

THE MORNING AFTER

*Highlights from the
Ross Town Council Meeting
of February 14, 2008*

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Welcome From Mayor Scot Hunter

We burned the midnight oil for last night's meeting and got a lot accomplished. I find that serving on the Town Council is a worthwhile public service; it is educational and in many ways an enjoyable and fulfilling activity. With that in mind, the next election for Council will be June 3rd when three seats will be filled. We need qualified candidates who have a desire to serve the community. If you're interested in running, or just want to talk about it, call any member of Council or check with staff at town hall. Act now, your town needs you!

Council Introduces Underage Drinking Ordinance

The Council unanimously voted to introduce an ordinance making parents and young adults responsible for the underage drinking that occurs at their homes or at rented party venues. Commonly referred to as "social host" legislation, the Town's Underage Drinking Ordinance makes it unlawful to host a loud or unruly gathering of five or more people under the age of 21 on private property where alcohol is served to, consumed by, or in the possession of an underage individual.

The law would hold parents accountable for underage drinking on their property by making them jointly responsible for their child's hosting of an unlawful gathering. Parents could violate the new drinking law by hosting a teenage party or leaving unsupervised children under 18 if a loud or unruly party with drinking ensued, even if the parents forbade such activities. Young adults aged 18-20 would similarly be held responsible for hosting gatherings where underage drinking occurs.



Violators of the ordinance would be punished with an administrative fine of \$750 for the first offense and \$1,000 for subsequent offenses. Hosts would also be charged for public safety costs for second and subsequent offenses. The ordinance is scheduled for adoption at the March Council meeting.



Council Revisits Speeding Problem on Bolinas Ave.

The Council agreed to add centerline striping on Bolinas Avenue to narrow the travel lanes and slow traffic as vehicles approach the Shady Lane, Richmond and Kensington intersections. The Council also directed staff to investigate additional traffic calming suggestions, including crosswalk improvements and solar-powered speed limit signs, and supported hiring a traffic consultant to prepare a joint application with San Anselmo for a Safe Routes to School Program grant to fund recommended improvements.

Ross and San Anselmo town staff originally explored installation of a multi-way stop sign at the intersection of Bolinas Avenue and Richmond Avenue. However, after gathering traffic, pedestrian and bicycle count data and reviewing roadway accidents, San Anselmo staff concluded that the levels

were not sufficiently high to support a warrant for a stop sign. Without a warrant, each community would take on potential liability in the event an accident occurred at the stop sign.

Mayor Scot Hunter's Report

Ross received an "A" on the American Lung Association's tobacco control report card. Ross was one of only six Bay Area municipalities to receive top marks.

Café Marmalade owner, Rana Madanat, is establishing a children's library in her native Jordan. If you would like to help, stop by the café and see Rana, or visit her website at www.growingwithbooks.org.



Council Appoints Advisory Design Review Group Members

The Council appointed members to the newly created Advisory Design Review Group. The five new members are Josefa Buckingham, Mark Fritts, James Kemp, Dan Winey, and Noreen Slivon. Christine Ramos and Elaine Schultz will serve as alternate members for Noreen Slivon's position as the group's only non-professional resident. The Council will select a chair and vice-chair at a later date. The Council also directed staff to bring a resolution back to Council next month allowing the Council to appoint two alternate members for the design professional positions.



Amendments to Animal Control Law Introduced

The Council voted to introduce an ordinance amending existing animal control laws. The proposed amendments reflect changes recently adopted by the County of Marin and other member communities under a joint powers agreement. The proposed ordinance adds more control measures for vicious and potentially dangerous dogs, including sterilization, muzzling and confinement of the dog, as well as a requirement to post warning signs on a dog owner's property.

Municipal Code Changes Adopted

The Council voted to introduce an ordinance deleting some outdated and repetitive sections of the Municipal Code. The proposed ordinance deletes regulations pertaining to herding of livestock on roadways, licensing of bicycles, and using profane language in public in front of women and children, among other amusing sections. The ordinance is scheduled for adoption in March.

The Council also voted to adopt an ordinance, introduced in January, revising and clarifying some zoning code sections. The new ordinance eliminates the variance requirement for solar panels installed on existing, primary structures that are within side or rear setbacks. In the commercial district, mixed use development is now allowed with a use permit, and design review is now required for outdoor advertising. A definition measuring slope as the line perpendicular to the contours was also adopted, despite a resident's objections. The Council directed staff to research alternative slope definitions for future consideration.

Town staff is working on a long-term project of improving the Municipal Code by clarifying existing regulations and practices, amending obsolete sections, and reorganizing some sections to make it easier for a user to locate desired regulations.

A black rectangular advertisement featuring a portrait of Donna Goldman, a woman with long brown hair, smiling. Below the portrait, the text reads: "Donna is blogging." followed by the URL "http://lifestylemarin.wordpress.com" in red, and the tagline "true tales from the home front." in white. At the bottom, it says "Donna Goldman, Ross Property Specialist dgoldman@pacunion.com" and the phone number "415.458.3500".



From Public Safety Director Barry Heying

We recently initiated a "What's in Your Kit?" campaign to encourage community preparedness. Residents are encouraged to send in their emergency kit lists by March 1. We will review the lists and award the best and most creative efforts.

The Fire Department welcomes Matt White as a new apprentice firefighter. Matt previously worked for George Lucas' Skywalker Fire Department and as a volunteer firefighter for the Kentfield Fire Department.

Town Centennial Celebration

Town Chief of Protocol Molly Gamble reported on the Centennial Committee's plans for 2008. The Centennial Celebration is scheduled for the weekend of September 19. Festivities will begin with a Town Dinner on the Ross Common on Friday night featuring lively entertainment.

On Saturday, September 20th, a parade down Shady Lane will showcase music, period costume, collectible cars and a "Ross through the Decades" theme. A picnic will follow on the Common with food, music, old-fashioned games, a Ross "museum," a ferris wheel and a huge cake decorated with the town map.

A large centennial committee is planning this event and other centennial activities. An honorary committee is also being formed to honor all residents who have lived in the town for more than 50 years. On May 29th, a cocktail party at the Lagunitas Country Club will honor all former mayors and council members, the honorary committee, and our town firefighters, police officers and staff.

A centennial newsletter featuring old photos and Ross lore will be sent to the Town's email list. Centennial merchandise, including wine glasses, picnic blankets, tote bags and our own Ross Centennial wine, will be sold throughout the year. The Centennial Committee welcomes anyone to join.



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Mid-Year Budget Review

Mayor Pro Tempore Bill Cahill reported the Town is remarkably dead-on at the mid-year point of our budget cycle. On the expense side, the Town's operating budget for general government, public works and public safety is within .2%, or approximately \$5,000, of the \$2,142,898 budget.

Six-month revenue is \$2,370,854, above budget levels by \$146,006. This surplus is almost completely due to a \$122,000 payment from the state in settlement of a long-standing dispute. Mid-year property tax revenue was within \$1,000 of the budgeted level of \$1,258,118.

Building and planning revenue has been close to budgeted levels. Projected revenue from these sources was reduced in this year's budget due to the weakening economy.



From Public Works Director Mel Jarjoura

The Department of Public Works has been busy clearing and maintaining drainage ditches, catch basins and culverts to prevent flooding. The town weathered the January storms so well because of this constant vigilance. Most of the flooding problems occurred on private roads and private property and were due to a lack of maintenance. Public Works staff continues to check for debris in the creeks and contact property owners to have trees removed as necessary.

Town and Police Sign 3-Year Contract

The Ross Town Council met in closed session and ratified a 3-year contract with the Ross Police Officer's Association (R.P.O.A.) The R.P.O.A. unanimously voted earlier in the week to accept the tentative agreement. Town Manager Gary Broad and R.P.O.A. representatives Sergeant Jim Reis, Sergeant Bob Tucker and Officer Gianfranco Campa met three times over a one-month period to hammer out an agreement that met the needs of both the Association and the Town. Effective July 1, 2008, salaries will increase 10% for police officers and 13% for sergeants to maintain parity with salaries in Fairfax, San Anselmo, Twin Cities Police and Belvedere. The contract also added longevity pay provisions in an effort to retain our excellent police department staff.



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 after approval at the March Council meeting.

Address	Applicant	Approved	Modified Approval	Denied	Continued
27 Ross Common	Vito and Sonia Badalamenti				
1 Woodside Way	Joe and Monica Kwait				
36 Glenwood Road	John and Lisa Pritzker				

Upcoming Town Council Meeting

The next Town Council meeting will be Thursday, March 13, at 6:30 pm. Agendas and staff reports are posted in advance of the meeting on the town's website at 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. The Town does not recommend or endorse advertisers, although we do appreciate the extra revenue! If you'd like to receive The Morning After and other town information via email, contact Linda Lopez at llopez@townofross.org.