



THE MORNING AFTER

Highlights from the
Ross Town Council Meeting
of December 13, 2012

Town of Ross

Volume 6, Issue 12

December 14, 2012

Emergency Preparedness



As residents know, the Town recently experienced a series of major storms all in a row. The good news while there was some limited localized flooding, there was thankfully no major loss of life or property due to a catastrophic flood. We did find out that the storm on Sunday, December 2nd had the creek level in downtown San Anselmo rising 5.2ft/hour as compared to several recent storms over the past several years which ranged from 1.2ft to 2.6ft/hour. No one would have predicted this rate of rise.

Town staff recently met with our neighboring Town of San

Anselmo, the Ross Valley Fire Department, Ross Police and Public Works staff to go over current protocols and procedures. This meeting was held to debrief after the storms to determine what worked, what did not work and to make improvements for the future. We have updated our emergency contact information among our agencies and added a link on the Ross website homepage to the flood information page at http://www.townofross.org/pages/public_safety/flood_information.html to make access to flood data easier to find. We are in the process of providing problem flooding locations to Ross Valley Fire Department (RVFD), placing alarms on creek level gauges, establishing updated protocols for notifications among the various agencies and coordination regarding activation of sirens in the Ross Valley. We also established a pre-storm event protocol for Ross Valley agencies to talk via conference call about preparations for

an upcoming storm. These continued improvements will help all our communities better serve the public and be more prepared for an event(s) in the future.

The Town is part of the Marin Emergency Alert Notification System (MEANS) which sends recorded emergency announcements to residents via telephone. Many Ross residents subscribe to this notification system. You may subscribe by completing an application form and returning it to the Ross Police Department. The form is available at the following link: http://www.townofross.org/pdf/flood_information/emergency-notification-form.pdf.

And as a reminder, sand and bags are available during the winter months at the entrance to Natalie Coffin Greene Park at the end of Lagunitas Road, and it is necessary to bring your own shovel.

Inside this issue:

<i>Mayor's Report</i>	2
<i>Refinance of CalPERS Employer Side Fund</i>	3
<i>Alarm Permit Renewal Process</i>	3
<i>Final November Election Results</i>	3
<i>Planning Applications Scoreboard</i>	4
<i>Reporting Streetlight Outages</i>	4
<i>What's Next</i>	4

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



Stay informed and up to date. Join the Town's email list.
Email
llopez@townofross.org
to join.

Encroachments in the Public Right-of-Way



A new encroachment permit ordinance was introduced at last night's meeting. The Town has been working under the guide-

lines of an old Ordinance and a Resolution that was enacted in 2002 regarding the public right-of-way. The ordinance was initiated by Council Member Carla Small as her goal last year and the proposed ordinance was discussed at numerous Public Works Committee meetings.

The new Ordinance will provide a comprehensive policy and method for issuing encroachment permits. Some of the benefits of the new Ordinance

compared to the previous Ordinance and Resolution include:

- Description of purpose in detail
- Detailed explanation of definitions used
- Explanation of where the ordinance is applied and what requires a permit
- Delineation of exceptions to permit requirements

(Continued on Page 2)



Rupert Russell
Mayor

The Mayor's Report



The Winter tree lighting on Ross Common on Friday, December 7, 2012 showed Ross at its best with families both old and young and from all denominations getting into the holiday cheer. Preceded by good spirited singing of "Frosty the Snowman" and "Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer" etc., the tree was lit and is now a resplendent beacon on Ross Common. This was a wonderful event that brought the Town together as a community and celebrated the special environment that we enjoy in Ross. This is a relatively new tradition for the Town, but one which was well supported and I expect will continue for years to come. Congratulations to Ross Rec Auxiliary.

Next, I want to confirm that Liz Welsh is retiring as Chief of

Protocol. Liz was responsible for two other terrific events that distinguished our Town earlier this year, July 4 and the Ross Town Picnic in September. Liz not only brought both these occasions off with enormous style and verve but raised the funds to make them possible. At a time when the Town was going through some awkward and difficult financial realities, Liz remained undaunted and was able to carry off these events without it being apparent that she had faced and overcome extreme challenges. We are very grateful to her and Liz will indeed be a hard act to follow. Thank you Liz. We will be looking shortly for a new Chief of Protocol.

Lastly we have already been through a tough Winter storm that we were lucky did not

cause more severe damage. We dodged a bullet when the rain stopped as the creek crested. However, some were not so lucky and in addition to trees down on Shady Lane that brought down wires and caused distress to the neighbors, the Hong's at 34 Fernhill had a tree come down through their roof. We hope we have no more disasters this year but I promise you that if disaster strikes those at the Town will try to be as responsive as possible and I am proud that our new disaster regulations will allow those affected by storms, fires, earthquakes etc., to have a streamlined method to get back into their homes.

Encroachments in the Public Right-of-Way (Continued from Page 1)



- Outline of necessary documents to obtain a permit
- Pre-existing encroachments, abandoned driveways and penalties
- Addressing the permit authority of the Public Works Director and approval/denial criteria
- Added compliance with Stormwater Ordinance
- Guidelines and criteria for acceptable driveway surfaces have been added
- Permit authority and various legal requirements such as bonding, insurance, indemnification and other rules such as imposed penalties and regulations have been added.

Staff will be meeting with the Public Works Committee (PWC) in early January to incorporate the following policy guid-

ance into the Ordinance to guide implementation procedures associated with enactment of the Ordinance. All those interested in this Ordinance are encouraged to attend the PWC meeting. The Town Council will hold the second reading of the Ordinance at the January 10th meeting.

- Where there are easements overlapping within the right-of-way, all the technical matters will remain the same, but legal, title and ownership issues would be different than the other right-of-way conditions. More specifically, all the other aspects of this ordinance shall govern and override where property easements interfere with the right-of-way areas.
- So long as a pre-existing en-

croachment in the right-of-way is not interfering with public safety, public use of the right-of-way, does not preclude or impair the ability of the Town to install needed infrastructure or related improvements and there is no legal rationale for taking any action; they may stay in place until such time the Town may correct said encroachment such as when a resale inspection is done.

- Enforcement will primarily, but not exclusively, be complaint driven or prompted by resale inspections or permit applications.
- Since property surveys are not readily available, it will be up to the Public Works Director to determine if a survey is needed on a case-by-case basis.

Refinance of CalPERS Employer Side Fund Debt

Upon the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Town Council approved the refinance of the CalPERS employer Side Fund debt through a loan from Marin County that will result in interest rate savings to the Town and a reduction in the debt repayment term. As of December 20, 2012, the Town's CalPERS Side fund debt obligation is \$95,038 for Miscellaneous employees and \$1,401,739 for Public Safety employees. The Town is currently paying down this debt at the CalPERS interest rate of 7.50%. The Town has looked at paying off this obligation

in 2010 and most recently last summer. The loan terms from Marin County include a five-year loan term, interest rate of 3.5% for years 1, 2, and 3; 3.75% interest for year 4, and 4% interest for year 5. The debt would be secured by Town property tax payments. In order to keep the current debt service payments (paid through the CalPERS rates) about the same as they are now, the Town will need to pay down a portion of the current debt from reserves. The payoff amount needed for this is \$576,000, which would be drawn from the Town Facilities Reserve Fund. After the payoff

of the Side Fund debt, the CalPERS contribution rates will change to: Miscellaneous decrease from 11.404% to 9.716% and Public Safety decrease from 29.931% to 20.999%. The advantages of the refinance include interest savings of nearly \$500K, payoff of the loan in five years versus over ten years, significant interest rate reduction, contribution rates to CalPERS will remain lower as long as the Town does not increase CalPERS benefit rates, and the Town avoids future discount rate changes which could negatively impact debt service payments.

Alarm Permit Renewal Process

The Council considered the introduction of Ordinance 639 amending Title 9, Fire and Burglar Alarm Systems, and decided to table it for now. In the meantime, the Police Department is working to update information on alarm subscribers. Thanks to the new Police records management system, the alarm information is literally at the responding officers fingertips. When officers respond to an alarm at a home or business, they can pull up information supplied by the subscriber as to people responsible for the property. That is, if

the department has current information.

Officers often need to contact someone responsible for the property to secure the residence or to check on something that appears suspicious. A current Alarm Permit Application is needed by the Police Department, with current owner's information and people's names and phone numbers to contact in case of problems.

The Town Alarm ordinance requires that anyone with an alarm obtain a permit for the alarm and

to renew it annually. There is no fee for the annual renewal. The renewal should include an updated application form. The Police department asks all alarm subscribers to submit an updated Alarm Permit Application. The form may be located on the Town website at:

<http://www.townofross.org/pdf/public-safety-reports/alarm-permit-application.pdf>

The Ross Police Department would like to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday.



Final November Election Results

The official results for Measure D, the Special Public Safety Tax, are in and have been certified by the Marin County Registrar of Voters Office. The Council adopted a Resolution approving the final results.

Measure D received the required two-thirds majority vote

needed and passed with 1,021 (74.20%) Yes votes, and 355 (25.80%) No votes. The total number of ballots cast in Ross was 1,457 (86.88%). Of the 1,457, 1,376 voted on Measure D.

The tax will provide approximately \$640,000 toward Public Safety services. If the tax had

not passed, the Town would have been forced to reduce its Public Safety services.

The Public Safety tax will take effect on July 1, 2013.





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 January 2013 Council meeting.

Address	Applicant	Council Action	Vote (for/against/abstain)
39 Fernhill Avenue	The Ross School	Approved. One-time event at Branson School	5-0-0
92 Shady Lane	Bill and Jenny Reilly	Approved. Lot coverage limited to 20% and height variance denied.	3-0-2 (Russell & Brekhus recused)
Southwest Corner of Ross Common	Ross Park & Recreation	Denied. Approved \$1,500 contribution for new shed on school site.	5-0-0
43 Shady Lane	Seth and Angie Taube	Approved. Permitted 29' ridge height and required impervious surfaces to be reduced by 5%.	4-1-0 (Small opposed to basement)



Reporting Street Light Outages

Street Lights are serviced by Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E). To report an outage, contact Public Works at 453-1453, option 4, with the address of the nearest property and the street pole number. The street pole number can be found on the pole and ends with the letter K.

What's Next...

- The General Government Committee will meet on Monday, December 17, 2012 at 8:00 a.m.
- The Finance Committee will meet on Tuesday, December 18, 2012 at 3:00 p.m.
- The Advisory Design Review Group will not meet in December.
- Town Hall Offices will be closed for the holidays the week of December 24-28, 2012 and January 1, 2013.
- The next regular Town Council meeting will be held on January 10, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. Agendas and staff reports are posted in advance of the meeting 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.

The Morning After is published following each regular Council meeting by the Town of Ross staff. 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. Comments regarding this publication are welcome at llopez@townofross.org.

Town of Ross
P.O. Box 320
Ross, CA 94957
415-453-1453
Fax: 415-453-1950
Visit us at www.townofross.org

