

# THE MORNING AFTER

*Highlights from the  
Ross Town Council Meeting  
of February 10, 2011*

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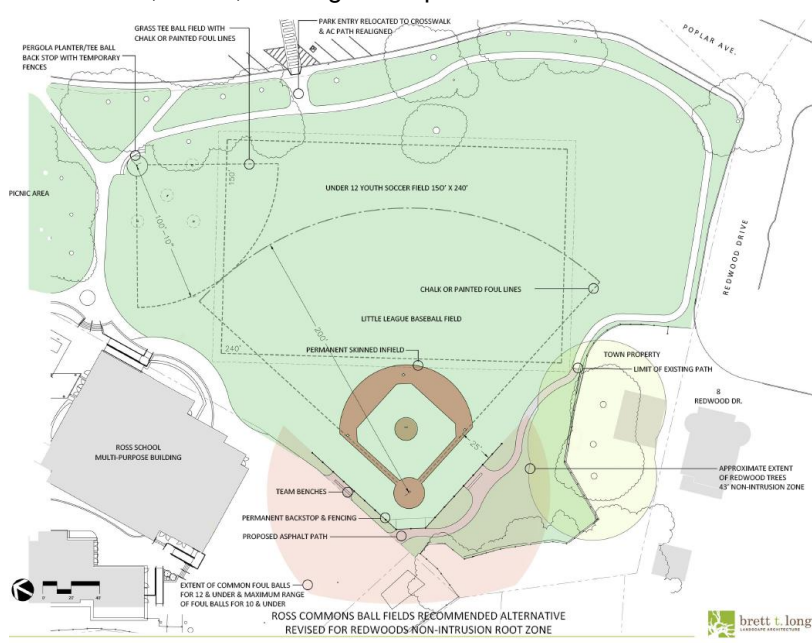
## Community Divided Over Baseball Field Siting

The Council considered a Ross School request to site the baseball field in the southwest corner of the Ross Common when the school restores the Common at the conclusion of its construction project in September. Landscape architect Brett Long presented three alternatives for siting the baseball, soccer and T-ball fields: the school board's recommended Alternative #1, which places the primary baseball field backstop in the southwest corner closest to the Allen Lane, Allen Avenue and Redwood Drive homes; Alternative #2, which restores the baseball diamond to a location closest to its original position in the northern corner of the field; and Alternative #3 which places the primary baseball field and backstop near the center of the Common. Mr. Long said the third alternative was supported the least, as it cut the field in half and most impacted the view corridor.

Mayor Chris Martin stated that in February 2009, the Town Council voted to restore the baseball field to its original location. In June 2009, the Council approved a lot line adjustment that permitted the school to build a stage on one side of the new gym that opens onto the Common for outdoor events. The stage now conflicts with the approved siting of the baseball field, as the chain link fence and skinned infield surface will impede the viewing of performances. The new gym is also located in the foul ball area, which presents safety risks for children running for errant balls.

Many residents spoke in favor of Alternative #1, noting that the location of the baseball field in the southwest corner would provide the greatest public benefit and protect the community's considerable investment in the new school and indoor/outdoor stage. Ross resident Alexandra Treene presented a petition signed by 332 residents and property owners supporting the placement of the primary baseball field in the southwest corner.

Opponents of Alternative #1, particularly the owners of neighboring properties, expressed their concern about noise, traffic, drainage and protection of the redwood trees located in the southwest corner. In



anticipation of these issues, Town Manager Gary Broad reported that the Town had engaged the services of three consultants to provide preliminary analyses. The noise consultant stated that the noise impacts would increase at adjacent Redwood Avenue, Allen Avenue and Allen Drive residences if the baseball field is sited closer to the houses. An 8-12' sound barrier could be constructed to reduce noise levels, but it would provide little benefit for the upper levels of residences.

The arborist studied the root zone of the three redwood trees located at 6 Redwood Drive and recommended a non-intrusion zone of 43' from the tree trunks. In response, the landscape architect

had moved the proposed baseball field towards the center of the Common and removed the concrete surface behind the backstop.

The traffic consultant said the traffic impacts could most likely be mitigated. Council member Rick Strauss noted that the new downtown plan provides 13 additional parking spaces. Parking restrictions and increased enforcement could also alleviate traffic issues.

Attorney Paul Smith representing 8 Redwood Drive resident Barbara Call insisted that the Town needs to conduct an environmental analysis according to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) before relocating the field from its present location. If required, a full environmental impact report would be very costly and time-consuming, and the Common would not be able to be restored this fall as scheduled.

The Council agreed to continue the discussion of the location of the playing field in order to resolve the CEQA issues and further study traffic and noise impacts. A special Council meeting may be scheduled if the additional information can be obtained before the March Council meeting.



### **Mayor Chris Martin's Report**

As was announced recently, our distinguished and respected Town Attorney, Mr. Hadden Roth, will soon step down. For an impressive 26 years Mr. Roth has served as our Town Attorney, providing ongoing legal counsel and representing our interests in numerous legal proceedings. We are grateful for his many years of service and commitment to our community. I believe the British monarchy has had more kings and queens in the span of Ross' one hundred year history than Ross has had Town attorneys. Since 1908, Ross has had eight Town attorneys. Mr. Roth has been assisting Council member Russell with determining a short list of possible successors. They are recommending several experienced individuals from established legal firms. All candidates will be invited to the March Council meeting to introduce themselves and speak in open session as to why they are the most qualified to be our Town's attorney. Among the criteria considered will be familiarity with laws governing California municipal government and operating procedures relative to the conduct of Town business, demonstrated experience in land use and zoning, real estate law, and building code compliance law, as well as cost of providing services. After the presentations and public discussion, the Town Council will meet in closed session to discuss the candidates and make a determination. This will be an opportunity for residents to observe and participate in the selection of our future Town attorney.

Now that the Lagunitas Bridge construction has been completed, and with the addition of 45 oak trees recently planted along the Sir Francis Drake Boulevard pathway and the ongoing planting of new magnolia trees near the bridge, the Town is beginning to look stately and stunning again. I would like to thank Town staff for their efforts during this process, as well as present and past Council members, our volunteer Advisory Design Review Committee and Street Tree Committee, the citizens of Ross and our merchant community for advising, supporting, and enduring this extended period of construction. Our Chief of Protocol Roseanna Lourdeaux is organizing an event to formally celebrate the completion of the Lagunitas Bridge on Sunday, March 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **New Traffic Signs Approved for Sir Francis Drake Boulevard**

The Council agreed to install additional signage on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard near the intersection of Winship Avenue. Transportation Engineer David Parisi recommended installing a reverse curve sign, three chevron signs, and pavement markings in both eastbound and westbound directions at the curve near Winship Avenue. The curve is a particularly dangerous section of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and has been the site of eleven collisions over the past five years.

Citing concerns about "sign pollution," the Council decided not to install the chevron signs at this time, but agreed to reconsider the signage if necessary. Council members asked Mr. Parisi to look into the signal timing in order to provide gaps in the traffic for residents entering Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, and to study ways to make the crosswalk at Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and Bolinas Avenue safer. The Council would also like to consider placing solar speed monitors on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard to reduce traffic speeds.



## Council Agrees to Trash Collection Rate Increase

The Council, with Council member Rick Strauss abstaining, approved a Marin Sanitary Service rate increase of 6.5% and a residential food waste collection program that will increase rates by an additional 4.39%. Beginning March 1st, residential food waste will be collected with yard waste, and green cans will be picked up weekly instead of bi-weekly. The food waste will be composted with yard waste and food-soiled paper.

Increased costs for employee benefits, fuel, and landfill disposal rates are primarily responsible for the base rate increase. Costs for the residential food waste collection include additional trucks and drivers, and expanded public outreach and education.

## Bolinas Avenue Drainage Alternatives Presented

Town Hydrologist Matt Smeltzer presented the results of his study on Bolinas Avenue street inundation and stormwater overflow. Mr. Smeltzer recommended four of the study's alternative measures to reduce stormwater flow and eliminate the ponding on Bolinas Avenue.

Measure 1, at an estimated cost of \$330,000, would improve and add new culverts at seven sites along upper Oak Avenue in San Anselmo. Measure 4, at a cost of \$780,000, would construct a new 42"



diameter culvert from the Richmond Avenue intersection with an outfall at Corte Madera Creek. Measure 4B would create bioretention areas in the Town's right of way and at the St. Anselm parking lot for \$220,000. Finally, Measure 8B would mitigate the cumulative impacts of adding more stormwater to the creek system by constructing a large stormwater detention vault under Richmond Avenue at a cost of \$650,000.

The Council agreed to endorse these measures and recommended pursuing grant funding.

## Frederick Allen Park Update

The Council reviewed plans and construction progress on Frederick Allen Park. Landscape architect Sandra Reed presented landscaping plans for hardscape and planting areas at the tennis court area and examples of furnishings that have been ordered. In response to issues raised by the Street Tree Committee, the plantings were modified and the budget re-appropriated to provide money for irrigation. The screening for the portable toilet was removed from the project and will be addressed when improvements are made to the south Post Office parking lot.

## Ross to Celebrate Opening of Lagunitas Road Bridge

The Council agreed to appropriate \$5,000 to fund a dedication ceremony for the new Lagunitas Bridge on Sunday March, 20, from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. The ceremony will require the closure of Lagunitas Road from Sir Francis Drake Boulevard to Shady Lane, Ross Common and Poplar Avenue from 3:15 to 5:15 p.m.

## Community Input Sought for New Regulations on Attics and Basements

There was a strong turn out and a lot of interest in the workshop on attics and basements that was held in the evening of January 25, 2011.

The meeting considered the proposal to permit the finishing off of existing space in existing homes as long as there is no material impact to neighbors, and there was an overwhelming consensus that supported moving forward with the proposal (both at the meeting and in the significant number of emails that were received on the topic). As a result, Town staff are now preparing a draft ordinance to reflect the proposal, which will be considered at another workshop for residents likely to be held in early March, following which, if there remains a consensus, the matter can be considered for action by the Council.

Residents are strongly encouraged to continue to participate in the process and to make their views known, either by attendance at the next workshop or otherwise by communicating with Council member Russell at [russell@sflaw.com](mailto:russell@sflaw.com) or Senior Planner Elise Semonian at [esemonian@townofross.org](mailto:esemonian@townofross.org).

## Moratorium on SmartMeter Installation Approved

The Council unanimously approved an urgency ordinance establishing a twelve-month moratorium, effective immediately, on the installation of SmartMeters and related equipment in Ross. The ordinance is similar to that adopted by the County of Marin and the Town of Fairfax. It cites inaccurate meter readings, privacy concerns, and potential health risks related to long-term exposure to electromagnetic frequency radiation as reasons for imposing the moratorium. Violations of the moratorium may be charged as infractions or misdemeanors as set forth in Chapter 1.04 of the Town Code. Violations will also be deemed public nuisances.

## Council Appoints New Advisory Design Review Members

The Council commended outgoing Advisory Design Review (ADR) Group members Josefa Buckingham and Noreen Slivon and appointed three members and two alternates to serve two-year terms on ADR. Ms. Buckingham and Ms. Slivon had each served on ADR for three years. The Town received five applications for the open positions, including a request for reappointment from incumbent Dan Winey. Two of the applicants, Peter Nelson and Dean Popplewell, stayed into the late hours of the meeting to present their qualifications and interest in serving on ADR, and the Council appointed both men. Mr. Nelson has a background in city planning and commercial real estate development, and Mr. Popplewell is a licensed general contractor. The Council reappointed Mr. Winey, and appointed Mark Kruttschnitt and Lee Pierce as alternates.



## 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 [here](#). The minutes of this meeting will be available on the website at [www.townofross.org](http://www.townofross.org) after approval at the March Council meeting.

Senior Planner Elise Semonian

Address	Applicant	Approved	Denied	Continued
29 Upper Road	Stuart and Sara Ryan	X		
29 Makin Grade	Leah Anton and Patrick Myers	X		
79 Bolinas Avenue	Jessica Bendy and Chris Pedrick	X		
20 Upper Road West	Clifford and Adriana Booth	X		
186 Prospect Avenue	James Rottmayer	X		

## Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Public Works Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 1, at 8:00 a.m. The next regular Town Council meeting will be held on Thursday, March 10, 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](http://www.townofross.org). All meetings are held at Town Hall unless indicated otherwise. You may email Town Council members by accessing the website [here](#).

*The Morning After is published following each regular Council meeting by the Town of Ross and is written by Project Planner Christine O'Rourke, edited by Town Manager Gary Broad with support from Administrative Manager Linda Lopez, and reviewed by the Ross Mayor prior to publication. 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.*