

THE MORNING AFTER

*Highlights from the
Ross Town Council Meeting
of September 11, 2007*

Volume 1, No. 3

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For Love or Money?

Once again, thanks for such enthusiastic feedback on the July issue reporting on our last Council meeting. One financially astute reader questioned why we are giving away such excellent content without selling some ads. We have been kicking this idea around and are intrigued by the prospect of a limited number of genteel advertisers adding artful ads to our issue and hard cash to the Town's coffers. The Town Dinner ad on page 2 shows what form such an ad might take.

We'd love to find a new town revenue source, but our top commitment is to satisfy you, our readers. So if you have any reaction to this idea, please let me know at gbroad@townofross.org.

Ross and Larkspur to Negotiate Consolidated Fire Protection



The Council agreed to negotiate a draft Joint Powers Agreement with the City of Larkspur to consolidate fire protection services. After 18 months of consolidation talks with fire departments throughout Ross Valley, the Town has determined that the best fit would be a merged Ross and Larkspur fire departments.

Consolidation will improve fire protection service in both communities and has been endorsed by management and labor in both departments. It will add much-needed additional management and supervisory staff, including a full-time fire chief, while presently the Town's Public Safety Director shares fire and police chief roles.

A second major benefit to consolidation would be the introduction of a Battalion Chief position to each shift, a management level position responsible for policy development, personnel administration, training coordination, equipment deployment, and control of emergency scenes. When there is no Battalion Chief, as is the case currently for both Ross and Larkspur, those duties have to be spread out among other department personnel, including assigning responsibility for emergency scenes to Battalion Chiefs from other departments.

Emergency response will remain the same as today. Most fire departments, including Ross and Larkspur, have automatic aid agreements that call for the closest engine company to respond regardless of jurisdiction.

The new organization would require adding two new positions, including the Battalion Chief positions. The positions will increase overall operating cost by \$150,000, split between the two communities.





Mayor Scot Hunter's Report

The Ross Grocery, a.k.a Eddie's, has reopened with newly remodeled interior space. Congratulations to Don and Denise Ahrens and many thanks for providing this service to Ross residents. We suggest everyone try the new menu and help make Ross's longest running business a continued success.

Street Tree Plan Presented

Street Tree Working Group chairperson Janell Hobart presented a street tree plan for Fernhill Avenue. The plan integrates existing trees with new trees to create an allée, which will create over time an arching canopy. It also mixes the tree types to avoid a single dominant canopy that could be vulnerable to disease.



The Street Tree Working Group walked Fernhill Avenue and marked individual locations for planting new trees. Their plan recommends additional ginkgo trees at the entry to Fernhill Avenue at St. Anselm's Church in order to create a gateway to Ross.

Ms. Hobart emphasized the importance of regular watering of young trees during the dry season and proper feeding and pruning for optimal growth. Residents will need to irrigate the street trees planted in the right-of-way of their properties.

The newly adopted Town of Ross General Plan 2007-2025 recommended the creation of a street tree committee to enhance and protect trees in the community. The group also includes Cynthia Zak, Mimi Lapeyre and Town Arborist Becky Duckles.

Ordinances Adopted

The Town Council adopted three ordinances first introduced at the July Council meeting. Ordinance No. 600 establishes an investigation fee of 10% of the market value of a project for any work begun without a permit. The fee is in addition to any fines or penalties already enacted.

Ordinance No. 601 amends time limits for completion of construction. Projects issued building permits before 2004 that were never finalized will now be subject to fees if not completed within a specified time period. The ordinance also adds penalties to unpaid construction completion penalties and subjects unpaid balances to interest.

Ordinance No. 598 updates the Municipal Code by adding a section establishing the office of Town Manager and detailing the responsibilities of the position.

The Ross Town Dinner

Friday, September 28, 6:00 pm

On the Ross Common



**Bring Your Own Picnic Dinner
and Join Your Neighbors
For a Fun Fall Town Dinner**

*Tables, chairs, tablecloths, lanterns,
flowers and music provided*

Please RSVP to ross.events@gmail.com

or 453-1453 x176



Council Goals Update

The Town is making substantial progress in implementing the five Council goals for FY 2007-2008. For the goal of increased emergency warning and response, the Town has expanded its ability to notify residents about emergencies via telephones and cell phones. The Town has also purchased a new audible community alerting system that will replace the aging air horn system. The new siren will reach more residents than the prior system.

The annual Disaster Awareness Fair and Blood Mobile will be held on the Ross Common on Saturday, Sept. 29, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Related to the goal of expanded residence emergency preparedness, the emergency plan has been updated and new emergency supplies have been purchased. Cecilia Conte has been appointed Disaster Volunteer Coordinator. She will assist in community outreach, including “Get Ready” classes for residents that should begin in November.

The Town is also moving ahead with an informal advisory design review process based on a “charrette” concept. A charrette is a collaborative session in which a group of designers drafts solutions to a design problem. The charrette process would be available to applicants for early feedback on a building proposal. A volunteer board of designers and residents with a design interest would be on hand to offer design suggestions. Neighbors would also be able to attend the informal charrette meeting and provide comments.

New Construction at Branson School Approved

The Council approved a planning application for The Branson School to build a new student commons building and fine arts center. The project will increase the floor area by 1.8% to the maximum allowable floor area ratio of 15%. No variances were necessary.

The 7,550 sq. ft. student commons building will be built in the area downslope of the tennis court, thereby screening much of the building from residential view. The building will be “green” with photovoltaic panels, radiant heat, natural ventilation, and recycled roof materials. The flanking areas of the roof will feature a living green roof that will minimize the perception of bulk and help blend the building into the hillside.



Student commons building. Image by K.Hammad.

A one-story, 3,278 sq. ft. fine arts center will be built to the south of the existing arts building. New landscape screening will be added along Circle Drive. After the building is completed, the Council will consider whether adding a wall is necessary to mitigate noise impacts and provide additional privacy for Circle Drive residents.

The Council commended the school administration and their architects, Turnbull Griffin Haesloop, for working closely with neighbors to resolve design issues over the past year. Council members agreed that the project will greatly enhance the school and is sensitive to the neighborhood.



From Public Works Director Mel Jarjura

Ross Valley Sanitary District is close to completing sewer line replacement on Walnut Avenue and Olive Avenue. The Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD) pipeline replacement project on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard has progressed to the second stage between Tunstead Avenue and Bolinas Avenue. MMWD also continues to work on a Phoenix Lake outlet project, with an estimated completion

date of mid-November 2007. Project construction could interrupt or close trail access at some points.



From Public Safety Director Barry Heying

The Town will again receive a \$100,000 grant from the State of California Citizen’s Option for Public Safety (COPS) program. The money will continue to fund one full-time police officer position at an annual total cost of \$114,240 for salary, benefits and equipment. The COPS account has a current balance of \$154,000.



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 last night’s agenda at www.townofross.org/town-council/current-meeting-agenda/. Copies of staff reports may be requested from Senior Planner Elise Semonian at esemonian@townofross.org. The minutes of this meeting will be available on the Town website at www.townofross.org after their approval at the October Council meeting

Address	Applicant	Approved	Partially Approved	Denied	Continued
104 Laurel Grove	Karen Pell, Heather Lupa, Benjamin Polk and Erin Kinikin	X			
44 Chestnut Ave.	Jennifer and Peter Daly	X			
79 Shady Lane	David and Anne Ramsay	X			
39 Fernhill Ave.	The Branson School	X			
19 Oak Ave.	Meade and Terri Boutwell	X			
3 Southwood Ave.	David and Elizabeth DeRuff	X			
63 Ivy Drive	Steve Daane and Sheryl Garrett				X
23 Sir Francis Drake	Edward Dong	X			
92 Shady Lane	Steven and Valerie McKinney	X			
18 Redwood Dr.	Lisa and Michael Gorham				X

Upcoming Town Council Meeting

The next Town Council meeting will be Thursday, October 11, at 6:30 p.m. Agendas are posted in advance of the meeting on the town’s website at www.townofross.org.

The Morning After is published monthly by The Town of Ross and is written by Project Planner Christine O’Rourke and edited by Town Manager Gary Broad. It is available at Town Hall and on-line at the town’s website at www.townofross.org. The newsletter is also delivered to everyone on the town’s Information by Email list. If you’d like to receive The Morning After and other town information via email, contact Linda Lopez at llopez@townofross.org.