

THE MORNING AFTER

TOWN OF ROSS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Volume 12 | Issue 12 | December 2018

Mayor's Corner



Beach Kuhl
Mayor

This month efforts continue to improve the Town's planning and permitting process, to make it operate both more smoothly and more economically. We have already added to our staff a Building

Permit Technician, Barbara Reher, to expedite the processing of building permits. We are also adding a full-time Senior Building Inspector, Eric Robbe, to perform the work previously outsourced to a contractor who provided that service only on a part time basis three days per week. We are also nearing completion of computerization of the building and planning process, which will enable us to keep records of those activities electronically and allow some customer activities to be completed electronically. Finally,

Continued on Page 2

Emergency Response Overview

California and the rest of the country have experienced increased number and intensity of disasters and emergencies in recent years. Thursday's Council meeting included a discussion of lessons learned from catastrophic wildfires and a local emergency response overview. Ross Valley Fire Department Fire Chief Jason Weber, who headed up a Countywide committee related to lessons learned, provided a report on the committee recommendation. Some of the key recommendations relate to: vegetation



management and defensible space; emergency notification (are you signed up for Alert Marin?); citizen preparation (are you prepared for an emergency?); evacuation procedures; coordination with a multitude of groups; and government disaster service worker training.

The Town and our partner government entities are continuously taking steps to improve how we prepare for and respond to an emergency. There is much planning, training, implementation of processes that goes on. It is on-going and often revised to take into account lessons learned and best practices. The Town's role in an emergency is to ensure there is Emergency Management of the event and provide coordination of resources, information, operational goals and planning efforts to support the response to significant emergencies. Emergency Management begins before the event occurs. There are three phases to an emergency: prepare; respond; and recover. We are prepared to handle the management of a significant event that we all hope will never occur here. One of the best ways to help prepare for an emergency, is for our citizens and businesses to be prepared for an emergency. On-line resources for emergency preparation can be found at the website <https://readymarin.org>. In addition, DISCO, the Town's Disaster Preparedness Council (see Page 3 article) objective is to help residents and businesses prepare for and respond effectively when a disaster strikes.

The Town has an Emergency Operations Plan that provides for the framework of responding to an emergency and establishing and operating an Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The Town Department heads receive training in SEMS (Standardized Emergency Management System) and NIMS (National Incident Management System) and Police and Fire conduct interagency training and coordination. All Town staff receives training in providing assistance as 'Disaster Service Workers'.

Continued on Page 4

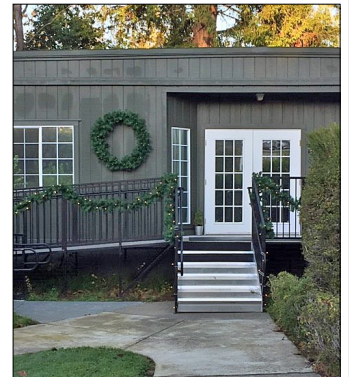
IN THIS ISSUE

2. New Building Inspector Hired
2. Planning & Building Dept Merger
3. DISCO - Being Good Neighbors
3. Town Hall Holiday Closure
4. Zero Waste Marin Holiday Tips
4. Recreation
5. Calendar



we are combining the building and planning departments under the direction of our Planning Manager, Heidi Scoble. We expect these reorganizations to save the Town something in excess of \$10,000 annually and, more importantly, ease and speed up service to the Town's residents.

Paralleling these changes, the Council has received and discussed an extensive report from Heidi analyzing our planning process and regulations and possible revisions to that process. This includes possibly eliminating the need for design review or Council consideration of some types of proposed projects incorporating visible exterior changes which could be handled simply by staff review while requiring other projects which include no visible exterior changes nonetheless to be reviewed by the Council. The intent is to address a variety of community concerns by facilitating and streamlining permits where the appearance of the project would have a negligible impact on the community, or to require enhanced staff and Council review to ensure that the look and feel of the community is retained. No action was taken but staff will return at a future meeting with proposed changes based upon the Council's discussion. I urge you to review Heidi's comprehensive report, available on the Town website, and let us have your thoughts.



In future months we expect to continue work on two long term issues, flood control and disaster preparedness. But in the meantime, we are appreciative of the community support we have received this year and look forward to an enjoyable holiday and a productive New Year. ■

New Building Inspector Hired



Eric Robbe
Senior Building Inspector

Eric Robbe has joined the Town of Ross as the new full-time Senior Building Inspector, effective December 10th. He replaces Thomas "Tommy" Thompson of Coastland Civil Engineering, who has been providing part-time contract Building Inspection services since 2013. We thank Mr. Thompson for his years of service to the Town and wish him all the best.

Eric brings his skills and expertise to Ross from his former position of Building Inspector with the Town of San Anselmo, which he held for 13 years. He will be part of the newly formed Planning and Building Department (see article opposite), providing Building Inspection services on a full-time basis, as well as some Building Plan Review services. He is well-versed in the Trakit software system the Town will soon be launching. He lives locally in San Rafael. We are very excited to have him aboard!

Eric's contact information is erobbe@townofross.org, or (415) 453-1453 ext. 170.

Planning & Building Depts Merge

The Council approved combining the Planning Department functions and the Building Department functions as one department, to be called the Planning and Building Department. Because of the synergy and relationship between the planning and building functions it is common in California to have the two functions included in one department. Of the other ten Marin County cities and towns, nine of them have planning and building included within the same department as either a Planning and Building Department or a Community Development Department. Some of the benefits of having a combined department would be: 1) Efficiencies and coordination in enforcing the Town's zoning ordinances and Municipal Code; 2) Increased levels of customer service in the plan review and inspection process; 3) Efficiencies in policy and staff development, training and evaluations. The Planning Manager is already supervising the Building Permit Technician, and will also be supervising the new Senior Building Inspector; and 4) Efficiencies in the administration of building permit and planning permit activities.

The result will be more responsive, timely building services to Town residents and businesses that enhance the effectiveness and efficiency in building inspection and some building plan review services. In addition, the reorganization will save the Town at least \$10,000 annually.

Ross DISCO

Being Good Neighbors

By Gil Fleitas, Disco Coordinator



Gil Fleitas

In the event of a major natural disaster — like a fire, earthquake, or flood-- our beautiful town will be left to fend for itself for a period of 3 – 7 **days**. How will we fare and get thru that?

In a worst-case scenario, roads will be clogged or impassable, the electric grid nonfunctioning, communication systems down or clogged, water and food supplies severely compromised.

We'll be on our own in a large emergency. Neighbors helping neighbors.

DISCO, which stands for *Disaster Preparedness Council*, is a citizens volunteer based group to help residents and businesses prepare for and respond effectively when a disaster strikes. The DISCO Coordinator reports to and coordinates with Town staff to ensure effective communication and guidance in the case of an event.

When an emergency occurs, emergency resources from the Town, County, and other government entities will respond to the emergency. In a large emergency, there are not enough government first responders to be everywhere and at best it will take time to reach us. DISCO is our community's "self-help" response during this critical initial period of maximum vulnerability.

From small to big, there are many meaningful roles for each of us to play, that cumulatively add up to a safety net that we may need when the time comes.

One of the most important parts of DISCO is the **Block Captain Program**, who are community residents that help organize their immediate neighborhood (usually 10 – 20 homes). They are a critical conduit for getting information to, and from, the emergency operating center and emergency responders in the event of a disaster.

Continued

DISCO

- continued



ARE YOU PREPARED?

To blanket the town, we will need about 30 – 40 Block Captains (including some alternatives to serve as back-ups). Block Captains will be fully supported by Marian Mancini, a long-time resident who has graciously agreed to lead the program as the Lead Block Captain, as well as the whole DISCO structure. It's truly a team effort. At most, it's a time commitment of 1/2 hour - 2 hours per month, but its potential impact can't be overstated.

We hope you will consider being a Block Captain, **or volunteering in the many other ways available to contribute to our collective safety and preparedness efforts.**

If we all do just a little bit, our beautiful town will become safer, more resilient, and more deeply blessed by the neighborhood spirit that binds us together.

Please contact me at (Fleitas@mac.com, 415-425-2300) or Marian Mancini (mirn@comcast.net) if you'd like to learn more about DISCO and the many ways you can contribute to our Ross community. Many thanks! ■

Holiday Closure for Town Hall Offices

Town Hall offices of Administration, Building, Public Works, & Planning will be closed for the holidays **December 24th through January 1, 2019**. If you have business needs with these departments, please address them before or after the closure. Police and Ross Valley Fire will remain open 24/7.

During the closure, if you need an Encroachment Permit, please email publicworks@townofross.org, and someone will respond to you. To schedule a Building Inspection, please contact the Building Inspector at 415-453-1453 ext. 170. We will reopen for business Wednesday, January 2nd. Happy holidays everyone!



ZERO WASTE MARIN HOLIDAY TIPS

Reducing waste this holiday season begins with thoughtful shopping and gift giving. Please remember to shop smart and waste less this holiday season. Here are a few tips:

Give an Experience

Give friends and family members a memorable and personalized gift that requires little or no packaging:

- Tickets to the theater, ballet or symphony
- Concert or movie passes
- Membership to a museum
- A gourmet meal cooked at home

Sustainable Gift Wrap

When wrapping your holiday gifts, instead of purchasing a new roll of wrapping paper and ribbon, consider these alternatives:

- Gift bags or reusable shopping bags
- Tins or baskets
- Old maps, newspaper or magazine pages
- Holiday fabrics
- Bows and paper from previous holidays

Never Burn Wrapping Paper!

It is illegal to burn trash and wrapping paper. If you must use wrapping paper, always purchase non-foil based paper and remember to toss it in your recycling bin, or save and reuse it next holiday season. Remember that bows, ribbons and wrapping papers that contain glitter or velvet surface treatments are *not* recyclable. These items go directly to the landfill, so avoid purchasing them if you can.



Don't Trash Your Tree



At the end of the holiday season, make sure your tree ends up in the compost pile, not the landfill. Check out this link for details on what to do: <https://zerowastemarin.org/residents/zero-waste-resources/christmas-tree-recycling/>.

RECREATION NEWS

The Ross Recreation youth basketball program is conducting a series of skill clinics for participants in preparation for our youth basketball season, which starts in January. The program includes practices during the week and games on Saturdays from January until March.

In addition to our popular youth sports programs, Ross Recreation offers a variety of dance programs including ballet, hip hop and ballroom dancing which



Ballroom Dancing

is the most popular. Eighty-eight middle school students meet once a week in the Ross School Gym to participate in ballroom dancing.



Hip Hop

Register for Ross Recreation programs at www.rossrecreation.org.

Emergency Response - continued from Page 1

When a disaster does occur, our First Responders, Police and Fire gather information to determine the extent of an event and provide information to Emergency Management. They activate emergency notifications such as ALERT MARIN, the Town Siren, townwide email, social media and door to door notifications of an event. DISCO will also be a resource in the notification process.

An EOC will be activated in a significant event. The Town utilizes the state-of-the-art Marin County Office of Emergency Services (OES) for our EOC location. The EOC is the command structure for the response to an event and provides for the coordination of resources, information, operational goals and planning efforts to support the emergency response. ■

ROSS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DECEMBER 2018

Dec 2	4:00	pm	Winter Sing Tree Lighting Ceremony, Ross Common
Dec 10	7:15	pm	Ross Property Owners Association Meeting, Town Hall
Dec 13	6:00	pm	Council Meeting, Town Hall
Dec 24-Dec 31	--	--	Town Hall Offices closed for the holidays

JANUARY 2019 - Happy New Year!

Jan 1	--	--	Town Hall Offices closed for New Year's Day
Jan 7	7:15	pm	Ross Property Owners Association Meeting, Town Hall
Jan 10	6:00	pm	Council Meeting, Town Hall
Jan 21	--	--	Town Hall Offices closed for Martin Luther King holiday
Jan 22	7:00	pm	Advisory Design Review Group Meeting, Town Hall

FEBRUARY 2019

Feb 11	7:15	pm	Ross Property Owners Association Meeting, Town Hall
Feb 13	9:00	am	Annual Strategic Council Workshop, the Studio, MAGC
Feb 14	6:00	pm	Council Meeting, Town Hall
Feb 18	--	--	Town Hall Offices closed for Presidents Day
Feb 26	7:00	pm	Advisory Design Review Group Meeting, Town Hall

CONTACT US

Administration	415.453.1453 x105	Public Works Director	415.453.1453 x115
Building & Public Works	415.453.1453 x106	Recreation	415.453.6020
Planning	415.453.1453 x121	Ross Valley Fire	415.258.4686
Police	415.453.1453, Option 2	Town Manager	415.453.1453 x107

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 320, Ross, CA 94957
 Street Address: 31 Sir Francis Drake Blvd, Ross, CA 94957

Visit us at www.townofross.org



We welcome suggestions for future issues. Email llopez@townofross.org

The Morning After is published by the Town of Ross. No portion of this newsletter may be copied, reproduced or reprinted without advance written permission from the Town of Ross. For questions, please contact Linda Lopez at llopez@townofross.org.