

THE MORNING AFTER

*Highlights from the
Ross Town Council Meeting
of July 15, 2010*

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Carla Small and Rupert Russell Join Council

Mayor Rick Strauss announced the official final results of the June 8, 2010, statewide direct primary election of town council members as follows: Carla Small, 536 votes; P. Rupert Russell, 409; Iris Winey, 267; and Mark Fritts, 261. The total votes cast in the election were 882 ballots, representing a 53% turnout.

Newly elected council members Carla Small and Rupert Russell were sworn in. Each will serve a four-year term.

Prior to the selection of mayor and mayor pro tempore for the current fiscal year, the Council thanked Mayor Rick Strauss for his outstanding service, and Mayor Pro Tempore Scot Hunter read the following statement:

“For the last several decades, the tradition in Ross has been that at the end of the mayor’s term, the mayor pro tem moves over to the mayor’s position and a new mayor pro tem is selected.

Having been the mayor of Ross for close to 1 ½ years during my first term on Council, I know very well how much of a commitment the position requires and after some soul searching with my wife, Mary Lee, I have decided that we cannot make a commitment to the position at the present time.

As a result, I would like to remove my name from consideration for mayor in the upcoming vote, and I will support whoever the Council chooses to appoint.”

The Council unanimously voted Council member Christopher Martin to serve as mayor over the next year and Council member Carla Small to serve as mayor pro tempore. “I am very honored and am looking forward to working with my colleagues and staff to help the citizens of Ross become more involved in their local government,” said Mayor Martin.



Newly elected Council members Rupert Russell (top) and Carla Small were sworn in by Mayor Rick Strauss.

Council Approves FY 2010-2011 Budget

The Council unanimously approved the Fiscal Year 2010-2011 Budget with projected revenues of \$5,338,215 and operating and capital improvement expenditures of \$5,336,411, almost \$200,000 less than last year’s budget. Despite a projected decline in general fund revenue of 2.6%, Council member and Finance Committee Chair Scot Hunter and Town Manager Gary Broad presented a budget with a \$21,804 surplus and noted that the Town is fortunate to be able to continue to provide the same level of excellent municipal services to our residents plus fund new capital improvements.

The budget includes capital outlays for the Sir Francis Drake Boulevard pathway and roadway resurfacing projects, the construction of the new Lagunitas Road Bridge, and improvements to Frederick Allen Park and the south Post Office parking lot. As shown in the table, Ross secured local, state, and federal grant money to fund many of these improvements. Of the nearly \$9 million in budgeted expenditures from all funds, outside grants will cover almost 26% of the cost.

FY 10-11 Grant Revenue From Outside Sources	
Federal Highway Administration Grant for Lagunitas Road Bridge	\$1,500,000
SFD Pedestrian Improvements	\$199,000
FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant	\$40,000
ABAG Workers Comp. Grant	\$10,000
ABAG Liability Insurance Grant	\$15,000
ARRA SFD Roadway Grant	\$226,000
State of CA Park Grants	\$226,363
State of CA COPS Grant	\$100,000
Total Grant Funding	\$2,316,363
Total Expenditures All Funds	\$8,956,421
% All Town FY 10-11 Expenditures Funded with Grant Money	25.9%

The budget projects property tax revenue, which comprises nearly 50% of general fund revenue, will be unchanged. Building permit fees are expected to decrease almost 17% to \$330,000, continuing a downward trend since a high of nearly \$525,000 in FY 08-09.

General government expenditures, which includes administration, finance, planning, building and public works operating expenses, are reduced 6.5% below last fiscal year’s estimated expenditures. Nearly all staff salaries were held at last year’s rates, although costs such as health and workers’ compensation insurance continue to escalate.

The police department budget saw a similar 6.6% budget cutback, while the fire department budget increased by 2.1% due to payroll costs for retiring Fire Captain Bruce Selfridge. The public safety budget comprises approximately 65% of this year’s general fund budget.

Town general fund, emergency fund, equipment replacement and facility fund reserves are projected to total a healthy \$5,599,785 at year’s end, up substantially from \$2,159,230 in 2003.

Municipal Services Tax to Remain at \$775

The Council voted to keep the Town’s Municipal Services Tax at \$775 per developed parcel. The tax has been at \$775 for the past three years. Ross voters first approved the 4-year Municipal Services Tax in 1984 to support public safety and other municipal services. The current tax is in effect through 2012 and will contribute \$642,000 to this year’s Town budget, approximately 12% of total general fund revenues.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Adopted

The Council unanimously voted to adopt the Town of Ross Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, which identifies routes, facilities and programs intended to increase cycling and walking throughout Town and promote safety.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan designates a bikeway system that provides routes to schools and significant destinations in Town as well as links between Ross and neighboring communities. The plan includes existing bike routes along Poplar Avenue, Ross Common, Lagunitas Road, and Shady Lane. New bike routes along Fernhill, Glenwood, Norwood, Bolinas, and Laurel Grove Avenues are also identified. These routes would be established with bike route signs, and possibly shared roadway bicycle markings and “Share the Road” signs, on the roadways.

The plan calls for a bike lane on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard wherever the



roadway can accommodate a 4' striped and stenciled Class II bike lane. The Town has engaged the services of a traffic engineer to determine the feasibility and location of this bike lane, which may not be continuous along the entire length of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. The bike lane will be addressed during the upcoming repaving of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.

The plan includes programs to encourage cycling to large public and private events, and to provide bike parking at downtown locations, the Post Office, the tennis courts, Ross Common, Town Hall, and Natalie Coffin Greene Park. In response to residents' concerns about cyclists disregarding traffic laws, the Plan includes a program to enforce existing traffic laws and ensure that bicyclists stop for posted stop signs, ride single file and ride as close to the right edge of the roadway as practical.



Sir Francis Drake Blvd. Pathway Construction Contract Awarded

The Council voted to award the Sir Francis Drake Boulevard Pathway construction project to John Benward Company for \$218,262. Benward's bid was more than \$50,000 below the engineer's estimate for the project and 30% lower than the nearly \$313,000 highest bid.

The Council discussed the advantages and disadvantages of three contemplated pathway surfaces – asphalt, colored asphalt and decomposed granite. They selected colored asphalt with decomposed granite color as the pathway material. Project engineer Jeff Peters recommended asphalt for its durability and lower

maintenance requirements in this high traffic area. Council member Rick Strauss and Mayor Pro Tempore Carla Small will review a sample of the selected colored asphalt. Pathway construction along Sir Francis Drake Boulevard from the Kentfield border to Bolinas Avenue will run from July 26 through September 3.

Hillside Lot Ordinance Introduced...Again

The Town Council further discussed new hillside development regulations for properties with an average slope of thirty percent or greater or that are wholly or partially within a hazard zone 3 or 4.

The Council considered a new ordinance provision to limit deck area to 25% of the allowable hillside lot floor area. Senior Planner Elise Semonian said that although staff did not recommend the regulation, members of the public and the advisory design review group have asked for a limit on deck area.

Council member Rick Strauss expressed concern that a deck area limitation would unnecessarily constrain architects. He felt that the Council could adequately address issues regarding project bulk and mass during design review. The Council voted unanimously to include a suggested guideline for deck area to be limited to 25% of the allowable floor area and voted to introduce the ordinance.



The Council will consider adoption of the Hillside Lot Ordinance at the August Council meeting.



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 [here](#). The minutes of this meeting will be available on the website at www.townofross.org after approval at the August Council meeting.

Senior Planner Elise Semonian

Address	Applicant	Approved	Denied	Continued
97 Shady Lane	Archdiocese of San Francisco	X		
18 Canyon Road	Douglas Abrams	X		
15 Woodside Way	Susanne and Peter Chase	X		
59 Winship Avenue	Robert and Carol Momsen	X		
39 Fernhill Avenue	The Branson School			X
57 Laurel Grove Ave.	Jennifer Maxwell	X		
662 Goodhill Road	Donald Santa Family Trust			X
43 Winship Avenue	Joanne Santa			X
33 Sir Francis Drake Blvd.	Clearwire US, LLC			X

Upcoming Town Meetings

The next regular Council meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 12, at 6:30 p.m. Agendas and staff reports are posted in advance of the meetings on the town's website at www.townofross.org.

The Council will hold a special meeting in August for a workshop to determine Fiscal Year 10-11 Council goals. The meeting time and place have yet to be finalized.

The Morning After is published following each regular Council meeting by The Town of Ross and is written by Project Planner Christine O'Rourke and edited by Town Manager Gary Broad with support from Administrative Manager Linda Lopez. 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.