

THE MORNING AFTER

Highlights from the
Ross Town Council Meeting
of March 13, 2008

Volume 2, No. 3

March 14, 2008



Welcome From Council Member Diane Durst

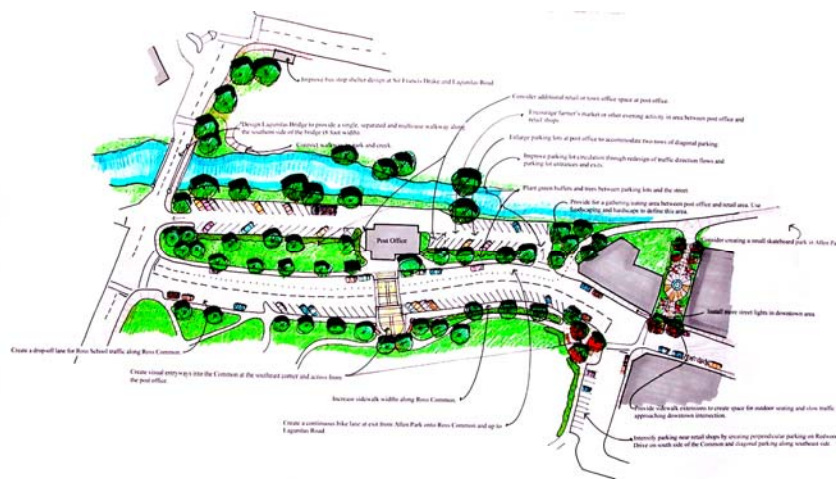
What is Advisory Design Review (ADR)? If you've wanted to remodel or rebuild your home but have been reticent about your design ideas, have ADR look at your plans. The Council has appointed a fabulous ADR Group. You'll get great insight and helpful suggestions on ways to deal with design hurdles unique to our community. We think you'll have a better understanding of your project and be able to present a complete application to Council for formal approval. ADR will hold its review sessions on the fourth Thursday of the month starting in April. Contact the Planning Department if you are interested in ADR. (P.S. the Town doesn't charge a fee for ADR!)

Council Discusses Downtown Plan

Council member Rick Strauss and his wife, architect Kathy Strauss, unveiled a schematic Downtown Plan detailing local designers' ideas developed during a downtown brainstorming meeting. The schematic will be used as a springboard to generate community ideas and comments during a public visioning session the town will host in the spring. An enlarged version of this plan is available at www.townofross.org/town-council/downtown-plan/.

To improve safety and discourage illegal U-turns, the designers suggest narrowing the Ross Common roadway to 12-foot travel lanes and adding a bike lane. Parking is increased by doubling the diagonal parking in the post office lots and adding more parking spaces around the Common. The plan includes more street trees and landscaping to provide a green buffer between the post office lot and the street.

The designers' plan proposes outdoor eating and gathering spaces near the retail area and improving park entrances with more seating and attractive visual gateways. The plan also suggests rerouting the bike path to exit Allen Park onto Ross Common. A landscaped patio at the intersection could provide an area for bikers and walkers to congregate and have a cup of coffee.



More designer ideas and objectives are posted on the Town's Downtown Plan webpage. In preparation for the public visioning meeting, residents and downtown businesses are encouraged to share their ideas, including photos and magazine tear sheets, of images they'd like to see downtown. Email gbroad@townofross.org or drop off material at the Town Administration office.



Mayor Scot Hunter's Report

The Town has added a Downtown Ross page featuring neighborhood merchants and businesses to its website. The page provides a handy way for residents to get contact information in one place and helps promote our downtown businesses.

A farmer's market may be coming to downtown Ross! We'll discuss this possibility more at our April meeting.

Council Adopts Underage Drinking Ordinance

The Council unanimously voted to adopt an underage drinking ordinance, making it unlawful for a juvenile or adult to host a loud or unruly gathering of five or more underage people when alcohol is served to, consumed by, or in the possession of anyone under 21.

The ordinance will go into effect in 30 days and carries administrative fines of \$750 for a first offense and \$1,000 for subsequent offenses. Hosts will also be charged for public safety costs for second and subsequent offenses. Parents will be held jointly responsible for parties hosted by their minor children.



Community Rating System Update

Senior Planner Elise Semonian updated the Council on the Town's efforts to reduce flood insurance premiums for Ross residents through the Community Rating System (CRS). The CRS provides discounts to communities that go beyond the minimum floodplain management requirements and develop extra measures to provide flood protection. The Town is working on earning CRS credit points to reduce residents' flood insurance premiums by 5% to 10%.



The Town will receive CRS credit points for many of the activities it already performs, such as requiring elevation certificates, maintaining drainage ways, and providing flood zone information to the public. In order to qualify for additional points, the Town will add information to the Town's website on flooding and flood insurance, provide local libraries with the town flood insurance map and other FEMA publications, and begin an annual outreach project to inform residents about a variety of flood-related topics. Staff will also develop a plan to address the town's eleven sites that have had repetitive losses.

Town Centennial Celebration

The Council voted to amend the Town's FY 07-08 budget to provide an additional \$38,000 in funding for the Town Centennial celebration. The Council will include \$22,000 for Centennial funding in the FY 08-09 budget. Town Manager Gary Broad said the Town could afford this expense for a once-every-hundred-year celebration.

The Town will continue to explore whether to locate a Centennial bronze plaque at Ross Town Hall or Centennial Park in downtown Ross.



Ordinance Takes Aim at Illegal Parking on Laurel Grove Ave.



The Council voted to adopt an ordinance authorizing police to tow commercial vehicles parked on town streets between 5 p.m. and 8 a.m. on weekdays and anytime on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. The ordinance also increases fines for illegal parking from \$30 to \$100 for a first offense, \$200 for a second offense, and \$250 for third and consecutive offenses within one year.

The Town will install a sign giving notice of the new tow-away provision at the dirt shoulder of Laurel Grove near its intersection with Canyon Road. Residents have complained about contractors leaving tractor trailers and heavy equipment at the pullout, and Council members hope this new deterrent will be effective. The Town will revisit the matter in six months to assess the success of the new regulations.

Shady Lane Safe Pathway to School Project

The Council discussed an improved Shady Lane pathway, including its initial designation as a Safe Routes to School project in 2003. Staff described the pros and cons of various surface materials. Permeable asphalt, for example, may increase absorption slightly, but only when the ground is not saturated. It also requires an annual “vacuuming” which could substantially increase maintenance costs.



Residents were generally in support of an improved pathway, although a few Shady Lane property owners voiced their concerns about bicycles potentially colliding with vehicles exiting driveways. Some residents suggested incorporating design features, such as mirrors and speed impediments, at the driveway entrances to improve safety.

Many parents of small children spoke in favor of a paved pathway, arguing that the pathway would be safer than walking or riding in the street when the pathway is muddy. Mary Amonette, Ross resident for over 50 years and former Shady Lane property owner, said, “The time has come when we have to realize Shady Lane is not only no longer shady, it is no longer a lane. It is a busy thoroughfare and needs a safer pathway.” The Council directed staff to review resident comments and to continue working on pathway engineering and design.



Ross Municipal Code Updated

The Council voted to adopt ordinances introduced at the February Council meeting amending animal control laws and deleting outdated sections of the municipal code. As of April 12th, it will no longer be illegal to camp on public streets, advertise fortune telling services, or race horses on town streets.

And the Winners Are...

The Council honored residents that submitted emergency kit lists to the Town’s “What in Your Kit?” competition. Lisa and John Martin, Doreen and Frank Malin, Cecilia Conte, and Jeanne, Dylan and Sophie Barr were awarded \$25 gift certificates to Café Marmalade for their creative and comprehensive kits. The Town sponsored the contest to encourage residents to “Get Ready” for an emergency and to share kit building ideas.



Advisory Design Review Under Construction

The Council passed a resolution creating two new alternate design professional positions for the Advisory Design Review Group. Richard Hannum, a local architect and member of the Ross General Plan Steering Committee 2005-2007, was appointed as a design professional alternate.



The Advisory Design Review Group held its first meeting earlier this week and will begin its regular meetings on April 24th at 5 p.m. The process is voluntary and free. Advisory Design Review will allow residents to get early feedback on design proposals before submitting a formal application to the Council.



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 | Withdrawn |
|------------------|--------------------------|---|-------------------|--------|--|
| 88 Glenwood Ave. | Christine and Ken Catton |  | | | |
| 16 Garden Road | Michael and Trudy Thoma | | | |  |
| 36 Glenwood Road | John and Lisa Pritzker |  | | | |

Upcoming Town Council Meeting

The next Town Council meeting will be Thursday, April 10, 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.