert series begins Thursday, June 27, 2013 at 5:00 p.m.
- Town Hall offices will be closed Thursday, July 4, 2013 for Independence Day.
- The next regular Town Council meeting will be held on July 11, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. Agendas and staff reports are posted in advance of the meeting on the Town's website at www.townofross.org. All meetings are held at Town Hall unless indicated otherwise. You may email Council members by accessing the website at www.townofross.org/pages/contact_email_council.html.
- The Finance Committee will meet on Wednesday, July 24, 2013 at 1:00 p.m.

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