

Cyndie Martel

From: Molly Gamble <gamblemolly1@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 8:29 PM
To: CouncilAll
Cc: Christa Johnson; info@rosspropertyowners.com; dmahoney@rossvalleyfire.org; sburdo@townofsananselmo.org
Subject: [EXTERNAL] letter
Attachments: Town Council letter 22625.pdf

To Town Council,

Please see attached letter in response to Council Member Robbin's opinion letter in the IJ.

Respectfully,

Molly Scales Gamble

February 26, 2025

To Members of the Ross Town Council,

I read Elizabeth Robbin's recent opinion letter in the Marin IJ (*Ross Station Closure Concerns are Justified*) with dismay and concern for the basic principles of Town governance. Is she speaking on behalf of the Ross Town Council? Is there an impending vote or decision that residents need to inform themselves about? Is she the only person with access to the "new information" about paramedic response time? Is she trying to mount a public backlash against the 2021 Town Council decision and instill fear that Ross residents will have to wait too long for a paramedic? Is the solution, in Council Member Robbin's mind, to restart the clock and revisit the decision to possibly build a new fire station in Ross? Since when does a Ross Town Council member singlehandedly mount a public campaign and exclude the Town's decision making process that we elected her to adhere to?

Unfortunately, the only thing we know is that Council Member Robbins has ignited confusion and anxiety among Ross residents, and apparently is working with the court of public opinion rather than with the Town Council to solve this problem, if there is one. This is not how governance works in Ross, and this is not what we elected the Town Council to do. Going forward, I hope the Town Council will follow their own recently revised guidelines about speaking with one voice, as the Council Procedures Manual states under the Communication and Representation section "Speaking for the Town."

In terms of the issue that is being raised, I am not even sure what we are talking about. Is the issue a concern about paramedic response times or scraping the 2021 Town decision in order to rebuild the fire station? Nobody knows. Regarding a potential new fire station, it is helpful to direct residents to read the staff report from March 11, 2021 to understand how and why the decision was made (Council Member Robbins does not need to read it because she was there). A six month process with multiple input meetings, a community questionnaire that showed a majority of residents would not vote for the higher cost of a bond that included a fire station, a private fundraising effort to separately fund the fire station (see my letter on page 55 of the staff report), and all of this happening during one of the worst wildfire seasons in California history. Since then, the Town has spent one year and \$150,000 on a Facilities Master Plan that does not include a fire station, with cost estimates continuing to rise and construction likely to begin in 2027.

But on second thought, let's just start over and rethink this whole thing. Meanwhile, our firefighters can stay in the same trailers they have lived in since 2005 (does anyone have a figure on how much rent that is?) and the rotting fire station may eventually cave in on itself, but hopefully the paramedic truck won't be in it. This would be an excellent way to kick this problem further down the road, just as every single Ross Town Council has done since 1980. Our public safety facilities are an embarrassment in this town, given the millions of dollars that Ross residents invest in their own houses.

Next, even though there is no impending vote or decision, it would be helpful at the next council meeting to hear directly from RVFD and county officials about paramedic response times once Ross rebuilds its public safety buildings. Misinformation is dangerous when we are talking about public safety, and I consider the RVFD representatives to be the final, authoritative word on this issue. Finally, I encourage people to read Dick Spotswood's excellent article in today's IJ, directly below Council Member Robbin's letter (*Emergency Command Center puts Marin in Good Spot*). The fact that the county has invested prescient resources in coordinated emergency response as an alternative to 800 Ross households financing a single engine fire station built around a resident volunteer model makes me sleep better at night.

Sincerely,

Molly Scales Gamble

https://www.townofrossca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/town_council/meeting/3381/11.-modernizing_town_facilities.pdf