

THE MORNING AFTER

*Highlights from the
Ross Town Council Meeting
of January 15, 2009*

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Unprecedented Economic Times

School Board President Dan Bernhard mentioned not once, but twice last night, that we are in “unprecedented economic times.” Ross residents asking to build a mere 34 square feet townwide clearly shows these “unprecedented economic times.” But even in this gloom, there was some cheer—including the Council approving the 34 square feet.☺ Additionally, public safety received well-deserved praise, the Council continues to implement Town goals and unlike the State, Ross not only has an adopted budget, but is operating in the black despite the “unprecedented economic times.” We will continue to plow along and know that brighter days are ahead.

Town Honors Employees

The Council recognized four employees for their years of dedicated work to the Town. Receiving awards were: Fire Chief Tom Vallee for 25 years of service; Fire Captain Tim Grasser, 10 years; Police Officer Paul Stromoski, 5 years; and Police Officer Gianfranco Campa, 5 years.

Ross began its Employee Appreciation Program in 2007 to thank long-time employees and recognize those celebrating a 5-year employment anniversary with the Town. No employees have left Town employment since it began this recognition program. Congratulations to all!



Officer Gianfranco Campa, Officer Paul Stromoski and Chief Tom Vallee.

Lagunitas Road Bridge Construction Schedule Discussed

David Anderson, URS Corporation Project Engineer, reported that regulatory approval for the bridge reconstruction project was moving slower than anticipated and is likely to delay bridge construction until the summer of 2010.



Biological studies regarding the red-legged frog and salmonoids in Corte Madera Creek were delivered to CalTrans in November 2008, but Caltrans just indicated it will not review the biological assessments until at least February 1st. Only after this review will they forward the reports to federal agencies for final review and permitting. Once approved, construction is expected to be completed in 135 days. The Caltrans review timeline would delay the currently projected start date. Work in Corte Madera Creek could not then be completed within the dry months, which end October 15th.

The Council agreed to contact Assemblyman Jared Huffman immediately to see if he can expedite the CalTrans approval process so the project schedule could get back on track. The biological assessment did not reveal issues which would affect project approval. Town dredging in Corte Madera Creek has previously been approved on the basis of similar biological reports.

Bridge design is 85% complete. The Town Council will take public input on the draft Environmental Impact Report for the bridge project at a special meeting on February 10th. It will consider concepts for changes to the Lagunitas Road intersections at Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and Ross Common at the next regular Council meeting on February 12th.



Mayor Bill Cahill's Report

I serve on the Marin County Council of Mayors and Council Members Legislative Committee which analyzes pending state legislation that affects local governments. If you want information on any particular piece of legislation, please [contact me](#).

Centennial DVDs are available for purchase. "The Ross Movie" and highlights of "The Town of Ross Centennial" cost \$25 each and \$40 for both DVDs. You may purchase the DVDs from the Town Administration office by contacting Linda Lopez at llopez@townofross.org.

The Town's website is undergoing some changes. Part of this upgrade will include a number of new, beautiful, and professionally-taken photographs of the community.

Trash Collection Rates to Increase 6.42%

The Town Council unanimously voted to grant Marin Sanitary Service a rate increase of 6.42% effective January 1, 2009. Rates will increase \$1.42 per month for a 32-gallon can and \$2.84 per month for a 64-gallon can.

The majority of the rate hike is attributed to higher operating costs and increases in employee benefit, fuel and disposal costs. Yard waste, for example, can no longer be disposed at Redwood Landfill and must be transported to a composting facility in the East Bay.

The Council questioned the necessity of the rate increase, especially in the midst of a recession, but determined the increase was acceptable given higher operating costs and Marin Sanitary's exemplary record in recycling and pursuing eco-friendly waste disposal strategies. Mayor Pro Tempore Rick Strauss suggested reviewing the current 20-year franchise agreement to ensure contract terms are in residents' best interest.



Including the 2009 rate hike, Marin Sanitary rates have increased an average of 3.4% per year since 1998, while the Consumer Price Index has increased 3.5% on average during the same time period. Rates increased 3.46% last year.



Ross School Report

Ross School District Board President Dan Bernhard reported on Ross School construction progress, which has been stymied by the State of California budget crisis. The State Allocation Board has frozen all allocations, including \$6.8 million promised for the Ross School construction project. Board President Bernhard did not know when funds may become available, but speculated it would not occur until a State budget is passed.

President Bernhard said demolition is complete and the

school is preparing to open bidding on the next construction phase. Twenty-five contractors have done a “walk-through” of the site in anticipation of bidding on the project. He noted that this is an exceptionally high number, and that it is indicative of tough economic times in the construction industry.

Construction should begin by the end of April 2009 in order to have the new school open in August 2010 as planned. While the School District has \$30.7 million of the \$37.5 million budget in place, State funding remains an important component of the project budget.

Martin Appointed to Marin Energy Authority Board

The Council appointed Council member Chris Martin to serve on the board of the Marin Energy Authority (MEA), a joint powers agency created to explore Marin Clean Energy and other greenhouse gas reduction programs. Mayor Bill Cahill will serve as an alternate board director. The MEA Board will meet on the first Thursday of each month beginning February 5th.



Created in December with nine participating Marin jurisdictions, the MEA expects to quickly develop an implementation plan and solicit bids from energy service providers for long-term renewable energy contracts.

The Council will spend the next few months assessing the feasibility of Marin Clean Energy. If renewable energy bids come in higher than expected, or if significant risks remain with the proposal, the Town could elect to withdraw from the MEA.



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 February Council meeting.

Address	Applicant	Approved	Denied	Continued
27 Ross Common	Vito and Sonja Badalamenti and Morgan Lane Marin, Inc.			
70 and 102 Ivy Drive	Ward and Melinda Ching and James and Brett Collins			
59 Bridge Road	Jay and Katie Kern			

Upcoming Town Council Meeting

The next regular Council meeting will be on Thursday, February 12, at 6:30 p.m. Agendas and staff reports are posted in advance of the meeting 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. If you’d like to receive The Morning After and other town information via email, contact llopez@townofross.org.