



# THE MORNING AFTER

*Town of Ross Monthly Newsletter*  
Includes highlights from the  
Ross Town Council Meetings of April 30 & May 9, 2013

Town of Ross

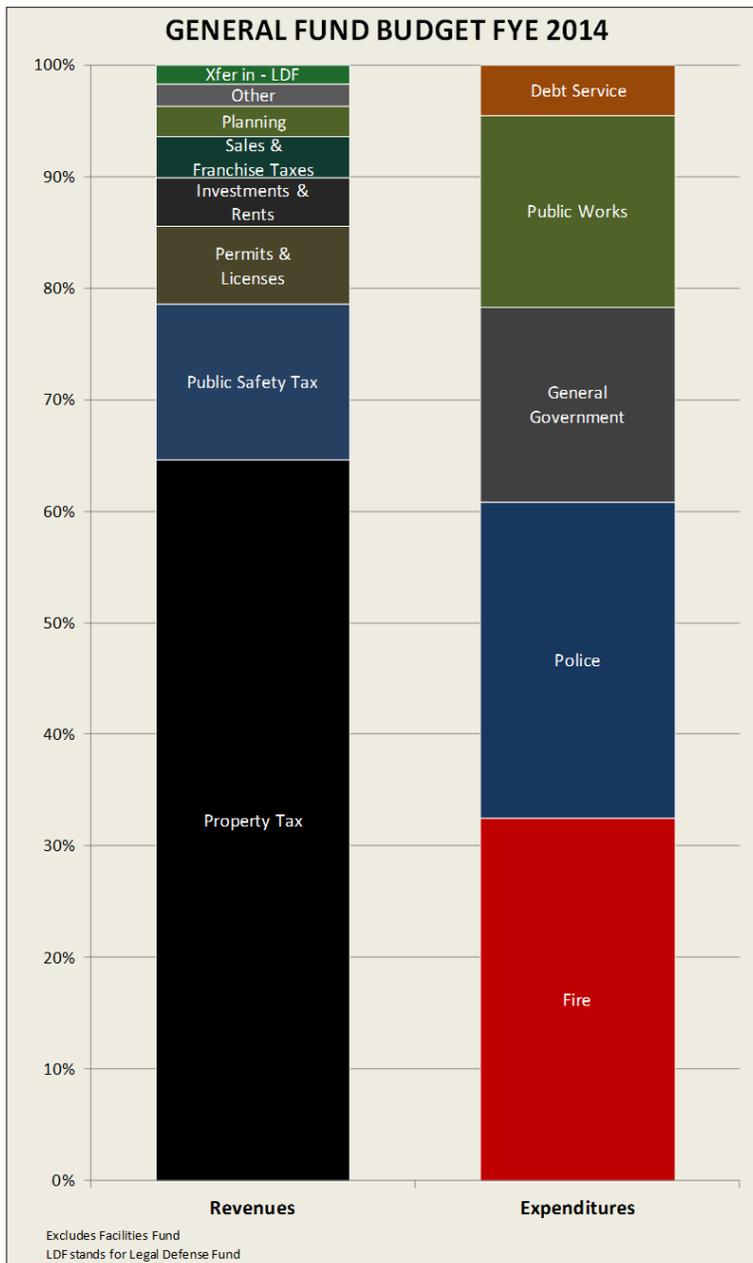
Volume 7, Issue 5  
May 10, 2013

## Council Discusses Proposed FY 2014 Budget

The Town Council reviewed the Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14) proposed budget at a workshop held April 30<sup>th</sup>. The Council along with town staff discussed the proposed budget for the coming fiscal year beginning July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014.

### Key budget highlights:

- The proposed General Fund budget if passed, is balanced without drawing upon reserves.
- The budget maintains core public safety services to the community.



- Police and fire services are the Town's largest operating expense @ \$3M or 61% of the General Fund.
- The General Fund receives \$.188 cents of every \$1 in property taxes paid, the rest \$.812 cents of the \$1 goes to the county, schools and other public agencies.
- Property taxes are the single largest source of revenues and represent 65% of general fund revenues including the Public Safety Tax.
- The proposed parcel tax rate for FY14 is \$850/parcel, net to residents.
- 59% of staffing is dedicated to public safety
- General Fund expenditures are down \$469K from three years ago (FY11 as compared to FY14)

The graph shows where the money comes from and where it goes.

The FY 2014 budget is scheduled to be adopted on May 23, 2013.

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Rupert Russell  
Mayor

## The Mayor's Report



We returned last night to the discussion of the Ball field on the Commons. This is a topic that has historically caused much discussion before the Council. At the April Council meeting we decided to make the current location of the Ball field permanent on a 4-1 vote. This resulted in some hurt feelings on the part of some of the neighbors adjoining the Commons and some harsh comments being directed toward members of Council, such as accusing Council members of being selfish in making the decision. This is a small town and residents encounter each other on a regular basis, sometimes on matters that involve the Council, and more often than not on unrelated matters, such as simply in picking up mail from the Post Office. We all need to bear in mind that there is a greater good in cooperation and preserving harmony. Residents are free to express themselves and

it is true that feelings can run raw sometimes, but please let's try to be respectful toward each other nonetheless. Also, as one of the Council members responsible for the difficult decision made at the April meeting, I do want to point out that none of the four Council members who voted in favor of making the Ball field location permanent have children who participate in Ross Valley Little League, play on the Ball field, or even attend the School. Council members have no self-interest in the decision and their motivation is simply to serve the best interests of the community at large. In addition, all members of the Council remain subject to the Brown Act, so no decision is predetermined prior to the Council meeting and until the decision was made at the April Council meeting none of us knew what the outcome would be.

Talking of neighborliness, on Monday April 29, 2013, there

was a neighborhood meeting for those living in Winship Park at the Town Hall. This was a very well attended meeting and, although I did not attend, as the meeting was not intended to be subject to Brown Act requirements, my understanding is that there was a lively and constructive interchange between affected residents and members of staff from the Town. We did make available Town resources for this purpose and there has been substantive follow up from that meeting. I do expect that from time to time where there may be issues of concern that affect particular neighborhoods the Town will again be willing to help support them. If more meetings for Winship Park or any other neighborhood are contemplated, residents should approach our Town Manager as the first point of contact.



## Response to Marin County Grand Jury Report

The Council issued its response to the Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report dated March 25, 2013 entitled "Marin on Fire Redux." The report deals broadly with the issue of preventing wildfires in Marin by using herbicides to reduce the fire fuel load on Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD) land. Ross Valley Fire Department (RVFD) analyzed this issue for each of the public agencies served by RVFD and provided the responses for consideration by each agency. Some of the Findings and responses to the report are included here. To view the complete report go to [http://www.townofross.org/pdf/staff\\_reports\\_council/may-9-](http://www.townofross.org/pdf/staff_reports_council/may-9-)

[2013-reports/agenda-item-8-grand-jury-report.pdf](#).

**F1:** *There has been a long history of fire on Mt. Tam. It is likely that wildfire will occur again.*

**Response:** Agree. With the extensive build up of flammable vegetation and extensive public use of the watershed, there is a strong likelihood that a major fire will occur on Mt. Tamalpais.

**F2:** *Wildfire danger is rated very high and owing to substantial fuel-load growth especially for invasive weeds, particularly various species of Broom.*

**Response:** Agree. The State has classified some areas as high and other areas as very high. It is also important to note that other fuel types are found on MMWD land that pose a significant fire threat

such as Manzanita, Chaparral, and Eucalyptus.

**F3:** *Property development in areas adjacent to open space places these adjacent communities at great risk to fire and the loss of life and property.*

**Response:** Agree. Homes built adjacent to the open space are at risk from wildfire, but that risk can be reduced through defensible space around structures, the use of ignition resistant building materials, and fuel modification in the open space including strategic lines of defense which are critical tools that firefighters need to contain a fire during the early stages before it grows beyond suppression capabilities.

## Crime Prevention Tips



Burglaries happen when a criminal spots an easy chance and takes it. You can reduce the chances of you becoming a target by following these crime prevention tips.

### BURGLARY:

- Use deadbolt locks on all exterior doors. Those with glass within three feet of the lock should have double cylinder deadbolts.
- Check all doors and windows before you leave.
- Make sure trees and shrubs around

your home are trimmed.

- Do not leave empty boxes for electronics by the trash.
- Be aware of the people who visit your home.
- Have someone watch your home when you go out of town. Police offer Vacation Checks
- Install a good alarm system.
- Engrave expensive items such as televisions, laptops and game systems.

### AUTO THEFTS: Common Sense is Your Best Defense!

- Lock your vehicle, close all windows and sun roofs, and take your keys.
- Don't leave valuables in plain view. Items left in the open attract thieves.
- Always secure your vehicle doors.
- Never leave your keys in the ignition and the vehicle running. Vehi-

cles are commonly stolen at ATMs and convenience stores.

- If your vehicle has an alarm or anti-theft device, use it.

**BE OBSERVANT:** A good description will be vital to police, so try to remember everything you can about the suspect:

- Color of hair/haircut
- Complexion
- Height /Weight
- Age/Sex
- Scars/marks/ tattoos
- Beard/mustache/sideburns
- Clothing

### ADDITIONAL TIPS:

If you discover a break-in, call the police immediately. Don't enter the premises until police arrive. The thief may still be inside, or you may disturb evidence.

## Leaf Blower and Construction Fines Begin May 11

Town staff may issue citations and fine residents for violations of the Town Municipal Code starting on May 11<sup>th</sup>. Residents should contact their gardeners to ensure that they do not use gas powered leaf blowers without appropriate Town permits. Residents should also ensure contractors do not work after permitted construction hours. Construction hours are permitted Monday-Friday from 8:00-5:00 p.m.

and not on weekends or holidays. Residents violating building and zoning regulations that do not involve safety issues will receive warning letters and an opportunity to correct violations prior to imposition of fines. If you have a complaint on construction occurring after hours or a gasoline powered leaf blower, please report it to the Police Department at (415) 453-1453 option 2.



## Marin Art & Garden Center Summer Concert Series



The Summer Concert Series at the Marin Art & Garden Center begins Thursday, June 27<sup>th</sup> and will continue every Thursday (except July 4<sup>th</sup>) through August 15<sup>th</sup>. Live music from local

bands will take place at the outdoor gazebo from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. With a different band every week, visitors will enjoy diverse musical styles such as Bluegrass, Folk, Jazz, and even a Beatles tribute.

Admission is free! Beverages including beer, wine, water and juice as well as boxed lunches provided by MAGC's exclusive caterers, may be purchased at the event. Proceeds from sales of food and beverages benefit programs at the Marin Art & Garden Center.

The bands scheduled to perform are as follows:

- June 27<sup>th</sup>: Adam Theis & the Last Band
- July 11<sup>th</sup>: The Rowan Brothers
- July 18<sup>th</sup>: David Thom Band
- July 25<sup>th</sup>: Steep Ravine
- August 1<sup>st</sup>: Rusty Evans & Ring of Fire
- August 8<sup>th</sup>: Revolver
- August 15<sup>th</sup>: The Wranglers



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](http://www.townofross.org/pages/town_council/staff_reports.html). The minutes of this meeting will be available on the website at [www.townofross.org](http://www.townofross.org) after approval at the June 2013 Council meeting.

Address	Applicant	Council Action	Vote (for/against/abstain)
35 Sir Francis Drake Blvd.	Town of Ross & Sprint	Approved	5/0/0
33 Wellington Avenue	Ken & Alison Pickart	Approved	4/0/1 (Russell abstained)
110 Winding Way	Kimberly Nunes	Approved	5/0/0
20 A Sir Francis Drake Blvd	Jack & Beverley Domet	Approved	5/0/0

### MMWD WATER STORAGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD) has begun the process of planning, designing and constructing two treated water storage facilities on the Mt. Tamalpais Watershed. The proposed facilities are replacements for the Pine Mountain Tunnel, built in 1918, and the Ross Reservoir, built in 1929. The current facilities do not provide adequate storage capacity and they create potential water quality challenges due to their age and structural deterioration.

The Water Storage Improvement Project will provide eight million gallons of potable water storage to: improve MMWD's ability to meet operational and emergency storage needs; improve seismic reliability of storage facilities; replace inadequate, outmoded and sub-standard storage facilities; and ensure the ongoing delivery of safe and reliable drinking water. MMWD will begin the environmental review process for the project in early Summer 2013. Community members will have multiple opportunities to learn about and discuss the project throughout the environmental review process. For more information on this project please visit MMWD's website at <http://marinwater.org/controller?action=menuclick&id=669>.

## What's Next...

- The Public Works Committee will meet on Thursday, May 16, 2013 at 8:00 a.m.
- The Town Council will hold a Special Council meeting to adopt the FY14 Budget on Thursday, May 23, 2013 at 6:00 p.m.
- Town Hall offices will be closed Monday, May 27, 2013 for Memorial Day.
- The Advisory Design Review Group will meet on Tuesday, May 28, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.
- The next regular Town Council meeting will be held on June 13, 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](http://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](http://www.townofross.org/pages/contact/email_council.html).

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