



THE MORNING AFTER

TOWN OF ROSS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Mayor's Corner



Elizabeth Brekhus
Mayor

These are very trying times. I know everyone is doing the best to hang in there and support others, and I really appreciate the sacrifice each of you is making to make a difference.

The Town of Ross has had to shift its focus from normal operational activity, including preparing to adopt a new budget, to focus on the emergency orders issued from the Marin County Health Officer, in coordination with 5 other counties' Health Officer orders. The Town Council and staff are not getting much of an advance look at these orders, and the orders are not always clearly stated. The Town has no roll in issuing these orders, but it does have the obligation to enforce the orders. We are

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COVID-19 - The New Abnormal

We are now in the 5th week of the Shelter in Place Order and hope that everyone is staying well and safe. We have all had to learn how to navigate through this unprecedented time of staying home, social distancing, closure of all schools and non-essential businesses, and scarcities of some products. The Town continues to follow the Marin County Health Officer's orders which are strictly in place until May 3rd, but that date could very well be extended.

While Town offices are closed under the Shelter in Place Order, most of the Town services are still available. All departments can be contacted by phone and email.

- The Police, Fire, and Public Works Departments operations and services are similar to before, though all departments have taken measures to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 which includes reducing the level of direct contact with the public and each other.
- All planning services and building services have moved to virtual appointments only (over the phone, email, virtual meeting, E-TRAKiT). The Town is still accepting new planning and building plan check applications via email and through E-TRAKiT. Also, resale inspections are still occurring with new safety procedures.
- Related to building permits, most construction activities are prohibited except for a limited number of projects that are considered essential construction under the Order. Building plan checks will continue to be reviewed and processed as normal via email and E-TRAKiT.
- Ross Recreation is conducting some classes online while not having in person classes. In addition, they have posted free instructional and fun family activities on-line at www.rossrecreation.org.
- Town Council meetings have changed to being virtual meetings that can be attended through Zoom or dialing in.

We want to thank the community for the many people who have volunteered to assist senior citizens that need assistance picking up food, prescriptions, and mail. In addition, please remember to support our local Ross restaurants and other businesses – your support is important.

We are grateful that Ross residents and businesses are taking the Public Health Orders seriously. It is very good news that in Marin County the rate of new COVID-19 confirmed cases has not only flattened but the rate of new cases is declining. Please continue to stay safe and we will stay strong as a community.

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working hard to appropriately interpret the orders, communicate to residents about the orders and then respond and enforce the new orders.

The Council has been hearing from a lot of residents on a host of issues including concerns with the crowds at Phoenix Lake, parking restrictions, the influx of neighborhood parking, voluminous bikers on the weekend, post office returning boxes that are not being picked up, the financial welfare of downtown merchants, gardeners working, and construction activity. Vice Mayor Julie McMillan and I have been holding regular meetings with the Town Manager regarding these concerns and the Town's response to them. I know that other members of the Council are also communicating with staff about problems and concerns they are hearing. Please don't hesitate to raise other concerns, and if I did not respond to your email to me, I apologize. Like many of you, I have 3 kids doing distance learning and I am getting on average 15 emails a day related to their online school work. This is tough, but we will get through this and this will not last forever. Together we will overcome this, and as frightening as the disease is, we are responding appropriately and will come out of this in a better position for the collective effort we all undertook. Thank you so much for the first responders and the essential workers, who are caring for people in our community, keeping our community safe, making our government work and keeping food on our table. Thank you and stay strong Ross.

Last night was the first Council meeting we conducted online, and we hope to improve on the meeting process as we continue to use virtual meeting technology.

On a positive final note, congratulations and welcome to Bill Kircher, who joins the Council. I look forward to working with you. And I also look forward to passing the torch to Julie McMillan, Mayor Pro Tem, who by tradition will be elected Mayor tonight. ■

Swearing in of New Council

The March 3, 2020 election results were certified by the County Registrar and Council Members Elizabeth Brekhus, Beach Kuhl, and C. William "Bill" Kircher, Jr. were elected to serve a four-year term. The new Council were sworn in at a virtual Council meeting held remotely on April 16th. Both Council Members Brekhus and Kuhl are beginning their third term on Council. We welcome new Council Member Bill Kircher.



Bill Kircher

Bill and his wife, Valerie, a former teacher, have enjoyed living in Ross ever since buying their home here six years ago. They have three grown children, the youngest of whom recently taught at Bacich School. Bill is an attorney with broad-based experience in state and local government. He is a former Assistant United States Attorney, and before that was the principal legislative aide to a Bay Area State Senator and a committee consultant for the California State Senate Committee on Health and Welfare. In addition to his government service, he has been a trial attorney in private practice, handling primarily complex litigation with an emphasis on securities and intellectual property issues. He currently teaches a Constitutional law course at Stanford through its continuing studies program and serves as a general partner of an investment partnership.

Mayor & Mayor Pro Tem Appointed



Julie McMillan
Mayor

The Council appointed Julie McMillan to serve as Mayor, and Elizabeth Robbins to serve as Mayor Pro Tempore. Each year, the Council appoints one of its members to serve in these positions for a one-year term. With the change to the Statewide election moving from June to March in even-numbered years, Council will be appointing their Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem of each year. The next Ross Council election will be held in March 2022.



Elizabeth Robbins
Mayor Pro Tempore

Mayor Brekhus will be recognized for her service and second term as Mayor at the May Council meeting.

The current Council Members and their terms are:

- Elizabeth Brekhus (2012-2024) *3rd Term*
- William "Bill" Kircher, Jr. (2020-2024) *1st Term*
- Beach Kuhl (2012-2024) *3rd Term*
- Julie McMillan (2017-2022) *1st Term*
- Elizabeth Robbins (2014-2022) *2nd Term*

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO MARY AMONETTE!



Ross Resident Mary Amonette turned 100 on April 7th, and many neighbors and friends came out to wish Mary a Happy Birthday from a safe distance. Mary has been a Ross resident for 63 years. Both she and her husband Gunny, were very involved in community activities over the years, and raised their three daughters in Ross who attended the Ross School and Branson. The Town wishes Mary a very happy birthday and many more!



NEW PLANNING & BUILDING DIRECTOR



Patrick Streeter

The Town is pleased to welcome Patrick Streeter as our new Planning and Building Director replacing Heidi Scoble. Patrick comes to Ross having most recently served as Senior Planner with the Santa Rosa Department of Planning and Economic Development. In addition to development review and environmental coordination responsibilities, Patrick

took a leadership role in the City's downtown housing initiatives, including managing an update to the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan. He was also a key member of Santa Rosa's Emergency Operation Center during the Tubbs Fire of 2017 and the Kincade Fire of 2019, in the position of Deputy Planning Intelligence Chief.

With a passion for sustainability and historic preservation, Patrick brings to Ross an appreciation for the Town's special environmental landscape and a deep respect for its cultural heritage. He looks forward to helping the Town protect and celebrate its unique character.

Before moving to California, Patrick was an environmental planner with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection and participated in the Mayor's Special Initiative for Rebuilding and Resiliency following Superstorm Sandy. Patrick is a graduate of Boston College and has a Master of Science in Urban Planning degree from Columbia University.

Patrick begins on Monday, April 20th, and though his orientation into his new position will certainly be different due to the COVID-19 order, we warmly welcome him to our Ross team. He will work some days in the office and some remotely. His contact information is pstreet-er@townofross.org, (415) 453-1453 ext. 121.

Time to Clear Vegetation

Spring has arrived in our beautiful town and already the vegetation – both wanted and unwanted, is sprouting up uncontrolled in our front



yards and along our roadways. Vegetation management work, like clearing brush and trimming up trees around you home, is considered essential work and is allowed under the Public Health Order and is an excellent way to get outside to enjoy some fresh air during the Shelter in Place Order. All individuals conducting vegetation maintenance work should follow CDC guidelines for sanitation and social distancing.

The Marin County Public Health Order states: "For the purposes of this Order, 'Essential Businesses' are: Arborists, landscapers, gardeners, and similar service professionals, but only to the limited extent necessary to maintain the habitability, sanitation, opera-

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Resident Appointed to Mosquito Board

The Council appointed Ross resident Monique Predovich to serve as the Town's representative on the Marin/Sonoma Mosquito and Vector Control District Board. Ms. Predovich will serve a two-year term. The Town appreciates Ms. Predovich volunteering for this position.





Clear Vegetation

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tion of businesses or residences, or the safety of residents, employees, or the public (such as fire safety or tree trimming to prevent a dangerous condition), and not for cosmetic or other purposes (such as upkeep)".

Why This Matters

California has been near record dry so far this year, which means fire season is upon us soon. Ross Valley Fire Department will be performing defensible space inspections starting in June. Residents should begin preparing their property now for defensible space. Please visit FireSafeMarin.org website which provides steps residents can follow to prepare their homes for defensible space.

What You Can Do

CUT DRY GRASS AND BRUSH - Cut your dry grass and brush back 10ft from roads, driveways, and your neighbors' property line, 30ft from your home, and up to 150ft if your home is affected by steep slopes.

TRIM BACK BRANCHES - Remove branches that are smaller than three inches in diameter that are within 10ft of the structure's roof or chimney.

CLEAR OUT DEAD DEBRIS - Clean out any build up of dead leaves or pine needles from gutters, decks, roofs, and exterior stairways. Maintain the clearing throughout wildfire season.

REMOVE DEAD VEGETATION - Remove all dead vegetation from the property, including leaves and tree droppings, grasses, bushes, shrubs, and trees.

LIMB UP TREES - Limb up trees by cutting low hanging branches 10ft from the ground and cutting branches from other trees and shrubs to create adequate spacing.

MAKE YOUR ADDRESS VISIBLE - Ensure your address numbers are clearly visible from the road. Placards should be contrasting color, with bright, reflective font.

In addition, per Ross Municipal Code Section 12.12.010 and 12.12.015, it is the responsibility of all occupants and owners of property within the town to trim, remove all trees, hedges, plants, shrubs or vegetation, which obstructs or impairs the free full public use of the sidewalk area or street in front of their premises.

RECREATION NEWS

On Monday, April 6, Ross Recreation launched it's first online art class for kindergarten ages. Students participated in the class via zoom where they created Easter bunnies.

On Thursday, April 9, a 3rd & 4th grade art class was also added to the online programs via zoom. The students illustrated superheroes, cartoon drawings and comic book art.

Both of these classes were part of the Ross Recreation spring program originally scheduled to be held at Bacich school. With the County of Marin shelter in place order, the programs were switched to an online format.



All of the Ross Recreation spring youth sports programs were cancelled, as were many other programs at both Ross and Bacich which are closed due to the Shelter in Place Order.

Ross recreation staff has created additional online tutorials in dance, art and yoga. The second installment of the art tutorial for children offered a drawing lesson with a "Finding Dory" theme. Students are encouraged to post their work in Casey's Art Gallery located in the on-line resource section at: www.rossrecreation.org.

A reminder that per County of Marin order, the playing fields at Ross Common and tennis courts at Frederick Allen Park are closed. If you have any questions about Ross Recreation programs please send an email to: rossrec@rossrecreation.org.

ROSS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL 2020

Apr 16* 6:00 pm Council Meeting, *(virtual meeting via Zoom)*
 Apr 28 -- -- Advisory Design Review Group Meeting *(cancelled)*

MAY 2020

May 7 9:00 am Special Council Meeting Budget Workshop *(virtual meeting via Zoom)*
 May 14 6:00 pm Council Meeting *(virtual meeting via Zoom)*
 May 25 -- -- Town Hall offices closed for Memorial Day
 May 26 7:00 pm Advisory Design Review Group Meeting, Town Hall - *tentative*

JUNE 2020

Jun 18* 6:00 pm Council Meeting *(*note new date)*
 Jun 23 7:00 pm Advisory Design Review Group Meeting, Town Hall

CONTACT US

Administration 415.453.1453 x105
 - llopez@townofross.org

Public Works Director 415.453.1453 x115
 - rsimonitch@townofross.org

Building & Public Works 415.453.1453 x106
 - breher@townofross.org

Recreation 415.453.6020
 - rossrec@rossrecreation.org

Bldg Inspection Hotline 415.453.1453 x170
 - erobbe@townofross.org

Ross Valley Fire Dept 415.258.4686

Planning 415.453.1453 x116
 - mweintraub@townofross.org

Town Manager 415.453.1453 x107
 - jchinn@townofross.org

Police 415.453.1453, Option 2

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

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