

THE MORNING AFTER

*Highlights from the
Ross Town Council Meeting
of November 12, 2009*

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November 13, 2009



A Tired Town Hall and Fire Station

In 1926, the Town of Ross voted to spend \$100,000 to buy the Shotwell estate. The present Ross Town Hall and Fire Station were built on this site in 1927. But 82 years later, both buildings are tired, outdated, inefficient and inadequate to meet current staff facility needs. As Fire Chief Town Vallee remarked during the recent heavy rain, "It's raining harder *inside* the building than outside." The buildings sit within the 100-year flood zone and fail to meet current seismic standards. The Council has taken a necessary step in adopting studying public facilities as one of this year's 5 Council goals. Please read Council member Cahill's comments in Council Members Report

09-10 Goals and give us your ideas on how to address our aging facilities. – *Town Manager Gary Broad*

Council Discusses Model Green Building Ordinance

San Rafael Planning Director Bob Brown presented a model county-wide green building ordinance for possible future Town adoption. The ordinance seeks to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions through a uniform set of green building standards applied to both remodel and new construction of residential and commercial buildings.

The model ordinance was developed over several months by a task force that includes council members from every Marin community. A large committee of experts, including architects, contractors, city building officials, energy consultants, and environmental advocates, provided technical advice.

The green building ordinance relies on widely accepted industry rating systems: GreenPoint Rated for residential construction and LEED for commercial buildings. The ordinance increases requirements for green building components and energy savings as the project size and budget increase. The requirements are expected to add 1-6% to the cost of construction but pay for themselves over time in energy cost savings.



The task force suggests exempting most remodeling projects under \$50,000 in valuation and then requiring a home performance audit for projects up to \$100,000. The \$500-700 audit rates a home's overall energy efficiency by assessing items such as air leakage from heating and air conditioning ducts, HVAC efficiency, insulation gaps and air leaks, and lighting and appliance energy efficiency.

Brown said the model ordinance could be tailored to Ross' needs, but noted there were advantages to adopting some common provisions, especially for architects and contractors who work throughout Marin.

Mayor Rick Strauss' Report

St. John's Episcopal Church has withdrawn its use permit application to provide shelter for the homeless this winter. However, the Ross Property Owners (RPOA) and the Town are striving to raise \$2,500 from the community for the Ritter Center's "Art Houses of Marin" campaign to help end homelessness in Marin. The RPOA and Council hope every Ross household will contribute to the campaign.



The Halloween window painting contest had a successful second year in downtown Ross. Thanks again to organizer Bonnie Bibas.

Alain Pinel Realtors will be hosting a reception for all Ross residents and merchants on Thursday, November 19, from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. Appetizers prepared by local merchants and beverages will be provided with an acoustic guitar soloist. I encourage everyone to shop downtown and support all of our local merchants.

Residency Requirements Amended for Ross Rec Committee

The Council approved the Ross Recreation Board of Directors and granted the Board's request to amend the agency's bylaws to permit up to three members from the neighboring communities of Kentfield, Greenbrae, San Anselmo and Larkspur to serve on the Ross Park and Recreation Committee. Presently, eleven of the twelve-member committee must be Ross School District residents. The Board's request stated that a large majority of Ross Rec program participants comes from outside the Ross School district, and the broadened residency requirement would ensure better representation and improved services to those communities.

Outdoor Fireplace Regulations Discussed

The Council agreed to consider an ordinance to extend Bay Area Air Quality Management District fireplace regulations to newly constructed outdoor fireplaces that require building permits. The Air Quality District's regulations require cleaner burning fireplaces, such as EPA-certified fireplace inserts or natural gas devices, to be installed in new construction and remodels. The Air Quality District prohibits wood burning on winter Spare the Air Days. Residents may sign up for Spare the Air Day alerts at www.sparetheair.org.



These existing CMSA anaerobic digesters would be used to convert food waste to methane gas .

Council Supports Food to Energy

The Council passed a resolution supporting development of a Central Marin Sanitation Agency (CMSA) "Food to Energy" initiative which would create electricity from methane gas generated by food waste. The project plans to collect food waste from restaurants, grocery stores, and other commercial sources in the Marin Sanitary Service area. CMSA facilities, where there is currently 50% unused capacity, would be used for anaerobic digestion of food waste into methane biogas, producing enough electricity to power the CMSA facility and sell excess energy to PG&E. The project potentially diverts up to 16.5 tons per day of commercial food waste from the landfill. New facilities are estimated

to cost between \$1.3 and \$2.8 million, depending upon project scale, and have a 1-6 year payback on investment. The CMSA Board has approved the project and is currently exploring funding sources.

Advisory Design Review Group Seeking New Members

The Council discussed the Advisory Design Review (ADR) Group member positions that are set to expire in February 2010. At the group's suggestion, the Council agreed to stagger the new terms to avoid a complete turnover of members every two years and retain some members with ADR experience. Community members cautioned the Council to avoid conflict of interest issues when selecting new ADR members. Staff will advertise the open ADR Group positions prior to the Council appointment at its February meeting. Contact Senior Planner Elise Semonian at esemonian@townofross.org for more information.



Council Designates COPS Funding Plan

The Council agreed to continue funding one police officer position with Citizens Option for Public Safety (COPS) funding. The Town expects to receive \$100,000 in COPS funding this year as the recently approved 2009-2010 state budget provided a one-year extension of the COPS program. The state has provided supplemental funding to local communities through the COPS program since 1996 to enhance local public safety services.

Council Members Report on 09-10 Goals

The Town Council reported on their Council goals for the 2009-10 fiscal year. Council member Michael Skall said the October 29 Hillside Lot Ordinance community workshop was very well-attended and generated over 50 comments. Some of the major themes related to slope calculation methodology, the concept of excellence of design in granting FAR exceptions, and the competing goals of providing clarity to property owners while allowing flexibility in Council decisions. Mayor Rick Strauss suggested establishing a minimum home size for hillside lots, and Council member Bill Cahill recommended reviewing the provision for exempting additions of up to 20% of existing original square footage. There will be another facilitator-led community workshop in January. Council member Cahill requested an inventory of vacant lots to be completed and asked staff to display a map identifying those lots at the January meeting.

Council member Cahill's goal is to study improvements to public facilities. He has reviewed previous design plans for a new civic center as well as more modest alternatives to remodel existing facilities. Council member Cahill would like community members to send their thoughts to him or Town Manager Gary Broad on goals for the Civic Center and Ross Common and specific ideas for improvements. Examples of goals may include: create more adjacencies for a better working collaboration for administrative employees; move administrative functions closer to public safety; or employ green building practices. Examples of specific ideas for improvements may include rebuilding the entire Civic Center, moving some or all functions to the Marin Art & Garden Center, moving the Council chambers, or remodeling or expanding Town Hall.

Marin Clean Energy Workshops Announced

The Marin Energy Authority will hold public workshops on the Marin Clean Energy initiative on November 23 at San Rafael City Hall and December 1 at the Mill Valley Community Center. Both workshops will be from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. The workshops will include a panel of speakers to discuss Marin Clean Energy, the draft power purchase agreement, nearby municipal utilities providing green energy projects, and potential local renewable and energy efficiency projects for Marin County.

The Marin Energy Authority (MEA) is composed of Belvedere, Fairfax, County of Marin, Mill Valley, Ross, San Anselmo, San Rafael, Sausalito and Tiburon. The MEA is currently reviewing a contract with Shell Energy North America to purchase energy with a higher renewable energy content rate than available through PG&E at a competitive rate.



The draft power purchase agreement is now in its final 90 day review period. Any of the participating communities can make a final decision to withdraw from the MEA at least 30 days prior to the contract being executed. The Council urges all residents to attend one of the workshops and welcomes comments. Visit www.marinenergyauthority.org for more information.

No Parking Zone Established on Wellington Avenue

The Council adopted a resolution prohibiting parking on a 145' section of Wellington Avenue from the northeast corner of Fallen Leaf Avenue to the west property line of 65 Wellington Avenue. Staff recommended the parking prohibition to ensure adequate emergency vehicle access on the narrow roadway.

Public Works Report

The Transportation Authority of Marin has awarded the Town of Ross \$255,000 in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) funds to repave Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. The project will include the entire .8 mile section of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard within the Ross town limits and is estimated to cost \$600,000. The existing pavement condition is considered poor with a Pavement Condition Index rating of 50 on a 0-100 scale. Marin County has received a total of \$5.73 million in ARRA funding for local roads.



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 website at www.townofross.org after approval at the December Council meeting.

Senior Planner Elise Semonian

Address	Applicant	Approved	Denied	Continued
18 Redwood Drive	Lisa and Michael Gorham			
7 Woodhaven Rd.*	Steve Bode			
21 Fernhill Ave.	Brian and Rachel Wells			
39 Poplar Ave.	Lambert and Dorothy Meyer			
10 Morrison Road	Margaret Haas			
Upper Toyon Lots**	Harvey Glasser			
98 Shady Lane	Paige and Bobby Locke			

*Application approval reinstated for 180 days.

**Land division only approved.

And Finally...

The Council announced no reportable action was taken during closed session regarding the extension of the Town Manager's contract.

Upcoming Town Council Meeting

The next regular Council meeting is on Thursday, December 10, 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 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 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.