

THE MORNING AFTER

Highlights from the
Ross Town Council Meeting
of December 8, 2011

Volume 5, No. 13

December 9, 2011

Council Discusses Installing Video System in Council Chambers

The Town Council discussed installing video equipment in the Town Hall chambers and purchasing a system to record public meetings, transmit the video for web streaming, and link video with agendas and staff reports.

Two camera setup options were considered: a single camera setup costing approximately \$10,000 and a multiple camera setup for approximately \$20,000 to \$25,000. The Marin Telecommunications Agency (MTA) currently has funds to pay for design costs and installation of either camera setup. The single camera setup would be oriented to the dais, while the multiple camera setup would allow more interesting visuals, with shots of people speaking from a podium and giving presentations.

The Town would pay for the video recording and web streaming system. Upfront costs range from \$5,525 to \$6,800, depending upon multi-city discounts that are currently available if other Marin cities choose to sign up. Monthly fees would cost approximately \$261 to \$290, again depending on other cities' participation, and would be waived until July 2012. The towns of San Anselmo, Fairfax, and Larkspur are also considering installing video equipment in their town hall chambers.

Video recording would require someone to operate the cameras. While the single camera setup could be operated by a staff person, the multiple camera option would require a professional operator at a cost of \$75 per hour. Residents can see a comparison of camera setups by visiting the City of Sausalito's website for a single camera setup, and the City of Mill Valley's website for a multiple camera setup.

If the Council decides to install the video system, residents could watch live meetings at home on the government access channel. Meetings would also be available to watch on the Town's website. Meetings would be archived and linked to agendas and staff reports, which would make it possible for a user to jump to a particular agenda item and read the staff report while watching the video. A search function would enable the user to search for a particular topic or project across all recorded meetings.

The Council also discussed the need for a sound system. For some audience members, as well as for

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "City Council Meeting - Mozilla Firefox". The address bar shows "cityofmillvalley.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=28&clip_id=200". The main content area features the "City of Mill Valley" logo and the following text:

**CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA**

COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL
26 CORTE MADERA AVENUE, MILL VALLEY
December 5, 2011
7:30 p.m.

Kenneth R. Wachtel, Mayor
Gary Leon, Vice Mayor
Shawn Marshall
Andrew Berman
Stephanie Moulton-Peters

CALL TO ORDER

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT: [The Mayor will introduce and explain the City's new eComment Pilot Program that will make it possible for internet users watching live City Council meeting webcasts to submit public comments in](#)

On the left side of the screenshot, there is a video player showing a live stream of the council meeting. Below the video player is an "Index" section with the following items:

- 1. Introduction and Congratulations to newly elected Mill Valley School District Board Members, Leslie A. Wachtel and Bob Jacobs.
- 2. Presentation of a Certificate of Appreciation to Parks and Recreation Director Christine Sansom on the occasion of her retirement for 22 Years of Service to the City of Mill Valley.
- 3. Presentation of a Proclamation Recognizing the Tamalpais High School

If approved, the Town would provide online video recordings of Council meetings in a format similar to this one from the City of Mill Valley website.

Council member Rupert Russell, microphones were of critical importance. Expenses for the sound system, which need to be developed, would be a separate cost not included in the video system.

The Council was divided on the need for a video system. Council member Scot Hunter was very opposed to the proposal, stating that it ran counter to the Town's traditions and the personal character of Town Hall meetings. "We go out of our way to keep people informed. We also have an audio recording of every meeting," he said. "If people don't come down to Town Hall, they're probably not interested."

Mayor Carla Small, Council member Chris Martin, and Mayor Pro Tempore Rupert Russell supported installation of a video system, although acknowledging that it may be best to move slowly and install a single camera setup that could be expanded later. "This will provide one additional tool to reach out to our community and enhance government transparency," said Mayor Small.

The Council continued the discussion to its January meeting. Community members are encouraged to share their views on this issue.

Council Discusses Liability Issues for Ross School Easements

The Council discussed a grant agreement with Ross School governing easements over portions of Town property on Ross Common. These easements were granted in 2009 to the School District as part of the Ross School renovation project. One easement provides for a pedestrian access walkway when school is in session and the other provides for construction of the stage, ramps, landscaped planter and accessory structures.

The Grant of Easements spells out the rights and responsibilities of both parties for the use and maintenance of the easements. The document also provides indemnification provisions for the easement areas. In the case of the pedestrian easement, the District will indemnify the Town when the School has a planned activity and when the school is open to the public; at all other times, the Town will retain liability. In the structure easement, the District will indemnify the Town at all times except when the Town of Ross or Ross Recreation is using the stage or structure easement.



Interim Town Manager Pat Thompson explained that one area of concern is where the two easements abut at the new outdoor stage. Here, the ramps and steps may attract skateboarders and bicyclists who could potentially injure themselves and fall into the Town's walkway easement, where the Town retains liability when the school is not open to the public. The Town's insurance agent recommended installing signs prohibiting these activities and limiting access to the stage when school is not in session. In order to reduce liability and ensure safety, the Town will work with the School District to install the appropriate signage.

Circle Drive Acknowledged as a Public Road

Town Attorney Greg Stepanicich reported that, after conducting extensive research and reviewing a number of historical documents submitted by Stephanie Smith Stein, it has been determined that Circle Drive and a portion of Park Drive are part of the Ross public road system. The Town did not accept Circle and Park Drives as public roads when the streets were created in 1915. However, a 1926 action by the Town ordering the paving of the streets pursuant to an assessment district established under the Improvement Act of 1911 effectively accepted the roadways into the Town's street system. Town Attorney Stepanicich explained that this is a unique situation that does not affect other streets in Ross, as streets that have been improved through assessment districts are all clearly in the public street system, such as Shady Lane, Laurel Grove and the lower part of Chestnut Avenue.



Mayor Carla Small

Mayor Carla Small's Report

Congratulations to Ross School for the completion of the gym and grand opening on December 5th. Ross School is interwoven in the fabric of our community in so many ways and the new facilities now match the fine education received by our children.

Thank you to Ross Recreation Auxiliary for the Town's holiday lighting event. From the Branson Choir to the participation of the downtown businesses, it was an event enjoyed by all. I hope this will become an annual tradition.

Much appreciation goes to the Ross Property Owner's Association for the lovely holiday decorations seen throughout our downtown. They have also set up a collection barrel for Ritter House in the post office. Ross Fire Department is once again coordinating the Toys for Tots holiday program with the U.S. Marine Corp. Collection barrels are located in the Public Safety building.

Saturday, December 10th, is the 25th Annual Tour de Noel House Tour, a Marin favorite. It is well worth taking a few hours to visit four beautifully decorated homes with all proceeds going to local charities.

With the holiday season upon us, please be respectful of the 15 minute postal patron parking and postal employee parking. Finally, I would like to take this opportunity from our family to yours, to wish you all a happy and healthy holiday season.

Ross Recreation Report

Ross Recreation Director Pam Riley presented Ross Recreation's annual report to the Town Council. Despite the poor economy, revenues exceeded those of previous years and enrollment numbers were up. Fiscal year 2010-2011 revenues came in just over \$1,000,000, and operating expenses were approximately \$933,000. Ross Recreation activities for last year included improving the website and on-line registration process, expanding outreach to Bacich and Kent schools, and revamping their preschools. Ross Recreation now has two licensed preschools at the Marin Art & Garden Center and St. John's Church, with seven teachers and 59 children participating. The summer camps at Kent Middle School and fall programs were very successful, with approximately 900 children participating during each session.

In closing, Ms. Riley requested the Council retain the current temporary locations of the T-Ball and Rookie ball fields and consider looking for a new location for the dog park. For both health and safety reasons, she felt it was preferable to move the dog park to the Post Office park or to Frederick Allen Park. The Council agreed to determine the temporary ball fields in January and approved the slate for the Ross Recreation Board of Directors for fiscal year 2011-2012.



Marin Sanitary Service Gives Update on Residential Food Waste Program

Marin Sanitary Service President Patty Garbarino provided the Council with an update on the residential food waste program that was implemented in Ross this past March. Ms. Garbarino said garbage truck drivers report participation is increasing and green cans are at the curb fairly consistently on a weekly basis. Yard waste tonnage has increased approximately 50% since the residential food waste program started, compared to the same period in 2010, but it is unclear how much of that is due to food waste being deposited in green cans and how much is due to the new weekly service. Prior to March, green cans were picked up every other week.

Marin Sanitary Service has been marketing the program to residents and pursuing outreach programs in the community and at Ross School. Overall, the feedback has been positive. Residents are reminded to

place all food waste and food soiled paper products in their green cans. Food waste will then be composted, rather than deposited into the landfill.

Town Pursues Fire Consolidation with Ross Valley Fire

Council member Scot Hunter reported that the Kentfield Fire Protection District Board of Directors unanimously decided at their November meeting to reject the Town’s proposal to form a joint powers authority. The decision means that Ross will now move forward with fire consolidation plans with the Ross Valley Fire Department. The Community Protection Committee and Fire Chief Tom Vallee are working with Ross Valley Fire to develop cost sharing recommendations and a preliminary plan to handle assets and liabilities. The Community Protection Committee will continue to keep residents informed and provide updates at Council meetings as the process moves along.

Winey Reappointed to Mosquito Board

The Council reappointed Iris Winey to serve a two-year term as the Ross representative on the Marin/Sonoma Mosquito & Vector Control District Board of Trustees. Ms. Winey was first appointed to the Mosquito Board in February 2010.



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. The minutes of this meeting will be available on the website at www.townofross.org after approval at the January Council meeting.

| Address | Applicant | Approved | Denied | Continued |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|----------|--------|-----------|
| 6 Hill Road | Matt and Courtney Seaschols | X | | |
| 205 Lagunitas Road | Lagunitas Country Club | X | | |
| 126 Winding Way* | Douglas and Miranda Abrams | X | | |
| 98 Shady Lane | Lulita and John Reed | | X | |
| 36 Glenwood Avenue | John and Lisa Pritzker | | X | |
| 60 Baywood Avenue | Reza Rae Pourian | | | X |
| 10 Ames Avenue | Bradley and Kristen Mastik | | | X |

* No action was taken on the construction completion penalty issue.

Upcoming Meetings

The Finance Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, December 22, at 8:15 a.m. The Community Protection Committee meeting will be held on Monday, January 9, at 8:30 a.m. The next regular Town Council meeting will be held on Thursday, January 12, at 6:30 p.m. The General Government Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, January 26, at 9 a.m. Agendas and staff reports for all meetings 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 Council members by accessing the website at www.townofross.org/pages/contact/email_council.html.