

Cyndie Martel

From: Jessica Viripaeff <jejalulu@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 11, 2025 9:32 PM
To: CouncilAll
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ross Fire Station

Good Evening,

Last night I attended the RPOA meeting held at the Town Hall to discuss the pending closure of the Ross Fire Department.

Thank you for being there and presenting the information. It was helpful to hear the history of how and why the Town of Ross is in this current position. I believe each of you has done quite a bit of work to present us with what you believe to be the best options for fire and ambulance. I fear we may not have all the information with shifting times and global warming. I like that everyone seems open to finding a solution, though.

I was touched and inspired by many of the stories of those in attendance.

These are my biggest takeaways:

I believe we must save our fire department in order to continue to be able to reliably find fire insurance. My husband and family have lived on Upper Road for four years. Unlike when we moved in, now there is only one company out of Minnesota that will continue to offer us fire insurance (as we have a wooded hillside acre lot). We view our home as the absolute center of our family life and as a savings for our children to inherit after we are gone. I can't think of anyone who would be comfortable throwing away their entire property value if we aren't able to insure our homes. This does feel like a legitimate risk if we no longer have a fire station given our inland tree filled topography (versus Belvedere near the water).

I heard a heartbreaking firsthand account of a lifelong resident of the Palisades who saw the small brush fire break out near a trail behind his home. He saw the helicopters gradually containing what easily could have been completely contained with 20 more minutes of active treatment by the fire department. He saw said helicopters fly away as they were called to the Altadena fire. An hour later he evacuated his home and saw his and his parents' nearby home lost forever. Neither family had fire insurance and lost literally everything. What if that were our community? It isn't a risk I think any of us would want to take.

There are endless accounts nearby in Northern California and beyond. I am certain that it is not **if**, but **when** the big fire comes for Marin. I want us to truly be prepared and understand that you all don't love the idea of giving up our fire department either. I really enjoyed the solutions presented by the community outlining ideas to privately fund a fire station and also for creating a fire foundation to be able to pay for the annual expenses to run said Ross Fire Station. If those could be made 5013C possible donations I think there would be a huge response.

It was helpful to learn about the regional coverage of the Ross Valley Fire Department. I agreed with the meeting attendees and their opinion that there is a prejudice against Ross. We lived in Kentfield for three years prior to Ross, and San Francisco for fifteen years prior to that. I have heard it from all over the Bay and still wanted to live in this gorgeous town with the wonderful public school both my kids attend. I love

seeing Chief Pata and the other officers watching out for us each day. I feel quite safe here and treasure that freedom it allows each of us. I grew up in the East Bay and sadly had nowhere near the level of actual or perceived safety. It is a gift! We are beyond lucky and I can't imagine our town without the Ross specific police team (and their hot cocoa!)

I'd love to extend that feeling of protection to the fire station. It feels like this is a crossroads we can still come back from. That way, in the future, we aren't watching the firefighters who started fighting Ross fires head to other areas with larger populations to fight a new fire, and we lose our homes and the memories in them.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Best wishes,
Jessica Viripaeff