

THE MORNING AFTER

*Highlights from the
Ross Town Council Meeting
of February 12, 2009*

Volume 3, No. 2

February 13, 2009



Marin Energy Authority

You may have read recently that the County of Marin along with eight other cities and towns, including Ross, are reviewing the feasibility of purchasing renewable power directly, while PG&E would continue to be responsible for maintaining the transmission lines and billing. Marin Clean Energy is an effort of the newly formed Marin Energy Authority (MEA). The MEA, initially funded solely by the County of Marin, is the first joint power agency in the State of California established to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in compliance with AB 32, California's global warming law.

If enacted by the County and participating towns, Marin Clean Energy (MCE) would reduce Marin's greenhouse gas emissions by initially providing twice as much renewable power as Marin receives now. It is MCE's objective to be competitive with PG&E rates, and accomplish price stability in the future by decreasing reliance on imported fossil fuels to generate power. Residential, commercial, and municipal customers will have a choice of two renewable source energy options. One option will be 100% renewable energy generated from solar, wind, and geothermal sources, and the other option will be approximately 25-50% renewable supply.

Any resident or business whose city or town is a member of the Marin Energy Authority may opt out of Marin Clean Energy and choose to remain a customer of PG&E.

At its first Board meeting last week, the Marin Energy Authority authorized Navigant Consulting to prepare bid documents for energy providers and analyze the pricing and technical aspects of the bids when they are received in August 2009. The MEA also engaged Ms. Dawn Weisz as its Interim Director, and voted to seek \$63 million of the federal stimulus package to implement solar, wind, and methane facilities locally.



As your Town's representative on the MEA, I intend to keep you informed during the coming months as the project progresses.

Council Discusses Lagunitas Road Intersections

The Town Council approved a design modification to the Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and Lagunitas Road intersection. Agreeing with Town consultants, the Council voted to "square off" the intersection and eliminate the "slip" lanes turning onto Lagunitas Road and into the Marin Art & Garden Center from Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. All right turn lanes would be preserved.

Transportation planner Jeremy Nelson from Nelson/Nygaard said the new design would improve pedestrian safety at the crosswalks and slow traffic as drivers travel through the intersection. Elizabeth Shreve and Larry Reed with the landscape architecture and planning firm SWA Group outlined how the new intersection could dramatically enhance the gateway into Ross by extending the walkway and plantings in front of Town Hall and redeveloping the park at the Lagunitas Road corner.



The Council also discussed the pros and cons of a traffic circle at Lagunitas Road and Ross Common intersection. The consultants explained how a circle could eliminate u-turns by providing drivers a legal way to reverse direction and improve pedestrian safety by slowing vehicles as they entered the circle. Residents Brian Salmen and Loraine Berry noted that they had never seen illegal u-turns at this intersection. Council members decided against further study of the concept, feeling the solution was worse than the problem. Mayor Bill Cahill noted that he was not supportive of an unattractive traffic circle, especially at the gateway to the town.

Mayor Bill Cahill's Report

The Ross Recreation Auxiliary Diamonds Are Forever cocktail party and dinner in 15 Ross homes held last Saturday was well attended with almost 200 residents participating. Rachel Wells was the lucky winner of the donated ½ carat diamond raffle. Thanks to Sean Gillam for hosting the event. Proceeds from this fundraiser support Ross Recreation's programs.

The Council had a good meeting on the Lagunitas Road Bridge and the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the project on Tuesday. Written comments may still be submitted to the Town through March 5, 2009.

Ross and San Anselmo are holding a joint Bolinas Avenue traffic calming workshop at Ross Town Hall on Monday, February 23, at 7 p.m. The recommendation of the traffic engineer hired by both communities will be presented and discussed.



The James Bond car of choice.

The Town Council and the Advisory Design Review Group will hold a joint public meeting on downtown plan ideas at 6:30 p.m. on February 26. The meeting will include suggested design concepts from our landscape architects, SWA Group, and transportation planner Nelson/Nygaard.

Redwood Drive Traffic Problems Discussed

In response to resident frustration with traffic and parking problems on Redwood Drive stemming from the temporary relocation of Ross School, the Council agreed to increased Redwood Drive police enforcement during the student drop-off and pickup period. Residents reported they had tried without success to directly resolve the issue with school parents, who continue to block driveways and drive unsafely on Redwood Drive.

Police Chief Jim Reis suggested temporarily extending the "graveyard shift" by two hours in order to provide an officer to patrol the area and issue citations. The action will cost the Town 10 hours of overtime pay per week.



The Council also supported allowing the Ross School to extend their fence around the campus to eliminate the Redwood Drive school entrance and compel parents to drop off their children on Ross Common. The Ross School would need to approve and install the fence modification.

The Council considered restricted parking on Redwood Drive, but did not want to make parking more difficult for Ross merchants' customers. The Town's public works subcommittee will further discuss other ideas suggested at the meeting to remedy the traffic situation.

Council Discusses Ross Common Play Field Locations

The Council considered three different locations for the Ross Common play fields following completion of the Ross School construction project. The designs provided amply-sized fields to meet Ross Rec requirements, while attempting to minimize the overlap between the soccer and baseball fields. Two proposals positioned the baseball diamond backstop near the Redwood Drive corner, while the third returned it to its former location near The Grove. To minimize noise and parking impacts, the Council selected the third option and asked the SWA Group consultants to fine-tune the concept.



Mid-Year Budget Review

While most governments are grappling with unprecedented budget shortfalls, Council member Chris Martin reported the Town's finances remain in good shape. The general government and public safety budgets are tracking according to budget projections and revenues are above projected levels. Council member Martin commended Town Manager Gary Broad, staff, and past and present Council members for producing the Town's healthy budget picture. He recommended the Town continue to practice fiscal restraint and monitor trends in order to adjust the budget as necessary in the future.

Council Adopts Greenhouse Gas Reduction Target

The Council adopted a greenhouse gas emissions reduction target for 2020 of 15% below 2005 levels. The target was based on a Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory report briefly summarized at the meeting. The report inventories 2005 greenhouse gas emissions from government operations and the community as a whole and establishes a baseline against which to measure future emissions reduction programs.



The report shows that the Ross community emitted approximately 17,206 metric tons of CO₂e in 2005, and the residential sector was the largest producer of emissions, constituting almost half of all emissions. The transportation sector, which includes vehicles travelling local roads and on Sir Francis Drake Blvd. through Ross, contributed about 42% of emissions. Government operations produced 1.5% of total emissions, with the Town's vehicle fleet of police cars, fire trucks, and public works vehicles, contributing the largest proportion of emissions. Interested residents may download the report from the Town's website [here](#).

Town staff is currently developing a draft climate action plan that will propose specific programs to reduce both local government and community greenhouse gas emissions 15% by 2020. The climate action plan will be ready for Council review in the next few months.

Zoning Code Changes Considered

The Council, sitting as a Planning Commission, discussed possible amendments to the Municipal Code to implement housing element programs adopted in 2005. In addition to adding definitions to the Municipal Code for emergency shelter, transitional housing and caretaker unit, the proposed ordinance allows limited, ancillary residential development as a conditionally permitted use at the Marin Art & Garden Center and at Branson School, two sites identified in the housing element for affordable housing. The proposed ordinance also permits emergency shelters and transitional housing in the Civic District. State law requires the Town to designate a zone for such uses. The Council will consider the proposed ordinance at the March Council meeting.



From Public Works Director Mel Jarjoura

The Town of Ross budget includes an ambitious list of road resurfacing projects for the spring and summer of 2009. Skyland Avenue and Walters Road will be resurfaced in late March. Norwood Avenue, Fernhill Avenue, North Road, East Road, West Road and Hill Road will follow in April. Southwood Avenue will receive a new overlay in May. A total of \$568,000 is budgeted for these improvements. Also, the remaining portion of the Shady Lane pathway is scheduled for construction this summer. Please contact the Town of Ross Public Works Department if you have any questions on these projects.

Roseanna Lourdeaux Appointed Chief of Protocol

The Council appointed Roseanna Lourdeaux to serve a two-year term as Chief of Protocol from February 12, 2009, to February 10, 2011. Roseanna will be responsible for chairing the Town Dinner and the 4th of July celebration. She brings with her a wealth of experience in event planning. She co-chaired the hugely successful Centennial Parade Committee for the 100-Year Town Centennial and has spearheaded several fundraisers to benefit local causes.



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, you can view staff reports at <http://www.townofross.org/town-council/current-meeting-reports/>. The minutes of this meeting will be available on the Town website at www.townofross.org after approval at the March Council meeting.

Address	Applicant	Approved	Denied	Continued
27 Ross Common	Vito and Sonja Badalamenti and Pelican Creek Capital, Inc.			
4 Southwood Avenue	Joe and Janelle Ciatti			
14 Walnut Avenue	Loretta Gargan & Catherine Wagner			
36 Glenwood Avenue	John and Lisa Pritzker			
109 Bolinas Avenue	Mark Millstein			
51 Bridge Road	John Gaeta			

Upcoming Town Council Meetings

A special meeting on the Downtown Plan will be held on Thursday, February 26, at 6:30 p.m. The next regular Council meeting will be on Thursday, March 12, at 6:30 p.m. Agendas and staff reports are posted in advance of the meetings on the town's website at www.townofross.org.

The Morning After is published following each regular Council meeting by The Town of Ross and is written by Project Planner Christine O'Rourke and edited by Town Manager Gary Broad with support from Linda Lopez. 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.