

THE MORNING AFTER

*Highlights from the
Ross Town Council Meeting
of May 12, 2011*

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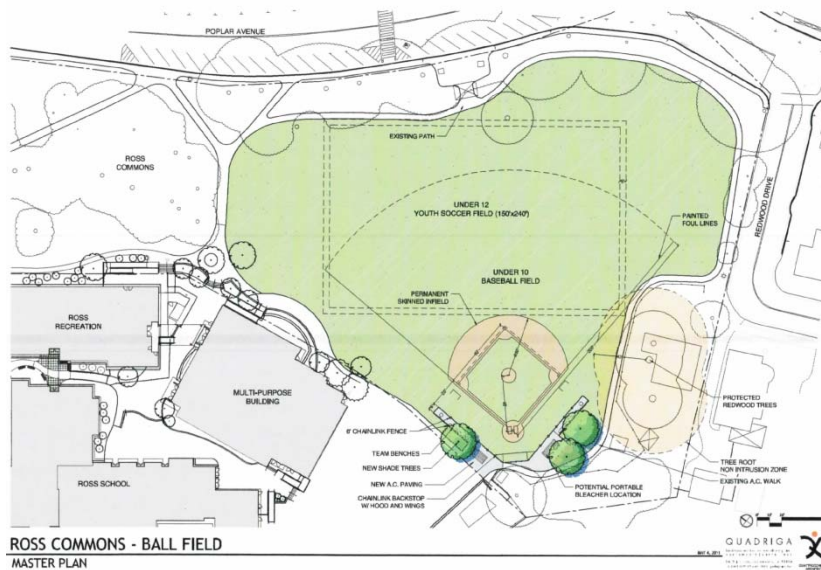
Council Reviews Schematic Design for Ross Common Baseball Field

The Council reviewed the landscape architect's baseball field schematic design for the southwest corner of the Ross Common. Town Manager Gary Broad explained that the schematic design would be used to develop more detailed drainage, grading, engineering and landscaping plans for the project's environmental review.

Council members asked if the architect could explore reducing the distance between team benches and the field from 25 feet to 20 feet to expand the proposed root non-intrusion zone of the protected redwood trees. Council member Rupert Russell was particularly concerned that the field location was constraining the soccer field. Council members requested that the backstop be kept to a minimum height and be black vinyl-coated chain link to minimize its visual impact. They also asked whether the paved area under the team benches was necessary and for more information on portable bleacher size. Town Manager Broad

indicated he would contact the Ross Valley Little League to confirm league requirements for the ball field design.

Several neighbors expressed concern for the protection of the adjacent redwood trees. They requested that the schematic design show the location of surrounding residences, the playground and the proposed landscape screening. They noted that the size of the adjacent residences and school buildings appeared to be incorrect. An update on the ball field will be brought back to the Council at its June meeting.



South Post Office Parking Lot Plan Reviewed

Senior Planner Elise Semonian reported that the Advisory Design Review (ADR) group had reviewed a plan developed by Town Engineer John Moe for the south Post Office parking lot improvements. While ADR had several comments about specific design elements, they were concerned about the estimated \$230,000 price tag and wanted to review the plan in context of an overall downtown plan.

The Town Engineer's cost estimate included re-grading and resurfacing the parking lot, construction of accessibility improvements, curb and gutter modifications, and landscaping. Council members wondered if it made more sense to just make some minor repairs and landscaping improvements at this time. Council member Rick Strauss, who has been working on the downtown plan for the past three years, agreed. "If we're going to do it half way, let's just not do it," he said. "We spent years going through a public process to develop a downtown plan that added parking spaces to the downtown, something the community said was a priority. We kicked this down the road for years. It now looks like the Council doesn't have the will to implement the plan, and I'm sort of embarrassed by the whole process."

Ross and Fairfax Police Departments to Share Supervisory Resources

The Town Council unanimously voted to enter into an initial one-year agreement between the Towns of Ross and Fairfax to share Police Department resources by providing advice and direction for police personnel when a supervisor or Chief of Police is out of town and/or unavailable. As this is a mutually beneficial exchange of resources, there is no cost to either town.

Chief of Police Erik Masterson explained that the Ross Police Department does not currently staff supervisors on a 24 hour/7 day a week level, with early morning hours, vacations, sick days and training periods left without an on-duty supervisor. During these periods, the Chief or off-duty supervisor is on call to provide advice. The agreement will allow personnel to contact the Fairfax police chief or supervisor when the Ross counterpart is not available by telephone or unable to respond to an incident and provide Fairfax with a reciprocal arrangement. Chief Masterson said the agreement would not change the chain of command or the Town's ability to retain control over a situation.



Mayor Chris Martin's Report

The 4th of July is around the corner and the Town of Ross will celebrate with its annual parade and picnic on the Ross Common. There will be live music, family games and hot dogs. Please register all pets, bikes, wagons and vintage cars for the parade by June 15th. Special thanks to Chief of Protocol Roseanna Lourdeaux, parade chair Cynthia Wollam, the Ross Property Owners' Association, and all the other volunteers organizing this outstanding event!

I also must give special recognition to an unsung hero, Richard Torney, our Town Historian, who wears a number of hats in his constant quest to better this community. Last week, Mr. Torney installed the dedication plaque on the Lagunitas Bridge, which should endure, along with the new bridge, for another one hundred years.

Lastly, I have submitted a proposed resolution for review by our Town Attorney, the Town Manager, Council members, and the public. The resolution formalizes the Council's standing committee structure, and clarifies the authority and duties of those committees. My term as Mayor expires soon. It was my stated objective as Mayor to have each of our four standing committees, Public Works, Finance, General Government, and Public Safety, meet publicly on a regular basis, in accordance with the Brown Act. Unfortunately, only two of those committees, the Public Works Committee chaired by Mayor Pro Tempore Small and the Finance Committee chaired by Councilman Russell have complied with this request. This proposed resolution, if approved by Council, will set forth requirements for our standing committees to ensure greater public access to Town matters as well as enable a properly informed community.

New Rules for Second Units Discussed

The Council discussed proposed revisions to the Town's second unit ordinance that would allow the Council greater flexibility to review and approve second units. A new discretionary review process would allow the Council to grant exceptions to the existing second unit development standards and allow units up to 1,200 square feet and newly constructed units on second stories, subject to design review.

Staff also proposed new regulations that would allow the Council to grant a 500 square foot floor area bonus to property owners who agree to deed restrict their newly constructed second unit to be affordable to a very low income household. While a 15-year deed restriction was proposed, Council members supported increasing the time period. The Council discussed how the new rules would affect hillside lots, and asked to staff to look at regulations that may be more restrictive for those properties.

Sir Francis Drake Boulevard Projects Officially Completed

The Council officially accepted the Sir Francis Drake Boulevard pavement rehabilitation and pathway projects. Repaving was completed at a cost of \$382,402 and was partially paid for with a \$226,000 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grant. The Town had budgeted \$500,000 for the project.

The Sir Francis Drake Boulevard pathway was constructed for \$222,515. The Town received a \$199,000 federal Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot Project grant to help pay for the project, which was originally budgeted at \$240,000.



Town Manager’s Report

Town Manager Gary Broad reported that the Town will be conducting a panel interview for six applicants for the vacant Public Works Director/Building official position. The top two or three applicants will then be asked back for a second interview.

The Town is currently negotiating a contract for construction of the Town Hall office remodel. The project will most likely begin this summer.

Town Manager
Gary Broad

Upon recommendation by the California Federal Emergency Agency (CalEMA), the Town’s Draft All-Hazard Mitigation Plan was sent to CalEMA for initial review and comments. Staff will work with CalEMA over the next several months to prepare an “approvable” plan that meets federal requirements for a local hazard mitigation plan. The plan will then be brought back to Council for final review and adoption.

The Town and its tennis court contractor, Saviano, Inc., recently agreed to a new schedule to complete the Frederick Allen Park tennis courts. Weather permitting, work will recommence on May 16th and will be completed within 33 working days. The existing resurfacing material will first need to be removed since it never cured properly, due to cold and rainy conditions last fall. The original \$40,000 contract price was not increased. The Town and Ross Rec will extend the time period available to current tennis court key holders (and thanks for your patience!).

Council Supports California Single Payer Health Care Bill

The Council passed a resolution supporting State Senator Mark Leno’s Senate Bill 810, the California Universal Health Care Act, which would create a state-sponsored insurance plan that guarantees health care access to all California residents. Council member Rupert Russell abstained from the vote, noting that while he supports a single payer health care system, he was not sure the Council should take action on a political issue.



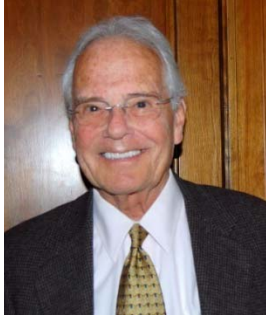
According to information provided by Senator Leno, the “Medicare-for-All” single payer plan would not require any new spending. Cost containment is expected to be achieved through elimination of clinical and administrative waste, insurer overhead and profit, and fraud. Bulk purchasing of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, and an emphasis on primary and preventative care, would drive costs down. Total savings of \$29 billion in the first year would be used to pay for those who are currently underinsured or uninsured, and would also reduce premiums for families and employers. The bill provides access to all doctors and coverage for all health services, including mental health, vision and dental care. Premiums would be replaced with set individual and employer payroll taxes. According to Senator Leno, most would pay less for health care than they currently pay in premiums, deductibles and out-of-pocket expenses.

Council Protests PG&E’s Smart Meter Opt-Out Program



The Council unanimously voted to join the Town of Fairfax, Lake County and Mendocino County in a protest and response filing against PG&E’s proposed SmartMeter opt-out program. In March, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) directed PG&E to prepare a proposal that would allow customers to opt-out of the SmartMeter program at a reasonable cost. PG&E has proposed that the company will continue to install SmartMeters, but would implement an opt-out request by deactivating the transmitter. Opt-out customers would be responsible for paying an upfront fee of \$270 and a monthly fee to manually read the opt-out meters.

Protestants are insisting the opt-out plan include an option to retain and use analog meters, and they are objecting to PG&E’s cost methodology for opt-out charges. They are also calling upon the CPUC to allow opt-outs on a community-wide basis, and to order PG&E to comply with local moratoriums, pending resolution of the Commission’s proceedings on the opt-out program. In February, the Ross Town Council unanimously approved an urgency ordinance establishing a twelve-month moratorium, effective immediately, on the installation of SmartMeters and related equipment in Ross.



Retired Town Attorney
Hadden Roth

Town Attorney Roth Commended

The Council commended former Town Attorney Hadden Roth on his retirement. Mr. Roth served as the Town Attorney for 27 years, providing legal counsel on day-to-day planning and administrative issues and representing the Town in numerous legal proceedings. He holds a remarkable record for winning every case the Town was involved in that went to trial. The Council thanked him for his many years of service and commitment to our community. Mr. Roth then swore in Gregory Stepanicich, of the law firm Richards, Watson and Gershon, as the new Town Attorney. The Council selected Mr. Stepanicich as Town Attorney at the March Council meeting.

Council Agrees to Extend Paramedic’s Contract

The Council voted to extend a lease agreement with the Ross Valley Paramedic Authority (RVPA) for another four years. The agreement provides the RVPA with office and sleeping space and an engine bay in the Ross Fire Station. At the request of the RVPA Board, the Council agreed to reduce the annual rent increase provision from 5% to 2.5%. The current lease amount for fiscal year 2010/2011 is \$24,258.



In a separate but related item, the Council voted to keep the RVPA annual tax at \$42 per residential parcel, plus a .50 administrative fee paid to the County of Marin. The commercial square footage rate will also remain the same. The RVPA was formed in 1982 to provide medical emergency services and transport to local medical facilities.



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, 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 June Council meeting.

Address	Applicant	Approved	Denied	Continued
201 Bolinas Avenue	Ed and Elaine Schultz	X		
19 Woodside Way	Todd and Julie Boes	X		
15 Woodside Way	Susanne and Peter Chase	X		
1 Southwood Avenue	Jeff and Leslie Bergholt	X		
4 Canyon Road	Christian Lind and Lisa Bernardi	X		

Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Public Works Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 7, at 8:00 a.m. The next Town Council meeting will be held on Thursday, June 9, 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.