

# THE MORNING AFTER

*Highlights from the  
Ross Town Council Meeting  
of November 10, 2011*

Volume 5, No. 12

November 14, 2011

## **Ross Bids Town Manager Gary Broad a Fond Farewell**

The Council adopted a resolution commending Town Manager Gary Broad for his twenty years of service to the Town and presented him with some parting gifts as he took his leave to become the St. Helena City Manager. The resolution named a long list of Mr. Broad's accomplishments, including: adoption of the Town of Ross General Plan in 2007; creation of the Town-wide email list and numerous new communication vehicles, including *The Morning After*; outstanding fiscal stewardship, which resulted in an increase in Town reserves from \$1 million to \$5 million from 2001-2011; and, successfully attracting over \$3 million in grant funding to complete a number of public works projects, from the Lagunitas Road Bridge to the Shady Lane pathway.

The Ross Town Council and the Ross Property Owners Association hosted a farewell party prior to the Council meeting featuring champagne and cake. Many residents turned out to share memories and wish Mr. Broad well. Thanks, Gary, for everything you did for Ross, and best of luck in St. Helena!



## **Holiday Tree to Light Up Ross Common**

The Town Council approved Ross Rec Auxiliary's request to place holiday lights on one of the evergreen trees on Ross Common from December 5<sup>th</sup> through New Year's Day. The holiday lights, which may be solar or LED lights, will be on between 5 and 8 p.m. each night, and possibly until 10 p.m. if the lights and any potential generator noise do not bother the neighbors. The Auxiliary has raised funds for lighting the tree.

The Council also approved the Auxiliary's request to hold a tree lighting ceremony on December 5<sup>th</sup> between 4:30 and 5:30 p.m. The Auxiliary is planning a short ceremony with holiday songs sung by the Ross School choir, a countdown to light up the tree, and a visit from Santa Claus. The Auxiliary is also working with Ross downtown merchants to offer holiday promotions for that evening.

## **“Barking Dog” Ordinance Adopted**

The Council adopted an ordinance that makes it unlawful for any person to permit any dog, cat, fowl, or other animal to habitually bark, yelp, howl or create noise that unreasonably disturbs the peace. The ordinance provides for residents to first be provided with a warning, and then a citation if the dog continues to bark for periods of at least 30 minutes in duration. First and second violations will be treated as an infraction and additional violations as a misdemeanor. The ordinance will become effective in 30 days.



*Mayor Carla Small*

## **Mayor Carla Small's Report**

As we have said our goodbyes to Gary tonight, we say hello to Pat Thompson, our new part time Interim Town Manager. After retiring in 2006 from the City of Napa where she served 17 years as City Manager, Ms. Thompson joined the field of interim city management. In the last five years, she has served as the Interim City Manager for the cities of Ukiah, Novato and Larkspur, as well as the Interim Assistant City Manager for the City of Santa Rosa. With her considerable experience and impeccable references, the Council, staff and residents are fortunate to have her guidance and leadership through this transition. She met with staff and Council on November 9<sup>th</sup> and will start her first official day on Monday, November 14<sup>th</sup>. The Ross Town Council will host a meet and greet for residents prior to the December 8<sup>th</sup> Council meeting.

Bob Hemati, our Public Works Director, is hosting a public meeting on the proposed improvements to the Sir Francis Drake Boulevard/Lagunitas Road intersection on Tuesday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, at 7 p.m. at Ross Town Hall. Now is the time to ask questions and share your observations. We would appreciate your insight and participation.

The Public Works Department and the Public Works Committee are continuing to work with Ross School and their project manager to resolve any outstanding construction issues related to Ross Common.

At the November 4<sup>th</sup> Special Council meeting, an ad hoc committee, including Mayor Pro Tem Rupert Russell and Council member Scot Hunter, was formed to work with two Ross School Board members, Bob Dickinson and Elizabeth Robbins. Along with Ross Recreation, they are charged with addressing policy and legal issues that have arisen with the completion of the gym.



*Mayor Pro Tem  
Rupert Russell*

## **Finance Committee Report**

The audited financial statements for the Town's 2009-2010 fiscal year have been completed and copies are being made available this week. The audit for the 2010-2011 fiscal year can now start.

Liz Ford, who previously worked on bookkeeping for the Town for about 20 years, has recently rejoined us as Town Accountant and bookkeeper following the resignation of Paige Rothman. There is currently a transition while Paige gets ready to leave us completely as of the end of the year and Liz gets up to speed with new software and gradually takes over various responsibilities. We are very lucky to have found Liz (who came with strong praise from all at the Town who had

worked with her previously) at this critical moment as we transition not only from Paige, but also with Gary Broad leaving the Town (including as Finance Director) this week.

There will be a financial impact not only directly from Gary leaving (in particular paying off his accrued vacation entitlement), but also generally from the changes that are occurring following his departure from the Town, such as with the appointment of Pat Thompson as our new Interim Town Manager. The Town has always been run in a fiscally prudent fashion and members of the Finance Committee have tried to ensure that fiscal considerations are carefully considered in the Town's decision-making as we implement these changes.

Finally, at the last Finance Committee meeting we discussed whether it made sense to introduce new Town ordinances to determine project valuations and to amend the existing construction completion ordinance. The Finance Committee decided that the Town does not at this point need to create new or additional rules. Instead, staff will be more proactive and provide more information on Town policies on the Town's website so that residents can have proper guidance when dealing with issues regarding how their projects are valued and by when they need to complete their projects.

## Ross Joins Marin Energy Authority

The Council adopted an ordinance approving the Marin Energy Authority Joint Powers Agreement and making the Town of Ross a member of the Marin Energy Authority. As a result, Ross residents and businesses will be enrolled in the Marin Clean Energy Light Green program in July 2012. Ratepayers will, however, be given a four-month window to opt-out of the program at no cost and remain with PG&E for electricity generation if they so choose.

Ross residents and businesses will also have the opportunity to enroll in the Marin Clean Energy Deep Green program, which provides 100% renewable energy to ratepayers who agree to pay 1 cent per kilowatt hour more for electricity. Ross ratepayers can sign up for Deep Green electricity in advance of the enrollment period by contacting the Marin Energy Authority at 888-632-3674.

Marin Clean Energy electricity has a higher renewable energy content than PG&E electricity, but it currently costs more, especially for large users. The Town will provide updated rate comparisons in May, before residents will be asked to make their choice between Marin Clean Energy and PG&E for their electricity generation.



*Council member  
Chris Martin*

## Flood Control Report

The County recently provided a full briefing on the status of the various flood control projects within Ross Valley, a.k.a. Flood Zone 9. These include: dredging the Corte Madera Creek in Larkspur; implementing the Army Corps of Engineers projects for Units 1-4, which spans along the Corte Madera Creek from Kentfield to the Ross/San Anselmo border; replacing seven bridges (three in Ross, three in San Anselmo, and one in Fairfax); the Phoenix Lake detention basin project and other detention basin projects in San Anselmo and Fairfax; and a number of other bank stabilization and creek enhancement projects. Together, these projects are designed to eliminate the 100-year flood event. The total cost is estimated to be \$129 million. As the Flood Control Parcel tax will generate \$43 million over its 40-year life, the County intends to

raise \$86 million from state and federal sources.

Within days from now, the State Water Resources Control Board will announce its decision on grant funding for the Phoenix Lake detention basin. The project is projected to take approximately five years to complete, assuming there are no significant environmental or jurisdictional snags.

The Army Corps of Engineers has estimated that the likely preferred plan for the Units 1-4 project will cost approximately \$6.5 million. The Corps does not expect federal funding will be forthcoming for this project in 2012 or 2013. The County has agreed to aggressively pursue federal monies to complete the Corps project since it is linchpin to the overall Ross Valley Flood Control project.

The County would like to meet with Public Works Director Bob Hemati to discuss applications to replace three Ross bridges for flood control purposes. These are the Sir Francis Drake Boulevard Bridge, the Locust/Shady Lane Bridge, and the Winship Bridge. Full federal and state funding may be available for the replacement of these three bridges.

Lastly, a new preliminary FEMA map of flood zones will be released between February and May next year. This may have a significant impact on many Ross property owners. The County will ask FEMA to hold a public meeting upon the release of the new flood zone map.

## Council Discusses Fire Consolidation with Kentfield Fire

Fire Chief Tom Vallee presented the Council with a letter from Kentfield Fire Protection District Chief Paul Smith that indicated the District was not interested in changing its form of governance to a joint powers agency, and that Ross would need to join the District in order to pursue fire consolidation with Kentfield. However, Kentfield Fire Protection District Board Member Ralph McLeran, who was in the audience, told the Council that the District Board had not taken action on Ross' proposal and remained interested in working with Ross to see if consolidation was an option. Mayor Carla Small emphasized that Ross would

not agree to a transfer of its tax base. She also said that it was vitally important to keep the Ross Fire Station open. Mr. McLaren said his board would discuss a consolidation proposal at their next meeting on Wednesday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 p.m. Ross residents are welcome to attend.

## Council Meetings Scheduled for 2012

The Council voted to schedule monthly meetings on the following Thursday nights in 2012: January 12, February 9, March 8, April 5, May 10, June 14, July 12, August 9, September 13, October 11, November 8 and December 13. Council meetings are typically held on the second Thursday of the month; however, due to Spring Break, the April Council meeting will be held on the first Thursday in April. The August meeting will be held only if necessary.



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 at [www.townofross.org/pages/town\\_council/staff\\_reports.html](http://www.townofross.org/pages/town_council/staff_reports.html). The minutes of this meeting will be available on the website at [www.townofross.org](http://www.townofross.org) after approval at the December Council meeting.

Address	Applicant	Approved	Denied	Continued
21 Fernhill Avenue	Brian and Rachel Wells	X		
1 Upper Road and 206 Lagunitas Road lot	Alan Grujic and Dorinda Lewis	X		
101 Winding Way	Craig and Jaqualine Thomas	X		
30 Sir Francis Drake Blvd.	Pixie Park and Marin Art & Garden Center	X		
126 Winding Way	Douglas and Miranda Abrams			X
4 Canyon Road	Christian Lind and Lisa Bernardi			X
61 Sir Francis Drake Blvd.	Andrew Johnson	X		

## Upcoming Meetings

The Public Works Department will host a public meeting on the proposed improvements to the Sir Francis Drake Boulevard/Lagunitas Road intersection on Tuesday, November 15, at 7 p.m. The Public Safety Committee will meet Friday, November 18, at 8:30 a.m. The General Government Committee will meet on Thursday, December 1, at 8 a.m.

The next regular Town Council meeting will be held on Thursday, December 8, at 6:30 p.m. Agendas and staff reports for all meetings are posted in advance of the meetings on the Town's website at [www.townofross.org](http://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](http://www.townofross.org/pages/contact/email_council.html).

*The Morning After is published following each regular Council meeting by the Town of Ross and is written by Project Planner Christine O'Rourke 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.*