

# THE MORNING AFTER

*Highlights from the  
Ross Town Council Meeting  
of April 10, 2008*

Volume 2, No. 4

April 11, 2008



## **Welcome From Council Member Rick Strauss**

The Ross Common and downtown are where town residents participate in community activities, from tee-ball to centennial events. As we develop a downtown plan, our goal should be not to change, but to enhance the center of our community and create settings that foster casual daily contact. We already have in our neighborhood center the essential elements — a downtown, school, post office, church and Ross Common. Think of the negative space formed by the town as a stage for your participation. What physical elements will enhance the sense of community? Is it outdoor seating at Marmalades or a two-sided stage with the

school auditorium on one side and the other facing the Ross Common? On May 3<sup>rd</sup> at 9:00 a.m., the Town will hold a downtown plan public visioning meeting at Ross School. We hope you'll come with photographs and ideas to present. Let's have fun!

## **Wildland Urban Interface Building Standards Introduced**

The Council voted to introduce an ordinance adding new vegetation management and building regulations to the municipal code. Public Safety Director Barry Heying explained that the new regulations were necessary to reduce fire risk in the hillside areas and enhance fire safety throughout town. The heavily wooded and steep topography of Ross, and its proximity to open space in a State-designated Very High Fire Severity zone, make the town especially vulnerable to wildland fires.



The proposed regulations require hillside properties to provide 100 feet of defensible space and add new design review guidelines requiring new hillside lot construction to conform to wildland urban interface building code standards. The building standards are designed to make a structure resistant to the intrusion of flames and burning embers.

New driveway design and construction standards that enhance fire truck and emergency access are also proposed. Driveway grades could not exceed 18% and driveways longer than 150' would be required to provide turnarounds.



## **Downtown Ross Farmers Market On its Way**

The Council authorized a Thursday afternoon Farmers Market in the parking lot between the Ross Post Office and the downtown commercial area. The market will run from June to September and will feature produce sold by about a dozen California farmers. Some residents expressed their desire for organic and locally grown produce and urged the Council to ban non-food items. Mayor Pro Tempore Bill Cahill and Town Manager Gary Broad will oversee the drafting of an agreement with the market.

The market will be open from approximately 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. and will require restricted parking from about 2:30 p.m. to allow vendor setup. Shoppers are requested to bring their own environmentally-friendly bags to the market!



### **Mayor Scot Hunter's Report**

I recently attended an information meeting on the planned Ross School renovation and urge everyone in the community to do the same. The plans for the school are beautiful and will bring this enduring town asset up to 21<sup>st</sup> century standards. Meetings are scheduled for April 15, April 28 and May 8. Check with the school for times and locations.

The Moya Library & Ross Historical Society will host a book release celebration for *Ross, California: The People, The Places, The History* at the Marin Art & Garden Center on Friday, May 2. Festivities will begin at 11 a.m. in the Livermore Room.

I'm excited to announce that Town efforts for a sidewalk on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard have been successful. We applied for federal funds and received a \$200,000 commitment. Town staff and CalTrans meet on April 15 to plan the project.

Finally, I'm pleased to report that San Anselmo has agreed to conduct another traffic count on Bolinas Avenue to see if the warrants can be met for a new stop sign. Town Manager Gary Broad will be contacting some Bolinas Avenue residents for input on the opportune time for the study. In the meantime, the Bolinas Avenue roadway striping project that was approved at the February Council meeting will be done soon.

### **Emergency Operation Center May Move to New Ross School**

The Town Council agreed to explore with the Ross School District a proposal to relocate the Town's Emergency Operation Center (EOC) to the new school building. The current EOC is located at Town Hall, which is short on space and located in the flood plain. The move would provide residents with an EOC in a seismically-safe structure built above the 100-year flood plain level. Planning could involve the installation of additional telephone lines and storage areas for emergency equipment. Council members agreed that coordinated disaster preparedness and response between the Town and Ross School would be a huge benefit to residents.



### **Council Commends Branson Basketball Teams**



*Mayor Scot Hunter congratulates Branson basketball players Ryan McGuigan and Michela Bestwick with Head of School Woody Price.*

The Town Council adopted a resolution honoring the Branson School boys and girls basketball teams for winning the Division V State Championship on March 15, 2008. The boys team completed an exceptional season this year, registering an impressive 31 regular season wins against only 3 losses, and beating Southern California's La-Cada's Renaissance Academy 40-33 for their third straight state title. The girls team was equally unstoppable this season, reeling off 28 wins with just 7 losses, and sailing past Mission Prep of San Luis Obispo 51-39 in their final game. It was the girls' second consecutive state championship win. Way to go Bulls!

## Council Approves “Green” Pathway

The Council accepted staff’s recommendation to construct the new Shady Lane Safe Routes to School pathway with decomposed granite with binder. Staff suggested decomposed granite with binder after considering alternative surface materials, including turf block, asphalt, permeable asphalt and decomposed granite without binder. In comparing the various materials, staff evaluated aesthetics, safety, permeability, maintenance, ADA compliance and whether or not it was a green product.



Decomposed granite is estimated to cost roughly \$15,000 more than asphalt, but Council members felt the more natural looking pathway warranted the extra expense. Residents supported the Council’s decision. Shady Lane property owner Chris Martin said, “I commend staff for listening to the residents, and I think all of the issues that were brought up have been addressed.”

Town Engineer John Moe said that safety concerns could be addressed by lowering the height of some hedges in the right-of-way to improve sight distance. Drainage could also be improved by adding an infiltration trench in some areas to mitigate stormwater runoff. Staff will be contacting residents along Shady Lane to describe the work to be done and resolve any outstanding issues.



## Five Goals for 2007-2008 and Five for 2008-2009

The Council reviewed its progress on achieving the five Council FY 2007-2008 goals and agreed that almost all had been substantially completed. Advisory Design Review has been implemented, fire consolidation with Larkspur is on track, and great improvements have been made in emergency preparedness, warning and response. The Council will most likely retain developing and implementing a downtown plan as a Council goal for FY 2008-2009. The Council also discussed new potential goals for the coming year, including utility undergrounding, development of a civic center master plan, police department organization and staffing, and completion of major public works projects (Shady Lane pathway, Sir Francis Drake pathway, Lagunitas Road bridge, fish ladder replacement, etc.). The 2008-2009 goals will be finalized at the May Council meeting. Community members are encouraged to submit their recommended priorities for Council consideration.

## Council Approves New 20-Minute Parking Spaces for Downtown

The Council agreed to convert two parking spaces directly in front of the Ross Grocery to a 20-minute green zone to improve the turnover of parking spaces for shoppers. The Council will consider additional 20-minute parking as part of the overall downtown plan.



## From Public Safety Director Barry Heying

We have been preparing for the Kentfield Fire Department’s scheduled move to Ross on May 15. There are still a few details to work out, such as the installation of utilities and the relocation of radio equipment and reserve emergency vehicles, but we expect the transition to be a smooth one.

Wildfire season is just around the corner, and public education efforts will now shift to fire safety. The next Get Ready classes will be held 9 to 11 a.m. on Thursday, April 24, at Molly Gamble’s home and on Friday, May 16, at Elaine Schultz’s home. For more information, contact [mgamble@comcast.net](mailto:mgamble@comcast.net) or [es@elaineschultz.com](mailto:es@elaineschultz.com).

**Council Continues Santa After-the-Fact Request**

The Council agreed to Don Santa’s request to continue his after-the-fact application for over 1,800 linear feet of retaining walls, up to 19+ feet tall, constructed on his Goodhill Road hillside lot since 1999 without planning department approval or building permits. The application also included after-the-fact approval of 380 yards of cut and 380 yards of fill to create terraces and paths not shown on the approved plans.



*This 19-foot retaining wall at 662 Goodhill Road was built without Town approval or building permits.*



Mr. Santa requested additional time to create a proposal that the Council would have been more likely to approve had the project been submitted for required design review. He indicated he will also submit additional information regarding the construction and engineering of the retaining walls as Council is concerned about the structural integrity of the walls constructed without Town review and inspection. The Council also requested accurate grading plans and calculations, as it appeared there was much more fill than identified on the submitted plans.

The Council agreed to the request continuance but declared the unpermitted work a nuisance and warned Mr. Santa that the 90-day abatement clock was ticking as of April 10.



**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 <http://www.townofross.org/town-council/current-meeting-reports/>. The minutes of this meeting will be available on the Town website at [www.townofross.org](http://www.townofross.org) after approval at the May Council meeting.

Address	Applicant	Approved	Modified Approval	Denied	Continued
662 Goodhill Road	Donald Santa				
18 Ross Terrace	Dan and Mia Beckham				

**Upcoming Town Council Meeting**

The next Town Council meeting will be Thursday, May 8, at 6:30 pm. Agendas and staff reports are posted in advance of the meeting on the town’s website at [www.townofross.org](http://www.townofross.org).

*The Morning After is published monthly by The Town of Ross and is written by Project Planner Christine O’Rourke and edited by Town Manager Gary Broad. The newsletter is not an official record of the meeting’s proceedings. No portion of this newsletter may be copied, reproduced or reprinted without advance written permission from the Town of Ross. If you’d like to receive The Morning After and other town information via email, contact Linda Lopez at [llopez@townofross.org](mailto:llopez@townofross.org).*