

THE MORNING AFTER

*Highlights from the
Ross Town Council Meeting
of January 13, 2011*

Volume 5, No. 1

January 14, 2011

Town Council Commends Public Works Director Mel Jarjoura

The Council adopted a resolution commending Public Works Director and Building Official Mel Jarjoura upon his retirement. Mr. Jarjoura has been with the Town of Ross since 1999, when he was hired as the Town's building inspector. He was promoted to Acting Director of Public Works in 2001 and promoted again the following year to Director of Public Works and Building Official.

During his tenure, Mr. Jarjoura oversaw a number of public works projects, including construction of new pathways and numerous roadway and drainage improvements. Perhaps his crowning achievement was the replacement of the Lagunitas Road Bridge, for which he secured federal financing.

The resolution states, "Mel Jarjoura will be remembered for his honesty, integrity, commitment to the Town, availability to the public, willingness to listen to residents and address their concerns, and his efforts to always achieve harmony, all of which will be sorely missed." Mr. Jarjoura received a standing ovation, as well as a framed resolution and a parting gift.

The Town has made a job offer to one of the previous finalists for the Public Works Director. The candidate has met with Mayor Chris Martin and Council member Rick Strauss, Town Manager Gary Broad, and a number of staff, and all feel he will make an excellent fit for the Town. Staff will notify the community as soon as the Town receives a signed acceptance.



Council Discusses Trash Collection Rate Increase

The Council agreed to continue discussion of a Marin Sanitary Service rate increase of 6.5% and a proposed residential food waste collection program that would increase rates by an additional 4.39%.

If approved, residential food waste would be collected with yard waste, and green cans would be picked up weekly instead of bi-weekly. Marin Sanitary Service President Patty Garbarino explained that health laws require weekly pick up of food waste. The food waste would be transported to a facility in Zamora, where it would be composted with yard waste and food-soiled paper (e.g., pizza boxes and paper towels).

Although rates would increase, residents could trim their waste collection costs by switching to smaller cans. The diversion of food waste, which typically takes up about 10-15% of garbage can space, might make a smaller can more feasible. Seniors could also take advantage of a special program that allows regular trash in a 32-gallon can to be picked up every other week at a reduced rate.

Mayor Pro Tempore Carla Small noted that many residents have wanted weekly green can pick up for a long time. The food waste collection program would allow additional yard waste removal while providing environmental benefits. The Town's recently approved Climate Action Plan calculated that removing all of the Town's food waste from the landfill would eliminate 138 metric tons of greenhouse gasses each year and reduce community emissions by 0.8%.

Other communities, including Tiburon, Belvedere and Mill Valley, have already instituted curbside food waste collection and composting. A Marin Sanitary Service pilot program has produced favorable results.

Council member Rick Strauss expressed concern about the increase in regular trash collection rates. Ms. Garbarino said increased costs for employee benefits, fuel, and landfill disposal rates were primarily responsible for the proposed rate increase.



Mayor Chris Martin's Report

As many of you are very aware, Town Council meetings can continue until the early morning hours. It is not our intention to wear you down. It is Council's objective to adjourn these meetings at a reasonable hour. Effective tonight, I will enforce the three-minute rule for each speaker, and in a reasonable manner facilitate the progress of each agenda item, avoiding protracted discussion unless a particular issue clearly merits such deliberation.

I would like to acknowledge and commend Council member Rupert Russell for chairing the first Brown Act-compliant Finance Committee meeting in the Town's recent history. The Finance Committee, along with the Public Works Committee which meets monthly, are both opportunities for Town residents, businesses, and the public-at-large to access and participate in publicly-noticed open meetings held during accessible hours. Our Town has two other standing committees, General Government and Public Safety, which will also begin to have regular public meetings in compliance with the Brown Act. When governmental meetings are open to the public, and when rules and decisions are open to discussion, we accomplish greater transparency as well as develop better-informed citizens. Initial review of issues at the committee level will relieve the burden on Council meetings and assist with adjourning these meetings at a reasonable hour.

Next week, Mayor Pro Tempore Small, Council member Russell, and I are going to a boot camp for elected officials in Sacramento. The League of California Cities, an association of cities and towns that work together to influence better public policy decisions, annually organizes a New Mayors and Council Members Academy. The Academy is an opportunity to meet other elected officials around the State and also to learn about the duties and responsibilities of being an elected representative. Discussion will include an examination of the State's current fiscal meltdown and financial oversight duties.

There are three openings on the Advisory Design Review Group. Applications are available on the Town's website and are due on January 15th. The Town is seeking two residents with professional design backgrounds and one resident that does not need design experience.

Council Agrees to Consider Moratorium on Smart Meter Installation

The Council agreed to prepare an urgency ordinance establishing a moratorium on Smart Meter deployment in Ross. The ordinance will be modeled on the County of Marin's recently approved ordinance and would be considered for adoption at the February Council meeting.



Photo credit: PG&E

Mayor Chris Martin reported that the Town had not received a response to the letter it sent to PG&E and the CPUC last month requesting a suspension of the deployment of smart meters in Ross until a California Council on Science and Technology study on the safety of meters was completed. The draft of that report stated that PG&E Smart Meter electromagnetic field (EMF) emissions are below emissions from many household appliances. However, the report could not determine if the accumulation of EMF emissions was detrimental to long-term health.

Mayor Martin said PG&E plans to relocate a wireless transmitter originally proposed for 2 Lagunitas Road, across from the Ross School.

Public Works Committee Report

At the January 11th Public Works Committee meeting, Town Hydrologist Matt Smeltzer discussed results from his preliminary study for reducing stormwater street inundation and overflow on Bolinas Avenue. He reviewed recommendations for upper and lower Bolinas Avenue and some possible improvements to Fernhill Creek. The final report will be available for public review after January 25th, and Mr. Smeltzer will make a presentation at the February Council meeting.

The Lagunitas Road Bridge is scheduled to be closed Tuesday and Wednesday, January 18th and 19th, for the placement of the electroliers, sand blasting of the bridge decking, and thermoplastic striping of the roadway. Raising of the rose bush and planting of the Magnolia trees should be completed within the week.

The final punch list items are being completed on the Sir Francis Drake Boulevard pedestrian pathway project. Forty Valley Oaks will be planted along the roadway within the week. Thanks to the Street Tree Committee for notifying residents of the tree planting.

Project Planner Christine O'Rourke gave a presentation of plans drawn up for Frederick Allen Park by Sandy Reed from ZAC Landscape Architects. The work needs to be completed by March 31, 2011, in order to capture \$226,340 in available State park funds. The plan will be posted on the website.

Mayor Pro Tempore Carla Small will send a letter to Kentfield Rehabilitation Hospital asking their staff and guests to not smoke in Allen Park. The Town's ordinance prohibits smoking on Town-owned properties and parks. If necessary, the Town will post a no smoking sign and begin issuing tickets to violators.



Street Light Bulb Outages

The Town discussed the unusually high number of street light bulb outages. Please report outages to Public Works Department Secretary Simone Jamotte at 435-1453 x106 or sjamotte@townofross.org. You must provide a description of the street light location and the pole number, which is located on the pole and ends with a capital "K." The Town can then inform PG&E of the street light bulbs that need to be replaced.

Finance Committee Report

On December 17, 2010, the Finance Committee held its first public meeting. Although there was limited attendance from residents, the Committee worked its way through a full agenda in an hour and a half. The Committee reviewed the Town's budget and financials, including Lagunitas Road Bridge project costs and reimbursements. No rude surprises were reported and, most importantly, the Town's property and parcel tax revenues came in a little ahead of budget. The Committee also reviewed and made recommendations for revisions to the current time limits for construction completion and the Building Department's process for determining building permit project valuations and fees. The Committee is expected to review a proposed revised ordinance for construction completion time limits at its next public meeting, as well as a new draft ordinance for establishing building permit project valuations and permit fees. This will assure residents the Town is providing a consistent and transparent approach to these issues. The next Committee meeting will occur in February on a date to be scheduled.

Community Input Sought for New Regulations on Attics and Basements

Council member Rupert Russell will hold a community workshop on potential modifications to Town policies regarding improvement of attics and basements on January 25th at 7 p.m. at Town Hall. The workshop will include discussion of a proposal to allow residents to finish off existing attic and basement spaces so long as there are no material negative impacts for neighbors. New policies or regulations could ultimately allow more finished attic and basement spaces.

At the Council's retreat last year, Council member Russell was tasked with a Council goal to review to the Town's regulations on attics and basements. He has been involved in a number of discussions with staff to rationalize and modernize the Town's approach to attics and basements. The Advisory Design

Review Group also discussed how new regulations might affect a couple of sample properties at its December 28, 2010, meeting.

Residents are strongly encouraged to participate in the January 25th workshop. Written comments are also welcome. For more information please contact Council member Russell at russell@sflaw.com or Senior Planner Elise Semonian at 453-1453 ext. 121 or esemonian@townofross.org.

Town Honors Employees

The Council recognized three employees for their years of dedicated service to the Town. Receiving Police Officer Kevin McKendry, Police Officer Danny Moy, and Administrative Manager Linda Lopez received awards and a small gift of appreciation. Each has worked for the Town for five 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. Congratulations and thank you to all!



Police Officer Danny Moy and Administrative Manager Linda Lopez



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 after approval at the February Council meeting.

Senior Planner Elise Semonian

| Address | Applicant | Approved | Denied | Continued |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|----------|--------|-----------|
| 6 Hill Road | Matt and Courtney Seashols | X | | |
| 10 Ames Avenue | Bradley and Kristin Matsik | X | | |
| 126 Winding Way | Douglas and Miranda Abrams | X | | |
| 88 Wellington Avenue | Steve and Chris Simpson | | | X |
| 111 Upper Road | Astrid Deeth and Bo Stehlin | X | | |
| 41 Upper Road | Mitch and Isobel Wiener | X | | |
| 79 Bolinas Avenue | Jessica Bendy and Chris Pedrick | | | X |
| 33 Winship Avenue | Chris and Mary Ann Neumann | | | X |

Upcoming Meetings

A Community Workshop on potential changes to Town regulations to allow finished basements and attics will be held on Tuesday, January 25, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The next regular Public Works Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 1, at 8:00 a.m. The next regular Town Council meeting will be held on Thursday, February 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. 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.