

THE MORNING AFTER

TOWN OF ROSS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Volume 13 | Issue 8 | August 2019

Mayor's Corner



Elizabeth Brekhus
Mayor

August is ordinarily a very quiet month, with many residents on vacation. Even the Council used to skip the August meeting, but we have a full agenda this month. We will be discussing under-

grounding of utility districts and creating a procedure that will help residents understand the process should their neighborhood wish to form a special district, or should residents want to underground utilities directly, without the Town's involvement. Periodically, we update various Town municipal codes and this month we are looking to consider an amendment of the Flood Damage Prevention Code, which would help improve flood safety for construction of proper-

Continued on Page 2

IN THIS ISSUE

2. Branson School Initiative
2. Road Construction Update
3. Planning
3. Planning & Building Dept Update
4. Back to School Safety
4. Recreation
5. Calendar

Three Bear Hut Nearing Completion

After 7 months of construction the final touches are being made on the Three Bear Hut structure and surrounding picnic area at Natalie Coffin Greene Park. The rehabilitation of the structure itself is complete, except for some final caulking and sealing between the wood members and the stonework. A permeable pathway made of recycled rubber tire material will allow access for all ages to the historic structure and the picnic area is being prepared to accommodate 10 new picnic tables and some additional bench seating. The Town is planning a grand opening celebration at the site sometime in the next month. An announcement will be forthcoming.



The Three Bear Hut structure is being rehabilitated under the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties which require special methods for preserving and rehabilitating as much of the

existing wood members as possible. Three Bear Hut was constructed in 1935-36 by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Designed in the so-called "Park Rustic" style, the picnic shelter is based on a standardized prototype called the "rock-type" shelter developed by the National Park Service for CCC projects. The Three Bear Hut is a rare and intact example of a Park Rustic-style public building constructed in Marin County during the Depression and is indeed a unique and valuable public resource for the citizens of Ross.

Do you have a Three Bear Hut or Natalie Coffin Greene Park memory or story you'd like to share? If so, the Town would love to hear from you. Please share your memory or story by emailing Heidi Scoble, Planning and Building Director, at hscoble@townofross.org.



ties within the 100-year flood elevation. We will also review the construction time limits ordinance and consider whether modifications to the ordinance are desired.

The Building Department has been making a lot of technological advances that we hope will increase efficiency and responsiveness of our building services. It is due to these efficiencies that the Town is proposing to reduce building plan review service costs.

Many of you have received emails from residents supporting and opposing Branson's campaign to increase enrollment. You might also have seen an IJ article discussing the initiative petition, and the Morning After has a separate article on the subject explaining the Branson initiative process and describes the Town and Town Council's role in deciding whether Branson is allowed to expand its student body by 100 students from 320 to 420 students. As part of the initiative process, the Town Council will vote on whether or not to direct Town staff to prepare a report on the initiative measure. The Town Council may request any matter to be included in the report, including but not limited to factors such as fiscal impact, general plan consistency, effect on the use of land within the Town, and/or impacts on transportation, schools, traffic, and parks. As we move forward, I believe more information and dialogue will help residents feel that they can come to the right decision in voting on this issue.

It is hard to believe summer is almost over and school is about to begin again. Ross School begins on August 21st.

Thank you to the residents for your patience during all the construction in Town.

Finally, please save the date on your calendar for the Ross Town Dinner for Friday, September 27. ■

Branson School Community Schools Initiative

Branson School has filed with the Town of Ross an initiative petition entitled "Support for Community Schools Initiative." The proposed initiative seeks to amend the 1978 adopted ballot measure that capped Branson student enrollment at 320 by increasing the student enrollment cap at up to 420 students. In order for this to happen, the initiative has to be placed on a ballot to be voted on by the voters of Ross. Branson is seeking to place the initiative/measure on the ballot at the March 3, 2020 election.



The process to place a measure on the ballot contains numerous steps. Currently, Branson representatives are circulating the petition for signatures. The Election Code requires that the petition receive signatures from at least 10% of registered voters in Ross (162 valid signatures in this case) to be able to be placed on the ballot. Once Branson representatives have collected sufficient signatures, the Town Elections Official has 30 days to verify that they have collected the requisite number of signatures. If the petition has sufficient signatures, the Elec-

Continued on Page 3

Road Construction Updates

Ross continues to have a very busy construction season with roadwork currently on the following streets.

Poplar Avenue - Construction began on Poplar Avenue near the Town Limit line in Kentfield. Daily operations will require about 100 feet of street closed off for staging and excavating, progressing to the north about 75 feet per day. Detour signs will direct through-traffic down Bridge to Brookwood to Redwood and vice-versa. This schedule puts the construction operations into the Town business district beginning the week of August 26th. We anticipate construction work impacting traffic on Poplar at least through mid-October.

Bolinas Avenue - Construction between Sir Francis Drake and Shady Lane should be completed by August 19th. All work on the storm drain system and temporary pavement restoration should be completed by October 1st. The complete pavement restoration of Bolinas Avenue from Sir Francis Drake to Upper Road is scheduled for next Spring/Summer.

Shady Lane - Major construction work on Shady and Lagunitas will be completed by the end of this week.

Lagunitas Road - Expect odors and nighttime generator noise from Monday 8/12 until Wednesday 8/14 for pipe lining operations. All work on Shady and Lagunitas, including pavement restoration operations, will be completed prior to Friday, August 16.

PLANNING RESULTS

The Town Council took the following action on planning applications at the August Council meeting. Staff reports and audio for the meeting can be found on the Town's website [August 8th](#) meeting page. The minutes for this meeting will be posted after adoption by the Council at the September 12, 2019 Council meeting.

Address: 26 Woodside Way
Applicant: Valentin Alexandrov
Council Action: Approved
Vote (for/against/abstain): 5-0-0

Address: 191 Lagunitas Road
Applicant: Paris & Martha Royo
Council Action: Continued to September

Branson Initiative - continued from page 2

tions Official shall certify the results to the Council at their next regular meeting after completion of the signature verification. If the petition has sufficient signatures, the Council must submit the ordinance, without alteration, to the voters or order a report at the regular meeting at which the certification of the petition is presented. If the Council orders a report, Town staff shall have 30 days to prepare and present the report to the Council. The report may include, amongst other factors, the following: the initiative measure's fiscal impact, general plan consistency, effect on the use of land, and/or impacts on transportation, schools, traffic, and parks. Following receipt of the report, the Council must submit the ordinance, without alteration, to the voters.

If the ballot initiative passes with a majority of yes votes, Branson does not automatically get to increase the enrollment cap of the school. The passage of the Initiative causes the Town's Municipal Code to be changed to allow there to be up to 420 students instead of being capped at 320 students. Any future increase above the existing 320 student limit requires Council approval of a new or amended Use Permit, which is a discretionary action of the Council. In addition, if any new facilities are needed to accommodate the increased enrollment, then Branson would need to apply and receive any other entitlements and/or development permits (such as design review, a nonconformity permit, and/or a variance). The Use Permit and potential needed development permits would require environmental analysis. ■

Planning & Building Update

"There is nothing wrong with change, if it is in the right direction" - Winston Churchill

In December 2018, the Council approved combining the Planning and Building Department functions as one department.

Consistent with the Council's action, there have been many positive changes regarding the Building Department and its services. Trakit, the Town's new permit tracking software implementation and launch has been completed



Eric Robbe, Heidi Scoble, Thomas Ahrens

and in operation. The Town's fulltime Senior Building Inspector, Eric Robbe, is assimilating well into the community and is providing a high level of customer service. Eric has also been conducting many of the building permit review plan checks, which has resulted in faster plan check review turnaround times. Barbara Reher, Permit Technician, has also been providing a high-level of service at the Development Service Counter. Barbara is instrumental in taking in the administrative functions related to the building permit process. Thomas Ahrens, the Town's new Building Official, has also been contributing positively to the building department by helping provide direction on complex building related matters, as well as auditing the Town's current processes and providing recommendations on how the Town can provide enhanced levels of service and improve processing times. The Town has replaced Coastland Civil Engineering with CSG, Inc. to provide building permit plan check services. CSG is meeting a 10-business day plan check turnaround for the first review and a 5-day plan check turnaround for the subsequent review. CSG has been providing the Town services since June 2019 and is meeting the plan check timeframes. Additionally, the Town Council approved at the August meeting a new building plan review fee that will have a lower cost structure for most plan reviews as compared to its previous contractor. Furthermore, the Town staff is currently in the process of preparing the building permit files to digitize the building records and make them accessible on the Town's website. The archived planning files will be the next phase of the digitizing project. Lastly, the Town Council approved a new planner position to help achieve the Town's planning priorities and provide better levels of service for general inquiries at the public counter. The Town anticipates the new planner starting in September 2019.



Back to School Safety

~ Message from the Chief

As school will soon be back in session, now is a good time to remind everyone how to safely return to school. Whether your children are walking, being driven, or riding a bicycle, here are a few tips to ensure their safety.

If kids are walking:

- Map out a safe route to school and walk it with your child so he/she becomes familiar with the route. Note there will be a new crossing guard at Sir Francis Drake and Bolinas Avenue to help children cross this busy street.
- Make sure your child crosses at intersections where there is a crossing guard. Have children wear bright clothing that can be seen by drivers.

Riding or driving in the car:

- Everyone must wear a seat belt. Use appropriate child care/booster seat. If you have a teen driving, remind him/her of safe driving, use of seat belts at all times, and no cell phone use while driving.



On a bicycle:

- Make sure your child always wears a helmet.
- Teach children to ride in the same direction as traffic, on the right side of the road. Explain the “rules of the road” and to obey all traffic signs and signals.

Tips for driving in a school zone:

Slow down - The simplest thing any driver can do when there are new driving hazards is slow down.

Allow More Time - As a new school year begins allow yourself more time to get where you are going until you can figure out the effects of increased traffic.

Learn the Rules - Schools have places for parents to drop off and pick up children. If you are driving your child to school learn where these areas are and follow the procedures. Never block pick up and drop off areas.

Yield to Pedestrians - Remember to yield to children/parents in crosswalks as they have the right-of-way.

Carpool - If at all possible carpool with other parents to pick up and drop off children.

Talk with Teen Drivers. Remind your teen drivers about the importance of being extra careful in and around school zones. ■

RECREATION NEWS

The Ross Recreation summer program is winding down with the main camps ending on August 2. The summer program offered a wide range of activities for local youth including art, sports, fishing and educational field trips.



Top Gun Sports Camp attended an A's game versus the Seattle Mariners on Wednesday July 17. The campers from Top Gun cheered on the A's who won 10-2.



The Bubble Man visited Camp Safari in July



Halibut caught at Fishing Camp

Fall program registration is open. Ross Recreation is offering a new Next Step soccer program with Dan Ferrando at Bacich Field. The program will offer skill development for 3rd and 4th grade boys and girls on Tuesday and Thursdays after school. Scrimmages will be held at Bacich Field on Saturdays. The program is intended for youth soccer players who want to improve skills and techniques in a supportive environment. Scrimmages will combine players of similar skill sets in game situations.

Register for Ross Recreation programs at www.rossrecreation.org



ROSS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

AUGUST 2019

Aug 8 6:00 pm Council Meeting, Town Hall
 Aug 27 7:00 pm Advisory Design Review Group Meeting, Town Hall

SEPTEMBER 2019

Sep 2 -- -- Town Hall offices closed for Labor Day
 Sep 9 7:15 pm Ross Property Owners Association Meeting, Town Hall
 Sep 12 6:00 pm Council Meeting, Town Hall
 Sep 24 7:00 pm Advisory Design Review Group Meeting, Town Hall
 Sep 27 5:00 pm Annual Ross Town Dinner, Ross Common

OCTOBER 2019

Oct 7 7:15 pm Ross Property Owners Association Meeting, Town Hall
 Oct 10 6:00 pm Council Meeting, Town Hall
 Oct 22 7:00 pm Advisory Design Review Group Meeting, Town Hall

RECURRING EVENTS

Thursdays, May - October Ross Farm Stand, 11:30 am - 7:30 pm, Ross Common

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
Bldg Inspection Hotline:	415.453.1453 x170	Ross Valley Fire Dept	415.258.4686
Planning	415.453.1453 x121	Town Manager	415.453.1453 x107
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

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.