



THE MORNING AFTER

Highlights from the
Ross Town Council Meetings
of August 14, 2012 and September 13, 2012

Town of Ross

Volume 6, Issue 9
September 14, 2012

Council Discusses Town Finances at Annual Strategy Workshop



Rob Braulik
Town Manager

The Town Council met August 14th in a strategic planning workshop. The meeting focus was discussion of Town Finances. The Council received presentations from the Town's Audit firm and the Town Manager. The Council agreed the major priority focus for the Council during the next year is stabilization of Town finances. Currently, the Town is experiencing a structural deficit.

This meeting was the first step the Town Council is taking to address and later implement short and long range plans to address the current fiscal situation. It is part of a three-part process. Holding the workshop was the first step which was to pinpoint the current fiscal issues, identify potential alternative solutions including revenue and expenditure options and impacts; the second step for staff based on the direction given by the Council is to obtain additional data and information on various alternatives which will come back before the council for review and consideration and the third step is implementing actions to solve and address the fiscal issues. The Council as a

result of the workshop directed staff to move forward in the coming weeks and months on various revenue and expenditure options.

Current fiscal issue

A structural deficit is a fiscal issue caused by an imbalance between revenues and expenditures. Oftentimes the imbalance will be mitigated year to year by making short term budget adjustments such as delaying purchases and capital improvement projects, not filling vacant positions and using non-general funds for some services. The long-term fix for a structural deficit requires strengthening the agency revenue base, reducing "standard" service levels and forgoing projects and programs.

Failure of Measure "C"

The current deficit was made much more severe when Measure C did not pass in June of this year. This former existing special parcel tax has been the second largest source of Town revenues and used to support public safety services. Last year (FY12) the Town received nearly \$640,000 in revenues from this tax. The Council has taken action to put this item back on the November ballot. This Measure known as Measure "D" is not a new tax. It would simply reinstate the prior parcel tax.

Implications on Public Safety Services

Passage of Measure "D" is essential to the Town continuing to operate its own police services. If it does not pass, the Town will need to explore alternative pub-

lic safety service from partial to full consolidation or contracting with another agency.

The Council also discussed several alternative revenue and expenditure options. These options would help the Town to implement short and long-term solutions to the current structural deficit. These included this abbreviated sample:

Revenues

- A Documentary Transfer (DTT) and or Utility User tax. The Council thought the DTT had greater merit and asked staff to move forward with additional research.
- The Council also supported staff coming forward with recommendations for fees which fully account and recover Town costs.
- The Council thought seeking payment-in-lieu agreements from major Town non-profits was worth further exploration.
- The Council asked staff to seek all available grant sources to fund services.

Expenditures

Town expenditures have been reduced through merging Ross Fire into the Ross Valley Fire District (RVFD), having recent new employees pay their employee share of the Public Employment Retirement System (PERS) pension costs and the Town is a member of several Marin County Joint Powers

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2012 CERT CLASSES
October 13-14 - Mill Valley
November 3-4 - Kentfield
 To enroll, go to
<http://www.marincountycert.org/cert-training-schedule>

Stay informed and up to date. Join the Town's email list.
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 to join.

The Mayor's Report



Rupert Russell
Mayor

First, a personal note: a few weeks ago someone living near the corner of Shady Lane and Fernhill found my daughter's cell phone and returned it to our home without identifying him or herself. Since neither I nor my daughter know who to thank individually, I take this opportunity to say that, whoever was that kind person, I and my daughter are very grateful. It is this spirit of good neighborliness that first and foremost makes Ross a great place to live.

Today, we honor Officer Bob Besgrove for his many years of fine service to our community. It was very sad that Bob was the primary casualty of our current fiscal difficulties resulting in large part from the failure of the public safety tax to receive the necessary two-thirds majority in the June ballot. Bob always did

his job with a smile and a good story to go with it, and he did not complain when we as a Council made the decision to remove him - indeed he commented that we had to act in the best interests of the Town. Even though I received some years ago a parking ticket from Officer Bob outside the school, I and my family will always remember Officer Bob with great fondness and regard him as having been a cherished part of our community, who made a tremendous contribution to living in Ross and was a fine example to our children. We will miss you, Officer Bob. I am proud that many in our community have been fundraising on Officer Bob's behalf and wish them success in their endeavors.

Next, I would like to give a big thank you to Tom Weisel for taking it on himself to organize a

letter writing campaign to encourage others to give to the Town of Ross to help make up our current deficit. As far as I am aware, he was not asked by any Council member to do this and we as a community should be grateful to him. So far the Town has received more than \$44,000 in donations. This is far short of the \$640,000 that we lost as a Town through the tax not being renewed, but on the other hand it is a useful and substantial contribution.

Finally, we are coming up to the election season and you should be aware that public safety tax is back on the ballot. Residents will have to decide in November an issue, which is for us in Ross, as important as whether Obama or Romney should be President. This is whether existing public safety services should be maintained or not.

Council Appoints New Resident to Mosquito & Vector Control District Board



The Council appointed Ross resident Phil Paisley as Ross' representative to the Marin/Sonoma Mosquito & Vector Control District Board of Trustees. Mr. Paisley, along with two other Ross residents (Bonnie Bibas and Zane Morrissey), submitted their names for consideration.

Mayor Russell thanked each of the candidates for their interest in serving on this important board. With the recent news of the West Nile Virus outbreak in many parts of the country, serving on this Board is more important than ever.

Mr. Paisley will replace current

Board member Iris Winey who asked to step down. He will serve the rest of Mrs. Winey's term through December 31, 2013. At that time, the Board seat will once again be up for reappointment.

No Town Council Review to Rebuild Residences After Disaster



The Town Council adopted an ordinance that allows the Building Official to issue building permits to repair and reconstruct a residence after a disaster. The ordinance applies to both major disasters and a single event, such as a fire. No Town Council review or a public hearing would

be required so long as certain conditions are met. The ordinance was adopted with a 3-2 vote, with Councilmembers Small and Brekhuis opposed. Councilmember Small believed upon hearing the testimonies of members of the community, that the current planning system worked after the flood of 2005.

She felt the proposed amendment was "so narrow in its scope that the impact of unintended consequences will outweigh any possible benefit to our residents." Councilmember Brekhuis stated more detailed application submittal requirements should be required and,

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Council Discusses Town Finances at Annual Strategy Workshop (Continued from Page 1)

Agencies (JPA's) to reduce administration and overhead costs for various town services provided to residents (e.g., refuse, street sweeping etc.). The Council asked staff to do additional research on potential cost savings from:

- Changing, if possible, the PERS pension benefit for safety employees from the current 3% at 55 to 2% at 50 or 2% at 55 and for miscellaneous employees from 2% at 55 to 2% at 60.
- Considering potential plans to get all employees to pay their PERS employee share
- Supporting staff to move forward with refinance of the

Town PERS Side Fund debt obligation from the current 7.75% interest rate to 4% or less.

Planning and Infrastructure

The Council also directed staff to come back with ordinance changes to eliminate minor planning items from having to come before the Council for review (e.g., fences). They also asked staff to implement on the existing neighborhood acknowledgment form a provision that residents seeking planning approvals reach out to their neighbors and have them voluntarily, in the form acknowledging they have been advised of the proposed project, state in writing any

support or objections they may have on a proposed project; and if there are objections, the nature of the objections.

The Council asked staff to look at getting a preliminary conceptual design for new landscaping at the Sir Francis Drake/Lagunitas intersection as part of this major pedestrian safety capital project which is planned for construction in FY13.

Staff will initiate efforts to address all the above work items over the coming months. Finally, it is expected the

Council will meet again possibly in a workshop setting after the November election to evaluate options and next steps pending the results of the Measure "D" election. Thank you.

Bob Besgrove Farewell Recognition



Robert "Officer Bob" Besgrove was formally recognized for his dedication and outstanding service to the Town as School Resource Officer from 1994 to 2012. Mayor Russell presented Mr. Besgrove with a Resolution

and commemorative gift and thanked him for his years of service. A number of members of the community shared their stories of Officer Bob and extended their well-wishes. Members of the community also created a quilt (pictured right) with pictures of Ross and presented it to Officer Bob.

For many years, Officer Bob provided a daily presence at the Ross School during the morning student drop off and afternoon pickup. He served as a liaison between the schools and the Police Department, and provided

for the safety and security of children as a visual deterrent to crime. He mediated disputes between students and prevented illegal drug and alcohol use. He taught students about bicycle safety and reporting crimes and suspicious activity in their schools and neighborhoods. Officer Bob will be remembered for his welcoming smile and huge heart, and his ability to engage our youth and make us all feel comfortable that our schools were a safe haven under his watch.



No Town Council Review to Rebuild Residences After Disaster (Continued from Page 2)

as written, the ordinance left the process open for abuse.

The new ordinance requires residences to be rebuilt exactly as they were before the disaster. However, they must be brought

up to current codes, including flood plan management regulations. Residents are encouraged to create and maintain plans and photographs of their structures and maintain them off-site so that they may be used to sub-

stantiate pre-disaster conditions. The ordinance will take effect October 14, 2012.



Senior Planner
Elise Semonian

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, visit www.townofross.org/pages/town_council/staff_reports.html. The minutes of this meeting will be available on the website at www.townofross.org after approval at the October Council meeting.

| Address | Applicant | Council Action | Vote (for/against/abstain) |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 662 Goodhill Road | Steve Scarpa | Approved | 4-0-1 (Small abstained) |
| 10 Norwood Avenue | Jordan & Caroline Shlain | Approved | 5-0-0 |
| 6 Southwood Avenue | Darr & Sandy Aley | Approved | 5-0-0 |
| 15 Woodside Way | Peter & Susanne Chase | Approved | 4-0-1 (Hoertkorn abstained) |
| 24 Woodside Way | Elizabeth McLaughlin Burgis | Approved | 4-1-0 (Small opposed) |
| 84 Glenwood Avenue | George Sandison | Continued to 10/8/12 | -- |
| 45 Sir Francis Drake Blvd | Doug & Caroline Prezzano | Approved | 5-0-0 |

DEADLINE TO REGISTER TO VOTE
in the November election is Monday, October 22, 2012.
 Go to <http://www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/RV/Main/RegisterVote/registervote.html>
to obtain voter registration form.

What's Next...

- Bolinas Avenue Safe Pathways to School Project will hold a public meeting on Tuesday, September 18, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.
- The Finance Committee will meet on Wednesday, September 19, 2012 at 2:00 p.m.
- The Advisory Design Review Group meets Tuesday, September 25, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.
- The Community Picnic (formerly known as the Town Dinner) is Friday, September 28, 2012. There is still time to help underwrite this event. Please contact Chief of Protocol Liz Welsh at ross.events@gmail.com.
- The next regular Town Council meeting will be held on the special date of **Monday, October 8, 2012 at 6:00 p.m.** Measure D will be discussed. Residents are encouraged to attend and submit their questions. Agendas and staff reports for all meetings are posted in advance of the meetings on the Town's website at www.townofross.org. All meetings are held at Town Hall unless indicated otherwise. You may email Council members by accessing the website at www.townofross.org/pages/contact/email_council.html.

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