

THE MORNING AFTER

TOWN OF ROSS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Mayor's Corner



Katie Hoertkorn

The Town of Ross Fee Study has been completed and Council voted on the new fee schedule which will take effect June 13th. The report is the result of a very vigorous, intensive activity based costing study. Every cost was analyzed, and activities were measured for the actual time it takes to complete a task. As we suspected, some fees will decrease, some will increase, and some will remain the same. You can now be assured that these fees actually reflect the time and cost to complete the actual task. It has always been our intent that property taxes should not be used for building and planning activities and that building and planning fees should reflect the actual cost.

Our annual audit was just completed as

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Introducing - The Ross Preschool!



This year, Ross Recreation Preschool at St. John's celebrates its 40th year of serving Ross residents and the greater community. Some very exciting things have been happening at the school during the past year! To celebrate and to better reflect the school's long-running tradition of preparing the littlest Ross area residents for Kindergarten, we are excited to announce that our school is changing its name to The Ross Preschool. We have a fresh new logo and a new website at www.therosspreschool.org.

We expanded from one mixed-age classroom into two classrooms, which provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum for their respective age groups. The separation allows for a more focused learning environment for older students in order to prepare them for Kindergarten. The school's outdoor play area was also revamped to better reflect the school's collaborative play, nature-oriented philosophy. Natural elements such as logs for hopping,



teepees for gathering, wooden tables for discovering, tree slices for building, and pebble boxes for digging were installed in the play area. In addition, we have outdoor art panels and are starting an edible garden in raised wooden planter boxes. Together, these elements comprise an outdoor classroom, which encourages collaborative play and continually evolves as we add more elements and change with the seasons.



Through a hands-on, play-based, nature-oriented approach, the school provides a nurturing environment for children which promotes active exploration in all areas of a child's development: emotional, social, intellectual and physical. In a play-based program, children are given an opportunity to develop their problem solving, negotiating and communicating skills at their own pace. They experience friendships, learn techniques for getting along with others and play cooperatively. Teachers facilitate learning by giving children opportunities to make choices about which activities and materials they will use and explore. With all of these exciting changes taking place, it's a great time to be a "Little Bear" at The Ross Preschool! ■



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well, and the Town's audit showed that our finances are healthy, a significant improvement over the past four years. However, we face the same issues as every town across America, specifically regarding retirement, health care, and costs. Our revenues are forecast to rise 3% next year, but so do our costs. For the first time this year, as required by new state law, the audit calls out our CalPERS unfunded obligations (i.e. retirement costs), which for Ross are \$3.5M. The transparency is positive in that government entities now have to acknowledge these obligations as it may help force change at the state level. It is very clear from the audit how essential our Public Safety Tax has been. The Public Safety Tax substantially helps us offset our safety costs for Fire and Police, which are \$3.2M, and account for almost 50% of our expenses. Without the additional revenues from the Public Safety tax, the Town would have to significantly reduce safety and other services. We work very hard to consistently monitor and controls costs. Ross has the leanest staff of any government entity in Marin. Thank you for your support for the Public Safety Tax, which we anticipate renewing this fall.



We are now moving into a beautiful spring, and the Farm Stand will again be on the Commons every Thursday afternoon starting May 5th. Stop by and enjoy the wide variety of organic produce!

I will be in front of the Ross Post Office, May 11th from 1:30-2:30 p.m., just before next month's Council meeting. I look forward to hearing any of your concerns or questions, or simply having the opportunity to meet you. ■

Town Adopts New Fee Schedule

The Council adopted a Resolution amending the schedule of fees and charges for the Town of Ross, which will become effective June 13, 2016. The Town of Ross like most municipalities in California, charges fees for services rendered to the public. These fees are charged to cover the cost of providing the service.

The goal of the Town is to establish fees at the appropriate level so we are neither under-collecting or over-collecting fees. Given that processes, structures, staff and services being provided change over time, it is natural that the cost of providing services will change with some going up and some going down, and often at different rates of change. The Council had requested the Town fees be evaluated and updated on a periodic basis to incorporate the current cost of providing services. The last major fee updates took place December 2012 and January 2013.

The Town hired NBS to perform a comprehensive fee study analysis of the Town's user and regulatory fees for Administration, Building, Planning, Police, and Public Works departments. California cities and towns are granted the authority to impose user and regulatory fees for services and activities they provide through provi-

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June 2016 Council Election Cancelled



The filing period for three open Council seats closed on March 11th, and only three individuals filed nomination papers during that time. A special Council meeting was held on March 21st to appoint the three nominees who filed papers to run for Council. Elizabeth Brekhus, Katie Hoertkorn and Beach Kuhl were each appointed to a second 4-year term on Council.

Per the Elections Code, when the number of Council seats open are matched by the number of persons filing for office, the Council has the option of 1) appointing the nominees and cancelling the election; or 2) holding the election. The Council chose to cancel the June election and save on election costs.

The three appointees will begin their second 4-year term on the Council in July.

Good Neighbor Reminder



**Sign, Sign,
Everywhere a
Sign...**



With two impending elections this year in June and November, many residents have been inquiring about what the Town's regulations are regarding the posting of signs. The Town's zoning regulations allow for limited temporary signs ([Municipal Code 18.40.115](#)). Temporary political signs are permitted provided the signs advertise an election (including advertising a candidate, an issue, a measure, or election headquarters). They can only be posted for a maximum duration of 60 days, cannot be placed on any public property, including landscaped areas and parks, and are no larger than 10 square feet in size. Additionally, a property owner may only display signs that do not exceed 80 square feet in aggregate. All political signs must be removed within 10 days after the election.

Other permitted temporary signs are advertising the sale or rental of real estate and temporary directional A-frame signs. Real estate or rental signs are limited to one square foot of sign area and the temporary directional A-frame signs may not exceed 6 square ft. in size (per side), may be installed 2 hours before the event, and in no case be in place for more than 12 hours. The directional signs are also permitted in every zoning district, provided the activity which the sign promotes is a Town Event or Special Community Event and there are no balloons tied to the sign. If the directional sign is located within a public right-of-way, an encroachment permit must be issued by the Town's Public Works Department.

Finally, a school, church, religious institution, non-profit social and recreational club, or residential care facility located in a residential zoning district, may post temporary banner signs for special events up to six times per year ([Municipal Code 18.16.100](#)). The temporary event sign is permitted to be displayed for up to 30 days prior to a special event, shall not exceed 28 square feet, shall not be illuminated, and shall be removed within one day following the event.

If you are thinking of posting a temporary sign that is not listed above, then chances are the sign is not permitted. Be sure to check with the Planning Department at (415) 453-1453 ext. 121.

PUBLIC SAFETY



As part of the ongoing effort to reduce crime in Ross, staff has been reviewing a variety of different crime preventive options. Video monitoring at private residences is one of the most practical preventive measures for the Town. Security monitoring is effective and helped solve two recent burglaries with fixed security cameras capturing images of the suspects at Branson School and a Kentfield residence.

The Council approved a pilot program to incentivize residents who currently have home security video systems or will be installing a new system. The program is available to provide an incentive grant to residents of 50% towards the purchase of an additional camera that views the street fronting their residence up to a maximum of \$500. Residents would apply to the Town for a grant to subsidize one camera per residence. The camera placement must meet the needs of the Police Department in that 1) it must view out to the street; and 2) the residence agrees to make the video available to the Police Department upon request for investigation of a crime. This pilot program is an addition to our recent program that residents register their video system with the Police Department to assist in future crime investigations. We thank you for your support in keeping Ross a safe community. ■

Farmers Market Returns in May

The Marin Community Farm Stand (MCFS) will begin its second year on the Ross Common beginning Thursday, May 5th. The seasonal farmers market will run every Thursday, from 11:00 am to 7:30 pm through October.



The Farm Stand features a wide selection of local, seasonal organic produce, fresh meat and fish, desserts, and breads, as well as many other items from local artisans.

The MCFS has been in Marin County since 2003. They currently operate a seasonal market in San Anselmo, and a permanent market in Forest Knolls Thursday thru Monday. To sign up for their weekly e-newsletter, go to <http://www.communityfarmstands.com/>.



Town Adopts New Fee Schedule

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sions of the State Constitution. These fees may not exceed the estimated reasonable cost to the town for providing the government service or benefit, or performing the regulatory activity.

NBS conducted a detailed, comprehensive cost of service analysis to derive the fee levels. Nearly all of the fees under review in the fee study require specific actions on the part of the Town staff and contractors to provide the service or conduct the activity. The fee development process included an analysis of all the time and effort to review, approve, provide and inspect, as applicable, all the work to complete the particular service requested from each of the departments. In the process of the fee review, staff and NBS had considerable discussions on the best basis of charging some fees with the goals of simplifying the fee schedule where possible for the customer and staff. The updated fee schedule results in some fees being increased, some decreased, and some unchanged.

You can view the full [Staff Report and Fee Schedule](#) on the Town's website. ■

RECREATION NEWS

Spring programs are underway and there are a few openings in selected programs. The Ross Rec spring lacrosse practices have begun and games will begin on April 30th.



Summer program registration is on line at www.rossrecreation.org.

Our popular Adventure, Top Gun, and Sporty Girl Camps are back and registrations are currently being accepted. Don't miss out and register early!

New offerings for the summer program include Lego robotics, remote control car mechanics, and Rainbow Chefs cooking classes.



19th Biennial Ross Garden Tour Saturday, May 7, 2016 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Once again our community opens its gardens to visitors far and wide for the 19th Biennial Beyond the Garden Gate Tour.

Advance tickets - \$50 at www.rossgardentour.org, and \$60 day of the event.

Showcasing five extraordinarily unique and exquisite gardens of Ross, this 2016 tour is sure to delight garden enthusiasts of all kinds. Enjoy lunch and refreshments at the Garden Tour Marketplace on Ross Com-

mon, along with an array of local merchants for your shopping pleasure.

Beyond the Garden Gate is a biennial fundraiser for the Fine Arts programs at the Ross School. For more information or to preview this year's gardens, go to www.rossgardentour.org.

ROSS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL 2016

Apr 14	6:00	pm	Council Meeting, Town Hall
Apr 26	7:00	pm	Advisory Design Review Group Meeting, Town Hall
Apr 27	9:00	am	Special Council Meeting Annual Budget Workshop, MAGC, Room E120

MAY 2016

May 7	9:00	am	Ross Garden Tour, Ross Common
May 10	6:00	pm	Recreation Advisory Committee Meeting, Town Hall
May 12	6:00	pm	Council Meeting, Town Hall
May 24	7:00	pm	Advisory Design Review Group Meeting, Town Hall
May 30	--	--	Town Hall offices closed Memorial Day

JUNE 2016

June 8*	6:00	pm	Council Meeting, Town Hall <i>*note date change</i>
June 28	7:00	pm	Advisory Design Review Group Meeting, Town Hall

RECURRING EVENTS

Thursdays, May - October Ross Farm Stand, 11:00 am - 7:30 pm, Ross Common - starts May 5th

CONTACT US

Administration	415.453.1453 x105	Public Works	415.453.1453 x106
Building	415.453.1453 x106	Recreation	415.453.6020
Planning	415.453.1453 x121	Ross Valley Fire	415.258.4686
Police	415.453.1453, Option 2	Town Manager	415.453.1453 x107

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