

THE MORNING AFTER

*Highlights from the
Ross Town Council Meeting
of November 13, 2008*

Volume 2, No. 11

November 14, 2008



The Morning After Comes Early...

The morning after arrived early for many members of the community, the Town Council and staff as last night's Council meeting continued despite the clock tolling midnight. Perhaps the agenda should have carried a disclaimer cautioning that the Thursday, November 13th meeting might become a Friday, November 14th meeting? But even as I struggle to use my tired brain to write this opening, I realize that last night's marathon Council session was a positive event. Residents cared enough to attend and provide the Council with thoughtful, carefully prepared comments on items and projects before the Council. It was just another regular Council meeting, but it was a wonderful democratic process in which residents gave their input to their elected representatives. Thank you to everyone who turned out last night...and this morning.

Ross Considers Joining Marin Energy Authority

The Council introduced an ordinance approving a joint powers agreement to create a Marin Energy Authority that will explore implementation of Marin Clean Energy and other greenhouse gas reduction programs. If the ordinance is approved at the December Council meeting, the Town will join the County and other Marin cities and towns in a joint effort to provide residents with an alternative renewable energy source and an opportunity to substantially reduce their carbon footprints.

According to the business plan, Marin Clean Energy proposes to deliver green energy to Marin customers through two products: a "light green" product, which contains 25-50% renewable energy and is projected to cost the same or less than PG&E electricity, and a "dark green" product, which delivers 100% renewable energy and is expected to cost 8-10% more than PG&E electricity. The energy would be transmitted over existing power lines, and PG&E would continue to provide billing and customer service.



Once the joint powers authority is formed, the Marin Energy Authority (MEA) will solicit energy service providers for bids to fulfill long-term renewable energy contracts. The Town will have 60 days to review these contracts and will have the option to withdraw from MEA if renewable energy proves costlier than anticipated. This decision point is expected to occur approximately in nine months. In the meantime, the Town and other MEA members will have the opportunity to conduct a risk analysis to further test business model assumptions.

Most Council members concluded that joining MEA would not pose any financial or legal liability to the Town at this juncture and voted to pass the first reading. Council member Michael Skall opposed.

To learn more, read the Town's MEA staff report and related documents at www.townofross.org or visit www.marincleanenergy.info.



Mayor Bill Cahill's Report

We continue to receive complaints about leaf blowers and construction noise during prohibited hours. Gasoline engine powered blowers are not permitted at any time without a special permit from the public works department. Lawn mowers and electricity powered leafblowers and other yard equipment are permitted only during non-holiday weekdays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.; property owners may also use this equipment on Saturdays between 9:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. Similar rules apply to construction work. Holidays include Veteran's Day, President's Day, and Martin

Luther King Jr. Day. Building permits clearly state permitted hours of construction. Please ensure your contractor follows these regulations.

We revived a Ross tradition this year with a spirited Halloween window painting contest in the downtown. Thanks to organizer Bonnie Bibas, who wanted to recreate the Halloween window painting she remembers while growing up in Rye, New York. Sophie Goldberg, an 8th grader, took first place, while 3rd grader Alice Owen came in second and 5th grader Rosie Owen took third. Congratulations to the winners and thanks for making our downtown so colorful this Halloween.



Council Designates COPS Funding Plan

The Council agreed to continue funding one police officer position with state COPS funding at a total cost of \$136,434. The state has provided supplemental funding to local communities through the COPS program since 1996 to enhance local public safety services. The Town will receive \$90,000 in COPS funding this year, and with the current disbursement, the COPS account will stand at \$243,594. Whether the State will continue to fund the COPS program next year is unknown.

Police Department Receives Additional Funding

The Town Council authorized \$105,236 in additional Police Department expenses for the current 2008-2009 fiscal year.

The Police Department will add one police officer at a cost of \$68,076 for the remainder of this fiscal year. This new hire will return the number of police officers to their historic level and will allow the Council to consider promoting an officer to the vacant second sergeant position in next year's budget.

The Police Department will also purchase a replacement patrol car in this fiscal year, instead of next year as originally planned. Police Chief Jim Reis will inherit a used police car, rather than having the Town purchase a new car for his use. Mayor Pro Tempore Rick Strauss requested staff to explore options for a "green" patrol car before purchasing the new vehicle.

Finally, the department will purchase ten Tasers at a net cost of \$6,500. The Town's insurance carrier so strongly encourages the use to Tasers to reduce liability that they will pay for 50% of the cost. The adopted budget for the Town projected an excess of revenue over expenditures of \$143,374, so the additional expenses will still result in a slight budget surplus for the year.





Council Approves Lot Line Adjustment for Ross School Project

The Council approved a lot line adjustment between the Town of Ross and the Ross School District to facilitate the reconstruction, raising and future expansion of the Ross School. The school will transfer 1,080 square feet to the Ross Common proximate to the redwood grove area, and the Town will transfer 1,079 square feet to the school property to provide an additional 5.5 feet of parcel width adjacent to the proposed new gym/multi-purpose building.

Neneshoes to Open in Ross

The Town Council granted a use permit to a new retail store specializing in European shoes and clothing for children called "neneshoes." The store will be located at 30 Ross Common in the former florist shop location and will be open daily from 10 to 6.

Neneshoes, whose flagship store is in Portland, Oregon, carries a large selection of colorful and well-made clothing and shoes. Shoes from Italian and Spanish designers run the gamut from baby walking shoes to ballet flats and everyday sandals. The store also carries clothing from Petit Blau Mari, well known in Europe for fine fabrics and exceptional attention to detail. A collection of swimwear, beach dresses, t-shirts and special occasion wear will be on hand.



Five Council Goals Update

Council members reported progress on their five Council goals. Council member Mike Skall announced that sandbag material has arrived for the rainy season. This year, sandbags will be available ONLY at Natalie Coffin Greene Park and not at the Town of Ross Fire Station. The Town continues its efforts to prepare residents for floods and other emergencies. Residents interested in attending CERT or Get Ready Marin classes, as well as senior citizens who wish to be included on a special Town emergency notification list, should contact the Town.

Mayor Pro Tempore Rick Strauss announced that SWA, landscape architects, is working on the downtown plan. A community workshop is planned in January 2009 and a final plan should be ready for Town review in February.

Council member Chris Martin reported that Marin County approved a contract with the Urban Creeks Council to provide free assistance to Marin creekside property owners to address erosion, bank stabilization, habitat restoration, and local permitting procedures. Programs will launch in January 2009. Visit www.urbancreeks.org to learn more.



From Public Works Director Mel Jarjoura

The Town is exploring locating the new Sir Francis Drake Boulevard pathway on the west side of the roadway, instead of the east side as originally proposed. The change could avoid excessive digging and relocation of utilities. The Town's consultant, Questa Engineering, is preparing an alternative evaluation.

The latest word from our consultant, URS Corporation, is that the Lagunitas Road Bridge replacement will be unable to begin prior to 2010 due to the time needed by Caltrans to process our environmental clearance and regulations prohibiting work in the creeks past October 15th. The Town will continue its effort to expedite the Caltrans review process.

Apprentice Firefighter Michael Gutierrez Joins Ross

Fire Chief Tom Vallee introduced apprentice firefighter Michael Gutierrez, filling a vacancy created when Rick Rosecrans was promoted from apprentice to firefighter in August. Mike previously worked at Windsor Fire District, first as a volunteer and then as an apprentice. He is a Santa Rosa Fire Academy graduate and is currently working on finishing his AS degree at Santa Rosa Junior College. Mike is a resident of Windsor. Welcome to Ross, Mike!



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 December Council meeting.

Address	Applicant	Approved	Denied	Continued
Ross Common and 9 Lagunitas Rd.	Ross School District			
30 Ross Common	Veronica Plasencia			
7 Woodside Way	Stephanie and Lee Notowich			
1 Spring Rd. and Madrona Ave. lot	Bill and Krista Martin			
54 Baywood Avenue	Ross and Ligia Parmenter			

Upcoming Town Council Meeting

The next Town Council meeting will be on Thursday, December 11, at 6:30 p.m. 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 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. If you'd like to receive The Morning After and other town information via email, contact llopez@townofross.org.