

SPECIAL MEETING of the ROSS TOWN COUNCIL  
THURSDAY, JULY 31, 2008  
LAGUNITAS COUNTRY CLUB

**1. 9:00 A.M. Commencement**

Present: Mayor Bill Cahill, and Council Members Strauss, Hunter, and Skall, Martin, Town Manager Gary Broad, Public Works Director Mel Jarjoura, Project Planner Christine O'Rourke, Fire Chief Tom Vallee, Police Chief Jim Reis, and Public Safety Director Barry Heying.

**2. Posting of Agenda**

Public Works Director Jarjoura reported the agenda was posted according to government code.

**3. Consideration of amendments to the Town of Ross FY 08-09 Budget to allow for construction to commence prior to the regular September 11, 2008 Council meeting as follows: a) amendment to the drainage fund to carry over from FY 07-08 budget and expand the Wellington Avenue and Garden Road curb and gutter replacement project; and b) an amendment to the Roadway Improvement Fund to carry over the North Road Overlay, Wellington Avenue Overlay and Curb Ramp Upgrade Projects from the FY 07-08 Budget**

Public Works Director Jarjoura explained that the amendments were needed to complete work that had been budgeted in FY 07-08 but not performed during this period to the FY 08-09 budget. He submitted an estimate of approximately \$178,000 to replace curbs and gutters on Garden, Wellington, North Road, East Road, and West Road.

Council member Martin stated a number of Winship area sidewalks are buckling, and sidewalk repair work should be coordinated with the curb and gutter replacement project. The sidewalks were originally paid for by the homeowners, and it is still the responsibility of the homeowners to repair them.

The Council agreed members of the Public Works Committee need to walk the project area. Council member Strauss directed Public Works Director Jarjoura to send a letter to homeowners immediately and schedule the work to be completed this year. The Council agreed to bring the issue before the public at the regular Public Works Committee meeting on Tuesday.

Regarding item (b), Public Works Director Jarjoura explained the overlay and curb ramp upgrade projects were carried over from the FY 07-08 budget to the FY 08-09 budget at the same cost.

Mayor Pro Tempore Strauss moved and Council member Hunter seconded to approve the budget amendments as introduced. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Council Workshop to discuss and adopt five Town Council goals for 2008-2009 and the implementation of these goals.

Mayor Cahill submitted a list of 14 potential goals to the Council. The Council agreed to consider all goals on the list and add two more: Trees and Public Right of Way.

*On-Going Emergency Preparedness (with special focus on seniors).* Council member Skall supported continuing this goal from FY 07-08 and adding a special emphasis on senior preparedness. Many seniors do not have internet access or have family nearby, and the Town should make a special effort to engage seniors in disaster preparedness. The Council discussed ways to gather names of seniors, and agreed Loraine Berry might be able to assist. Seniors should be encouraged to provide contact information to the public safety department to ensure aid reaches them in the event of an emergency. Fire Chief Vallee said his goal was to appoint a trained block captain to each neighborhood who could identify seniors who may need extra assistance during disasters.

*Town and Ross Valley Flood Control (including Lagunitas Bridge).* Council member Strauss updated the Council on on-going flood control projects. The Council agreed the Town should continue to work with the County of Marin and the Army Corps of Engineers to ensure the Unit 4 project moves ahead as quickly as possible. The Council discussed the importance of keeping residents up to date on the project's status and sending periodic press releases to the local media to keep the public informed.

The Council discussed the need to develop local regulations and regional land use policies to minimize stormwater runoff by reducing impervious surfaces, retaining stormwater on site, and ensuring runoff from new development is not deposited directly into drainageways. Public Works Director Jarjoura stated he requires stormwater runoff mitigation in the building permit review process. The Council has also actively discouraged additional use of impervious material through the design review process. The Council discussed reducing flood impact fees for homeowners who retain stormwater on site. Council member Martin suggested the Town take the lead in developing a model stormwater runoff ordinance.

The Council also discussed the need for creek clean up. Council member Martin suggested organizing a clean up event with the Friends of Corte Madera Creek. Council member Martin and Public Works Superintendent Robert Maccario will walk the creek together and complete an assessment.

*Downtown Plan Completion.* Mayor Pro Tempore Strauss updated the Council on the downtown plan. He said the Town still needs to survey the downtown area, hire a traffic engineer, and retain a consultant to develop ideas explored at last May's visioning event. Then the plan will be brought back to the community for further discussion and input.

The Council discussed the possibility of forming a community benefit district in Ross and agreed the Town was not large enough to create a viable district. The Council also discussed the possibility of enlisting the Marin Art & Garden Center and nearby communities in a regional effort.

***Police/Fire Reorganization, Goals and Succession Planning.*** Council member Hunter reviewed the history of the Town's fire consolidation efforts. Although the Town originally hoped to establish a Ross Valley-wide fire district, funding and personnel issues have thwarted progress. Consolidation at the county level may make more sense. In the meantime, the Council agreed more community education and input were needed. The Council discussed creating a blue-ribbon committee, similar to the general plan steering committee, to study fire consolidation. The blue ribbon committee would also look at the condition of the existing police and fire stations, and make recommendations to the Council on reconstruction/remodeling and how to obtain funding and/or financing for these improvements. The Council agreed the blue ribbon committee should consider all civic center development, including the Town Hall building and offices and redevelopment of 37 Sir Francis Drake Blvd.

***Personnel Positions and Performance Reviews.*** Mayor Cahill reported this potential goal was added to the list following the June 24 Council meeting. He said it was very important to develop job descriptions and employee review processes, and suggested outsourcing this work to a consultant. The consultant could also make recommendations on the best way to organize governmental functions.

The Council discussed a survey that some residents are planning to distribute to gauge satisfaction with Town employees and services. These residents are planning to conduct the survey and have indicated confidential survey results will be reported to the Council. They will not provide other citizens with the survey data.

Mayor Cahill commented on the numerous emails, both positive and negative, he has received to date. He will share these with other Council members.

***Municipal Code Review.*** Town Manager Broad stated Project Planner O'Rourke has been tasked with cleaning up the Municipal Code. The Council agreed regulations regarding attics and basements and construction completion should be reviewed. The General Government Committee will discuss these with staff and provide a recommendation for Council.

The Council agreed to pursue design review for large landscape projects. The Council discussed including driveways in design review, with some Council members in favor of requiring driveway replacement to be subject to design review. The Council is primarily concerned with discouraging impervious surfaces in order to improve site drainage.

Council member Martin suggested exploring the idea of changing Ross from a general law city to a charter city. He said it is not complicated to do, but would require voter approval. One of the advantages is that a charter city has more leeway in developing its regulations, and the municipal code can then be rewritten as a guiding document. Council member Martin will provide background information to the Council.

***Safe Routes for Bikes and Pedestrians.*** The Council agreed to include safe routes for bikes and pedestrians in the Downtown Plan Completion goal.

***Civic Center Development Plan.*** The Council agreed to include the civic center development plan in the Police/Fire Reorganization goal.

**37 Sir Francis Drake Development Plan.** The Council discussed Kentfield Fire Department's current use of the site and the possibility of developing the site with affordable housing. The Council agreed to include the 37 Sir Francis Drake development plan in the Police/Fire Reorganization goal.

**Housing Element Update (due 6/09).** Project Planner O'Rourke reported on the housing element update. The housing element update is progressing ahead of schedule, and a draft will be ready for public review ahead of the deadline. The Town needs to revise its second unit ordinance in order to encourage more second units, legalize more existing second units, and create units affordable to very low income households. If the Town cannot demonstrate a realistic ability to meet its regional housing need numbers through second unit development, the State will require the Town to zone adequate land for multi-family use at 20 units/acre density. It would be helpful to revise the second unit ordinance in advance of the housing element deadline so that a successful track record can be demonstrated. The Town will also need to zone parcels for homeless shelters. The Council discussed the feasibility of zoning the St. Anselm's site for both multi-family and homeless shelter uses.

The Council agreed to make the housing element update goal a staff goal for this fiscal year.

**Utility Undergrounding.** Town Manager Broad provided background information on the Town's efforts to establish a utility undergrounding district. Since the 2006 survey did not indicate adequate support for forming utility undergrounding assessment districts, the Town has been pursuing utility undergrounding along Lagunitas Road and possibly down Shady Lane through a combination of private contributions, Town funding, and PG&E allocation credits.

**Identify Historic Resources.** There was discussion about the Advisory Design Review group has volunteered to identify historic resources in Ross. The identification would be included on the pre-sale agreement, so potential buyers would be aware of limitations on remodeling and redevelopment of the site. Local real estate agents say a historic designation often diminishes the value of the property. The Council agreed any historic designation would have to be approved by Council. There was no decision to move forward with an inventory, but it was noted that an advisory is now a part of the resale inspection form.

**Establish Green Building Requirements.** Town Manager Broad said the Town is pursuing green building requirements through its participation in the Marin Climate and Energy Partnership (MCEP). MCEP received a \$75,000 grant to hire a Climate Action Director to assist the cities in developing regulations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Project Planner O'Rourke confirmed that one of the MCEP deliverables is a model green building ordinance that can be adapted to each jurisdiction's unique needs. Public Works Director Jarjoura said green building requirements will be included in the 2010 California Building Code.

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The Council discussed educating residents on recycling, composting, and disposal of waste. The Council agreed to pursue coordinating these efforts with the Marin Art & Garden Center.

***Water System (Pressure) Plan for Fire Protection.*** Fire Chief Vallee said MMWD is responsible for repairing and replacing water mains. Although Ross has areas where water pressure is not good (primarily in the hillside areas of Upper Road, Canyon Road, and Makin Grade), the affected areas serve a small number of residents and are not considered a high priority by MMWD. Council members should lobby MMWD officials to address these areas. Fire Chief Vallee reported the Town has developed a map identifying substandard water pressure areas and has submitted a list of priority projects to MMWD. The Public Safety Committee will review this map and contact MMWD officials.

***Trees.*** The Council discussed the need to formalize the Street Tree Working Group and move forward with a master tree plan. The Council also discussed the need for residents to irrigate street trees located on their properties and in the right of way. The Street Tree Working Group is being folded into the Public Works Committee.

***Public Right of Way.*** The Council discussed the need to clearly identify homeowner's responsibilities in the right of way. Letters should be sent to residents informing them of their responsibility to repair sidewalks. The Council also discussed landscaping and parking in the right of way.

***Other Business.*** The Council discussed next steps in the Marin Clean Energy initiative and decided to ask Dawn Weisz to provide a calendar of key dates and action items. The Council agreed to wait to see if the cities of San Rafael and Novato are supportive of the initiative.

The Council discussed attendance at Marin County Council of Mayors and Council Members (MCCMC) meetings and agreed that at least one Ross representative should make an effort to attend the meetings. Attendance will be coordinated through Linda Lopez.

Council member Martin suggested creating a process for the cities of Ross, San Anselmo, Larkspur and Fairfax to get together more often. He also suggested implementing a forum for residents to meet informally with Council members.

The Council discussed creating five districts and appointing one Council member to represent each district. Some Council members did not think this was necessary given the small size of Ross and the fact that residents usually call the Council member they know best.

The Council agreed to buy a table at the Centennial Dinner and sit together.

***Selection of Goals and Appointments.*** Council member Hunter moved and Council member Skall seconded to select five council goals for FY 08-09 and appoint Council members to spearhead those goals as follows:

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On-Going Emergency Preparedness (with a focus on seniors): Council member Skall.  
Town and Ross Valley Flood Control: Council member Martin.  
Downtown Plan: Mayor Pro Tempore Strauss.  
Police and Fire Department Reorganization: Council member Hunter.  
Staff Job Description Updates and Performance Reviews: Mayor Cahill.

Motion passed unanimously by Council.

**5. Adjournment.**

By order of the Mayor, the meeting adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

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William Cahill, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Gary Broad, Town Manager