

THE MORNING AFTER

*Highlights from the
Ross Town Council Meeting
of September 8, 2011*

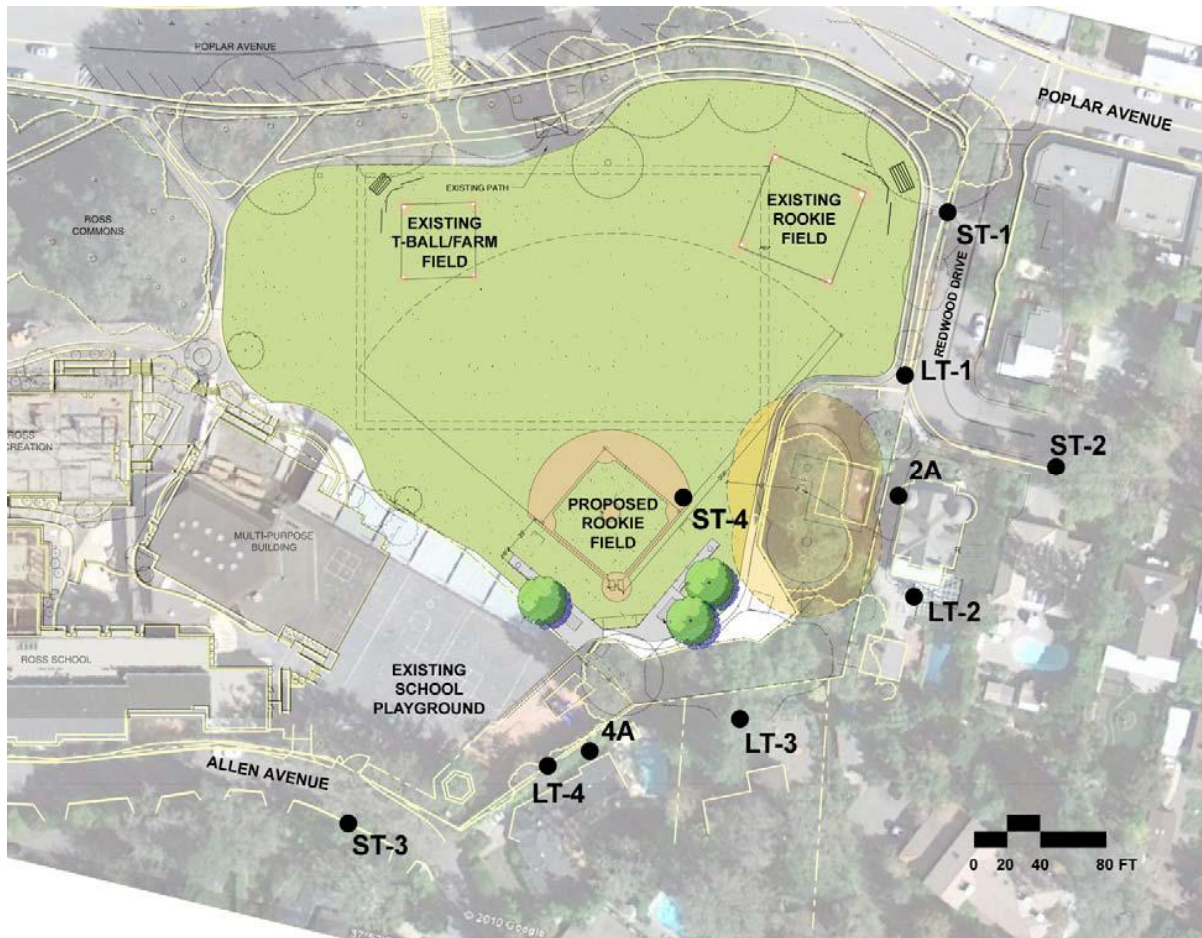
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Acoustical Study Presented for the Rookie Ball Field

The Town Council reviewed a noise study prepared for the Initial Study for relocation of the existing rookie ball field to a proposed site in the southwest corner of the Commons. Acoustical engineer Harold Goldberg from Rosen, Goldberg, Der and Lewitz, Inc. explained the parameters and conclusions of the study. To assess the noise effects of the project, the noise generated during a normal Saturday during the Little League season was examined. The noise levels expected at nearby residences were compared with the Town's standards as well as the existing noise levels to assess the potential increase in noise associated with the project.

The Town's General Plan states that the noise standard for exterior use areas, such as backyards, in residential neighborhoods is 55 decibels L_{dn} . The acoustical study showed noise from the existing rookie field in the southeast corner meets the General Plan standard, but relocating the field to the southwest corner would increase noise levels above the standard in two locations, at the 3 Allen Lane backyard and the 19 Allen Lane side yard, indicated as locations LT-3 and 4A in the figure below.



The study also determined that the relocation of the ball field would cause a significant increase in noise, measured as an increase of at least 5 decibels, at two locations – the 8 Redwood Drive back porch and the 3 Allen Lane backyard, shown as locations LT-2 and LT-3.

In order to reduce future noise levels to meet the Town's exterior noise goals and limit the potential increase in noise to a less than significant level, Mr. Goldberg said a solid 8-foot tall noise barrier could be constructed near the property lines separating the field from the nearest residences.

A number of audience members expressed concerns about the study's methodology. They questioned the use of the 55 decibels L_{dn} threshold for residences located adjacent to a school and neighborhood park. Much of this discussion centered on a General Plan chart that shows normally acceptable decibel levels of 60 L_{dn} for residential land use, schools, playgrounds and neighborhood parks. However, Town Attorney Greg Stepanicich explained that the appropriate threshold was 55 L_{dn} since this is the standard explicitly defined in General Plan Policy 5.7 for exterior residential use areas such as backyards.

Audience members questioned some of the noise measurement results, especially charts that showed noise levels higher on days and times when Little League rookie games were not in play. They were especially frustrated that the methodology doesn't take into account soccer games and other uses in the southwest corner at other times. Town Attorney Stepanicich said that the chosen methodology was deliberately very conservative and would be legally defensible if the environmental report was litigated in court.

The Council agreed to continue the discussion of the rookie ball field location until Ross School finished their construction in the spring and completed restoration of the Commons. They agreed the Commons may look very different when the fences are down, and the Council could then properly stake the alternative field locations and take a fresh look at the best location for the baseball field.



Mayor Carla Small

Mayor Carla Small's Report

Tonight, I have a special announcement. Dorothea Miehle, a 76-year resident of Ross who moved here in May of 1935, is turning 100 on September 29th. I congratulate her becoming a Ross centenarian. Happy Birthday!

This coming Saturday, September 10th from noon to 3 p.m. is our 101 Year Fire Department anniversary celebration. They are hosting a BBQ lunch, a jump house for the kids and a short presentation. No parking at the firehouse, so walk, bike or park on the Common. A great event and opportunity to meet all your fire personnel.

There has been a misperception that the Town of Ross has given Ross Common land to Ross School for the building of the new gym. The Town did authorize a slight lot line adjustment but please know that the Town of Ross actually received a net gain in the exchange. With the fencing and size of the gym, it may look like we have lost part of the Common but it is being restored. The Common should be completed around the end of September but we will have to keep the newly planted sod fenced off until it takes a firm root.

September 15th is a Special Council Meeting to discuss MEA as well as an initial discussion on shared Fire services.

Finally, the Town received a letter from San Rafael Police Chief Jeff Franzini complimenting and thanking Ross Police Chief Erik Masterson for his assistance during the recent two-day ordeal with a gunman who had barricaded himself in a room in the Extended Stay Deluxe Hotel in San Rafael and fired a gunshot out the window toward traffic on Highway 580. Chief Masterson, who previously was the Team Leader and Administrator for San Rafael's Hostage Negotiation Team, assisted in hostage negotiations.

Council Approves New Conflict of Interest Rules for Town Consultants

The Council passed a resolution designed to avoid potential conflicts of interest by prohibiting some Town consultants from working on private projects in Ross. The prohibition will affect the Town Arborist, the

Town Hydrologist, the Building Inspector, and any consultant providing advice to the Town Council or staff on buildings not constructed by the Town. In order to provide for a transition period, the restriction does not apply to any pending projects that a consultant is currently working on for a Ross business, residence, school or other public agency.

Planning and Building Fee Schedule Amended

The Council passed a resolution establishing fees for planning applications and building permits. The majority of fees remained the same, but a few were added or amended to better represent the true cost of providing the service. Fees were last set in September 2009.

The parcel slope determination fee was changed to \$150 to reflect the fact that Public Works Director and Building Official Bob Hemati will now perform parcel slope calculations in house. Previously, the slope was determined by the Town Engineer and applicants were billed for his time at cost.

Residential building record fees were changed from a flat rate of \$325 to a sliding scale that will better represent the costs of inspecting large houses and multiple units. Houses under 5,000 square feet will be charged \$375, while houses over 5,000 square feet will be charged \$575. Each additional unit will be charged \$150. The Council discussed adding a higher charge for houses over 10,000 square feet and may consider this action at a future time.

A new \$600 fee was added for applicants who request exceptions from existing development standards, such as those exceptions recently adopted by the Town Council to streamline conversions of attics and basements to finished spaces. The fee would also apply to second unit applications that seek an exception from existing development standards regulating the size, height, location and floor area of second units, as proposed in a new ordinance introduced by the Council last night.

The resolution establishes a building mechanical permit fee of \$95 and encroachment permit fees of \$95 for a one-day permit and \$250 for a permit lasting more than one day. A fire sprinkler inspection fee of \$300 was also approved.

The new fees will become effective in 60 days.

Road Closure Approved for Halloween

The Council passed a resolution enacting an annual temporary closure of Shady Lane on October 31 for Halloween. The road will be closed to vehicles between Norwood Avenue and Fernhill Avenue from 5 to 9 p.m.

New Parking Restrictions on Woodside Way

The Council adopted an ordinance limiting parking on Woodside Way at the intersection of Madrona Avenue. Beginning October 8th, parking will be prohibited on the west side of Woodside Way for 32 feet in each direction from the corner of Madrona Avenue.



Ross School Report

Ross School Board Member Robert Dickinson introduced new Ross School Superintendent/Principal Dr. Scott Mahoney. Dr. Mahoney comes from the Petaluma school district, where he served as a K-8 principal and superintendent.

Ross resident Randy Orr asked Dr. Mahoney if the school was intending to make the new multi-purpose room available to groups other than Ross Recreation, such as CYO basketball. Dr. Mahoney explained that public schools are required by law to make their spaces available to community organizations, but that the Ross School Board was aware of the community's desire to prioritize the multi-purpose room for Ross School and Ross Recreation use. For now, the multi-purpose room will not be made available to other groups. Mayor Carla Small said the Town will look into any authority it may have over the matter, such as issuing use permits.



Public Works
Director
Bob Hemati

Public Works Report

Public Works Department staff continue to meet with Ross School representatives as the Ross Common restoration project nears completion. Ross School provided the Town with plans showing impervious and pervious surface areas are within 2% of the original surface areas. Community members may view these plans at Town Hall, and Public Works Director Hemati will post information on the website. Staff is also working with PG&E and the Town Arborist to address two remaining issues with two trees on Allen Avenue.

The Laurel Grove bank stabilization and drainage project is nearly complete, but a changed condition requires some additional work. Staff is waiting for a price quote for the new work. The Corte Madera Creek left bank erosion protection project will start on Friday and should be completed within two weeks.

Design is proceeding according to schedule for the Lagunitas Road/Sir Francis Drake Boulevard intersection improvement project. Staff will meet with Marin Art & Garden Center and will then hold a public outreach meeting for the community, tentatively scheduled for the evening of October 25th.



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, 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 October Council meeting.

Address	Applicant	Approved	Denied	Continued
90 Laurel Grove Avenue	Steve and Kirsten Polsky	X		
15 Woodside Way	Susanne and Peter Chase	X		
58 Ivy Drive	Mischi a Marca and Haidee Thai			X
98 Shady Lane	Lulita and John Reed			X

Upcoming Meetings

The Town Council will hold a special meeting on Thursday, September 15, at 7 p.m. to discuss joining the Marin Energy Authority and the possibility of a Ross Fire Department merger. The Council will hold its annual Council workshop on Wednesday, September 28, from 9-2 p.m. The workshop location is yet to be determined. The next regular Town Council meeting will be held on Thursday, October 13, at 6:30 p.m.

Agendas and staff reports for all meetings 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 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.