

THE MORNING AFTER

TOWN OF ROSS NEWSLETTER

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Mayor's Corner



Mayor Elizabeth Brekhuis

It may be a sign that you are ready to leave the Council when you are struggling as hard as I was in writing this Mayor's report.

First, I entered some of the items on our agenda, and that we have focused on of late, into chatgpt and got a rather impressive report that said nothing but sounded like something. I felt guilty about turning it in and I was not sure I could read it with a straight face.

Then, I went back and read prior Mayor reports I had done – I did 3 stints as Mayor so I had a good number of reports to look at. What struck me is that the more things change in Ross, the more they stay the same. I probably could have recycled the majority of those reports and no one would have noticed.

The exception to that was my reports when Covid struck. I actually forgot that I was mayor when it began and honestly, it made me a little sad for our collective isolation.

Next I turned to staff, and asked staff what they thought I should write about. Staff helpfully suggested I could report on what I will do with my time after I leave the Council, such as whether I would serve on the grand jury or

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Town of Ross MEASURE E

Information about the Upcoming Municipal Election and Measure E



Q: What is Measure E?

A: On October 12, 2023, the Ross Town Council voted unanimously to place Measure E, a renewal of Ross' Public Safety Parcel Tax, on the March 5, 2024 ballot.

Q: Is Measure E a new tax?

A: No. The parcel tax was last renewed by Ross residents in 2016.

Q: What services does Measure E support?

A: The Public Safety Parcel Tax funds police and fire department services.

Q: How much does Measure E cost?

A: Measure E continues the current \$1201.50 parcel tax rate that raises approximately \$1million a year to fund police and fire department services. Measure E continues the Town's current parcel tax for ten years and limits annual increases to the Consumer Price Index.

Q: How can I learn more?

A: For additional information visit townofross.org/MeasureE. March 5, 2024 is also the Town's Municipal Election, including Town Council races. For voting information visit marincounty.org/depts/rv.

Ways to Vote in the March 5 Election

- ⇒ All active registered voters will be mailed a vote-by-mail ballot, starting February 5, 2024.
- ⇒ Ballots can be returned by mail, into an Official Drop Box, or to a Vote Center.
- ⇒ Mail-in ballots must be postmarked by March 5 and received by the Elections Office by March 12.
- ⇒ You may vote in person at any one of the 21 Marin Vote Centers. Check online (link below) for days and hours that Vote Centers are open. All Vote Centers are open March 2 to 5. Three are open February 24 to March 5. The Marin County Elections Department Vote Center in San Rafael is open weekdays from February 5 to March 5 and weekends February 24-25 and March 2-3.

[Link for the locations and hours of the 21 Vote Centers in Marin County](#)

[Link for the location of the 24-hour Drop Boxes](#)

Please note: There are no Drop Boxes or Vote Centers in Ross.



volunteer with the elderly. I appreciated the prompt, but I have to confess, I am looking forward to not volunteering for a while. I will be working with the elderly, but my work will consist of visiting with my elderly folks in the Winship Park neighborhood. And truth be told, I don't have a lot of time because I have a full time plus law practice and even with 2 of my 3 kids at college, they still seem to keep me quite busy. Just this week, my oldest fostered a dog at her college apartment, in violation of her lease, and the dog somehow broke out of its cage and turned on the gas. A 21-year-old does not instinctively know what to do in this situation.

I am looking forward to stepping back from the Council but staying engaged with friends and neighbors, including attending community events. I just signed up for the Ross Auxiliary Winter Dinner – now in the Spring – and hope to see you there.

The brief Council update is that we have 3 planning items to consider, a Housing Element item related to the Branson School, and various budget and investment reports. We also are considering a budget increase of \$25,000 for a cultural resource reporting for the Winship Bridge replacement project related to the discovery of evidence of a Native American community that lived and thrived in the vicinity of the bridge. And last, the Council is proposing to renew the terms of the advisory review board consisting of members Josefa Buckingham, Laura Dewar, Mark Fritts, Stephen Sutro, and Mark Kruttschnitt, whose service is invaluable to the Council.

~~Mayor Elizabeth Brekhus

e-BIKES, Pedestrians and Automotive Safety for our Community

An e-Bike is a motorized, or power assisted bicycle. What started as a brilliant idea for transportation in the 1890's, has become a hot topic in Marin County 134 years later.

You may have noticed more electronically powered bicycles on our streets. They can be a fun form of alternate transportation, but with power assisted propulsion, these vehicles can reach speeds that are unsafe, even for experienced riders.

Some e-Bikes are electric powered motorcycles in disguise. They can be capable of speeds exceeding 28 miles per hour. The Ross Police Department (RPD) is committed to healthy and safe alternatives to driving, but our observation is that some of our e-Bike and e-Scooter riders are not obeying the rules of the road. Those rules are designed to provide safety for all people who use our roads and sidewalks, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and cars.

Last year, RPD reached out to our families with the help of our schools, because of the increase of e-Bikes and e-Scooters traveling on our roads. Students were riding to school, and some were passing through-town toward the high schools. Many people are not aware that the State has regulations in place for e-Bikes. There are three classifications with specific regulations for each. Two of three classifications do not allow e-Bike use unless you are at least 16 years old and have a driver's license.

Last year and again this school year the RPD collaborated with Ross School and Superintendent Rice by sending home literature and email information, sharing the types and classifications of e-Bikes. The RPD also decided to get buy-in from students by having them participate in an education program to advance the message about safety and rules of the road. One of our officers was a guest star in a video created by the students to show in their classes.

We followed up the education project with a reward-based program to continue to educate our riders. The program consisted of a Green colored card and an Orange colored card that had some constructive outcomes. A Crossing Guard or Officer would issue a green card to riders who were demonstrating safe riding. When they received the card, the student turned it in to their teacher, who in turn submitted it to RPD for recognition. Consistent safe riders were invited to pizza with the Police and Chief at the Police Station as a reward. Orange cards were designed to change the behavior of less safe riders. Answering safety questions and correcting unsafe riding habits made them eligible to turn in their orange card for a green one and receive recognition.

The program had an impact. Students went out of their way to demonstrate good riding behavior and the cards became "collectable" with some riders! This would not have been possible without our partners at The Ross School, supported by the kids and their parents.

For the 2023/2024 school year the RPD and the schools are rolling out a new initiative to change riding behavior, focused on our e-Bike and traditionally powered bike riders. The focus is on safely sharing the road. A major component for education and enforcement will be to make sure our kids are riding lawful e-Bikes, safely. The intent is to stop the unlawful riding of higher-powered e-Bikes to and from school while continuing to educate parents on the types of e-Bike classifications and rules associated with each. Traditional bike riders will also notice an increase in enforcement to change unsafe riding habits.



Chief Pata



PLANNING RESULTS

The Town Council took the following action on planning applications at the February 15, 2024 Council meeting. Staff reports and video for the meeting can be found on the Town's February 15 website page. The minutes for the meeting will be posted on this page after adoption by the Council.

Address: 18 Canyon Road
Applicant: Robert & Sandra Ludlow
Council Action: Approved
Vote (for/against/abstain): 5-0-0

Address: 15 Skyland Way
Applicant: Pedersen Associates, Kai Okada
Council Action: Approved
Vote (for/against/abstain): 5-0-0



Retiring Council Member Reception



Thursday, April 4, 2024, 5:00pm in front of Ross Town Hall.

Please join us to celebrate 12 years of service on the Ross Town Council for Beach Kuhl and Elizabeth Brekhus!

All are welcome! Light refreshments will be served.



You're Invited...

A Verdant Affair: An Evening in Green!
Spring Dinner on April 20, 2024

5pm Cocktails
7pm Dinner

[\(Purchase Tickets Here\)](#)



Get Wildfire Ready

Start your year with expert tips and guidance to prepare for wildfire! Sign up for the Fire Safe Marin monthly newsletter to keep your home, family, and neighborhood safe. [Click here!](#)



Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority's Significant Accomplishments

At its January Board meeting, MWPA presented its third [Annual Report](#) for fiscal year 2022-23. The Town of Ross is a member of the MWPA, along with 16 other Marin jurisdictions. Ross Town Manager Christa Johnson serves on the Operations Committee; Council member Julie McMillan has served as the Ross liaison since its 2020 inception and is currently Board President.

MWPA highlights in FY2022-23 include:

- ◆ **Vegetation Management:** 6,316 acres of shaded fuel breaks and prescribed herbivory, 567 miles of roadside evacuation route improvements, and 16 miles of fire road maintenance were completed, underway, or ready to implement by the end of FY 2022-23. MWPA completed planning for the 3,463-acre Greater Novato Shaded Fuel Break Project.
- ◆ **Detection, Alert, and Evacuation:** The Evacuation/Ingress/Egress Risk Assessment project completed a literature and data review, and modeled wildfire, communications, and traffic to create detailed fire model maps for five test areas of Marin County.
- ◆ **Grant Programs:** \$733,000 MWPA grant funds were distributed to residents to address 563 unique defensible space and 126 unique home hardening improvements.
- ◆ **Public Outreach and Education:** Fire Safe Marin (FSM) and MWPA both initiated different surveys to gather quantitative baseline data to guide public outreach strategies. FSM also developed an extraordinary amount of content to educate Marin residents about preparing for and adapting to wildfire. <https://firesafemarin.org/#gsc.tab=0>
- ◆ **Fire Resistant Homes:** In FY 2022-23, 30,884 homes were evaluated during the Defensible Space and Home Hardening evaluations, providing 6,750 hours of one-on-one community engagement. Chipper Days resulted in 10,502 cubic yards of vegetation removed during 3,307 pickups. MWPA collaborated with the Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS) on "Wildfire Prepared Home"™ designations that allows California homeowners to show their insurance companies that they've taken action to reduce their home's wildfire risk.

MWPA Projects in Ross: In FY 2023-24, \$112,786 of MWPA funds are being used in Ross for the Defensible Space Inspection & Evaluation Program and the Invasive Vegetation Treatment Program. See page 45 of the 2023/2024 MWPA Work Plan [here](#).



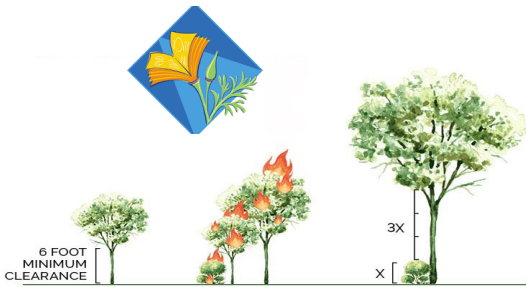


Fire-Smart Tips from the UC Master Gardeners

FEBRUARY: Spacing of Trees and Shrubs for fire safety

- ◆ Consider creating separation by increasing the spacing between tree canopies while considering flat vs sloped terrain.
- ◆ Maintain vertical clearance of at least 3X the shrub's height between the tops of shrubs and the bottom of the tree canopy. This can be done by pruning the shrub down, or pruning smaller, easily ignitable tree branches up, or both.
- ◆ Remove dead trees
- ◆ Plant spacing, size control, and maintenance are more important than the type of plant

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON FIRE-SMART LANDSCAPING, VISIT [UC MARIN MASTER GARDENER WEBSITE](http://ucmarinmastergardener.com).



Here are ways older people can connect with others and feel useful and appreciated again.

1. Smile, even if it feels hard. ...
2. Invite friends for tea. ...
3. Keep in touch by phone. ...
4. Learn to love computers. ...
5. Get involved in local community activities. ...
6. Fill your diary. ...
7. Get out and about. ...
8. Help others.

Ross Recreation

Register Now!

Spring class registration is open for youth and adults!

Summer registration will open
Tuesday, February 27th at 12:00pm.

rossrecreation.org

rossrecreation.org



We Are HIRING

P/T RECREATION INSTRUCTORS!

Part-time Afterschool Youth Recreation Instructors for general afterschool, K-8 Sports, Arts, Music classes, and more!

Immediate openings available.

Scan QR code to learn more and apply!



rossrec@rossrecreation.org

415-453-6020

9 Lagunitas Rd, Ross CA 94957



ROSS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY 2024

Feb 19 All Day President's Day Holiday (Town offices closed)

MARCH 2024

Mar 11 7:00 pm Ross Property Owners Association, Town Hall
Mar 14 6:00 pm Town Council Meeting (Town Hall & Zoom)
Mar 19 6:00 pm Advisory Design Review Group Meeting (Town Hall & Zoom)

APRIL 2024

Apr 4 5:00 pm Reception for Retiring Council Members. All are Welcome. (Town Hall)
Apr 4 6:00 pm Town Council Meeting (Town Hall & Zoom)
Apr 8 7:00 pm Ross Property Owners Association, Town Hall
Apr 16 6:00 pm Advisory Design Review Group Meeting (Town Hall & Zoom)
Apr 19 4:30 pm Live on the Common
Apr 25 9:00 am Town Council Annual Special Meeting-Budget Workshop

MAY 2024

May 2 6:00 pm Town Council Meeting (Town Hall & Zoom)
May 13 7:00 pm Ross Property Owners Association, Town Hall
May 21 6:00 pm Advisory Design Review Group Meeting (Town Hall & Zoom)

CONTACT US

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Building Department	415-453-1453 x106	Public Works Director	415-453-1453 x115
- breher@townofross.org		- rsimonitch@townofross.org	
Bldg Inspection Hotline	415-453-1453 x170	Recreation Department	415-453-6020
- erobbe@townofross.org		- rossrec@rossrecreation.org	
Planning/Bldg Director	415-453-1453 x121	Ross Valley Fire Dept	415-258-4686
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Visit us at www.townofross.org



We welcome suggestions for future issues. Email cmartel@townofross.org

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