

# THE MORNING AFTER

## TOWN OF ROSS NEWSLETTER

Volume 14 | Issue 12 | December 2020

### Mayor's Corner



Julie McMillan  
Mayor

The holidays are here and a new year is around the corner. Everyone has had an extraordinary 2020, with COVID-19, a recession, racial justice issues, wildfires, climate change, and now another Stay Home Order. It's hard to believe that the Town Council has not met in person for more than nine months, and we truly miss seeing our colleagues, staff and residents. Despite these challenges, our Town continues to move forward. This year we took the following actions: 1) COVID-19 pandemic Health Order measures to keep the community safe and assist business and school operations; 2) Participated in and supported the start-up of the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority; 3) Approved the Winship Bridge

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### Community Questionnaire Seeks Input



Have you completed the Ross Town facilities community questionnaire? The Town needs your feedback. Our public safety building which was originally constructed in 1927 is physically and functionally obsolete, with extensive structural deficiencies, and is not compliant with Essential Service Act requirements for public safety buildings. Decisions needs to be made on how best to modernize the Town's facilities and we are seeking input from residents. Please complete our brief online questionnaire using the following link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/rosspublicsafety>

The questionnaire should take less than 5 minutes to complete and responses will be accepted through December 23, 2020. The purpose of the questionnaire is to inform the Town Council as it considers the Town facilities modernization project and determines its scope early next year as part of the public planning process. Thank you very much for your participation!

### New COVID-19 Stay Home Order

With COVID cases continuing to spike, the County's new health order that went into effect December 8th orders Bay Area residents to stay at home as much as possible and limit mixing with other households. This is especially hard now due to the holidays in a year that has already been extremely challenging for everyone. We look forward to a time when things return to some kind of normalcy. Please continue to follow the health order and stay safe during the holidays.

With the new Order, more restrictions have been put in place until January 4, 2021, such as retail operations reduced to 20% capacity, and restaurants offering only take-out. A number of business sectors were ordered to close such as gyms, hair salons and barbershops, wineries, bars, movie theatres, and amusement parks. Playgrounds are now allowed to remain open to facilitate physically distanced personal health and wellness through outdoor exercise. To see the full list of restrictions, go to <https://coronavirus.marinhhs.org/covid-19-status-update-12082020>.



Replacement mitigated negative declaration; 4) Adopted the West Ross Undergrounding Utility District #1 boundary map and began the engineering work; 5) Provided input on the Corte Madera Creek Flood Risk Management Project; 6) Prepared for PG&E power shutdowns, including adopting a policy on generators; 7) Maintained a balanced budget in challenging times, while providing significant funding for current and future capital improvements; 8) Rehabilitated Bolinas Avenue and Thomas Court streets; 9) Resurfaced the Frederick Allen Park tennis courts; 10) Completed landscape improvements to the 6 Redwood site, connecting it to the Common for public use, and added picnic tables along Redwood Drive; 11) Continued discussions on how best to modernize Town facilities for fire, police, paramedics and administrative staff (**Thank you for returning your facilities questionnaire by December 23: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/rosspublicsafety>**); and 12) Continued addressing climate change.

Next year promises to be just as busy. In early 2021, items on our agenda include: 1) Town facilities: We will determine which facilities to rebuild; 2) Sir Francis Drake Boulevard: Along with other jurisdictions, we will decide whether to rename the street; and 3) Ross Common Landscaping Master Plan: We will consider new design concepts.

Finally, during this unparalleled season, generous groups in Town are helping those in need:

1. In partnership with the Ross Auxiliary, RPOA is supporting Adopt A Family of Marin. To assist, visit [adoptfamily.org](http://adoptfamily.org).
2. Our local Girl Scout Troop 10926 is sponsoring a food drive to donate 5,000 healthy meals to hungry Marin families. If you'd like to help, visit [Troop 10926 Food Drive](#).



Best wishes to everyone for safe holidays, and a better new year! ■

### Ross Police Chief to Retire



Erik Masterson  
Police Chief

Police Chief Erik Masterson has announced his plans to retire in March/April 2021. Chief Masterson's distinguished career has spanned over four decades in law enforcement with 30 years with the City of San Rafael, 1.5 years in the Town of San Anselmo, and the last 10 years with the Ross Police Department as

Police Chief. During his tenure, Chief Masterson has led the department with impeccable character and integrity, the highest standards of excellence, and a deep commitment to providing effective community policing to ensure Ross remains one of the nation's safest. Always approachable, Chief Masterson's generous spirit and calm demeanor, and his willingness to engage and interact with the community, have been the perfect fit for Ross. He will be very hard to replace and greatly missed!

The Town has begun its recruitment process for the new Chief of Police, and hopes to begin interviews early next year.

### Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority Update



Mark Brown  
Executive Officer

Mark Brown was introduced at the December Council meeting as the new Executive Officer of the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA). Mr. Brown started his career in the fire service in 1986 and was hired at the Marin County Fire Department in 1991 as a Firefighter/Paramedic. He retired as the

Deputy Fire Chief in order to transition into the role of Executive Officer for the MWPA.

The MWPA was funded through Measure C that was passed by the voters of Marin County on March 3, 2020. Measure C has allowed MWPA to considerably expand prevention efforts around wildfire protection. This includes providing on-site evaluations to property owners. Beginning in May this year, MWPA dispatched nearly 20 seasonal employees to meet with homeowners and assist them in creating adequate defensible space around their home and ways to "harden" the home to protect from ember showers.

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# PLANNING RESULTS

The Town Council took the following action on planning applications at the December Council meeting. Staff reports and video for the meeting can be found on the Town's website [December 10th](#) meeting page. The minutes for this meeting will be posted after adoption by the Council at the January 14, 2021 Council meeting.

**Address:** 1 East Road  
**Owner:** Charlene Kodimer  
**Council Action:** Approved  
**Vote (for/against/abstain):** 5-0-0

**Address:** 114 Winding Way  
**Owner:** Jane & Lee Gammill  
**Council Action:** Approved  
**Vote (for/against/abstain):** 5-0-0

# MWPA

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To date, the following projects have been completed or are currently in the works throughout the County:

**Vegetation Management:** includes 3 Chipper Days held in Ross.

**Evacuation Route Clearing:** Baywood, Wellington, Madera, Crest completed, and evacuation clearing work currently occurring on Upper Road, Woodhaven, and early next year on Upper Road West.

**Evacuation Planning/Improvements:** Currently drafting a Request for Proposals for an Evacuation Route Study; Evacuation Route Maps for the community - a future project for MWPA to round out the entire county.

**Notification Systems Improvements:** 1,000 NOAA Weather Radios distributed throughout Marin.

**Public Education:** 7 Webinars with 6,075 people in attendance; 4

Informational newsletters sent to 4,500 subscribers; 102,000 FireSafe Marin website visitors (87% are new visits); Educational materials distributed (Wildfire Preparedness Brochure, Evacuation Checklist, Firewise Door Hangers); 15 educational videos completed.

**Defensible Space Evaluations:** 11,929 Defensible Space Evaluations were conducted countywide, including 474 in Ross.

The primary goals of the MWPA are to: 1) Protect lives; 2) Protect homes and structures from loss; and 3) Create a landscape that allows for lower intensity fire. Protecting people's lives focuses on a "house out" approach, meaning we are placing considerable emphasis on homes being a defensible place in a wildfire, and improving evacuation routes to ensure residents can rapidly and orderly evacuate in the event of a wildfire. This year, MPWA has focused efforts on evacuation routes in some of the town's most vulnerable hillside areas. ■



## Holiday Closure for Town Hall Offices

Though Town Hall offices have remained closed to the public during the pandemic, staff have been diligently working in house (with COVID protocols in place) since last April. Staff in the offices of Administration, Building, Public Works, Planning, and Recreation will be taking a break for the holidays **December 24th through January 1, 2021**. If you have business needs with these departments, please contact them before or after the closure. Police and Ross Valley Fire will remain open 24/7.

During the closure if you need an Encroachment Permit, please email [public-works@townofross.org](mailto:public-works@townofross.org). To schedule a Building Inspection during the closure, contact Building Inspector Eric Robbe, at (415) 453-1453 ext. 170.

Staff will be back in the office on Monday, January 4th. We wish everyone happy holidays and hope for a better 2021!



## Right Plant, Right Place

UC Marin Master Gardeners always say to plant the “right plant in the right place” as a formula for success. In a fire-smart landscape there are no fire resistant plants, since all plants can burn. Plants should be water wise and ecologically sound, well maintained and in good health. Add proper irrigation and maintenance, and keep them free of dead material and fallen leaves.



- For easy maintenance and water savings, a good choice are California natives.
- Choose pollinator-friendly, summer dry and winter wet plants for our Marin Mediterranean climate.
- Create a mosaic, a patchwork of plants within the garden.
- Ensure the separation of shrubby bushes, perennials and groundcovers using the right mulch, rock or pavers.
- Ensure fire-smart spacing of shrubby bushes by regularly pruning

A fire-smart landscape can preserve habitat, provide pollinator corridors and enhance your home. Questions about creating a fire-smart landscape? Visit [http://marinmg.ucanr.edu/Fire-smart\\_Landscaping/](http://marinmg.ucanr.edu/Fire-smart_Landscaping/).

## WinterFest December 12 Cancelled

The WinterFest event, sponsored by Ross Auxiliary, has been cancelled due to the new Stay Home Order. But don't fret - the Ross Auxiliary has come up with some creative and festive ways to celebrate together (yet apart), including Santa's Mailbox which can be found in front of the Post Office. Please visit <https://www.rossauxiliary.com/events/winterfest> to find out more details on Santa's Mailbox and other family friendly activities you can partake in (safely) during the holidays.



## RECREATION NEWS

We would like to begin by thanking and acknowledging the care, commitment and perseverance that all of families have shown over the past 9+ months for their children and this community. Together, we have maintained a safe place for children and adults to come and have time with their peers, move their bodies and breathe the fresh air.



A note on the new Stay Home Order: all of our youth sports programs are allowed to continue running as long as they are held outdoors. Also, the tennis and paddle ball courts will remain open during the Stay Home order with all COVID restrictions and guidelines in place.

There are still spaces in our in-person Holiday camp running 12/21-12/24 & 12/28 – 12/31 (9am-1pm) with Holly Salamun. Depending on the weather, we will either have this at Phoenix Lake or on the Ross School campus.



We also have a couple of virtual programs that will be offered this holiday season. There is virtual wreath making for adults on December 12<sup>th</sup> with Francesca Perez and two weeks of virtual sewing camp for the kids. Please find these classes under the virtual programs tab on our website.

Lastly, registration is now live for our winter programs that begin in January 2021! Space is limited to 14 children or fewer per class so sign-up early! We will be having an Art & Science aftercare program on the Ross School campus, Basketball Skills & Drills with Mr. Jackson, Hip Hop with Chelsea Hill and more! Please find the full list of classes on our website.

Happy Holidays from the Ross Recreation Team!



# ROSS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## DECEMBER 2020

Dec 10	6:00	pm	Council Meeting ( <i>virtual meeting</i> )
Dec 15	7:00	pm	Advisory Design Review Group Meeting ( <i>virtual meeting</i> )
Dec 24-31	--	--	Town Hall offices closed for the holidays

## JANUARY 2021 - Happy New Year!

Jan 1	--	--	Town Hall offices closed for New Year's Day
Jan 11	7:00	pm	Ross Property Owners Assn ( <i>for Zoom invite, contact <a href="mailto:jeffkoblick@comcast.net">jeffkoblick@comcast.net</a></i> )
Jan 14	6:00	pm	Council Meeting ( <i>virtual meeting</i> )
Jan 18	--	--	Town Hall offices closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday
Jan 19	7:00	pm	Advisory Design Review Group Meeting ( <i>virtual meeting</i> )

## FEBRUARY 2021

Feb 8	7:00	pm	Ross Property Owners Assn ( <i>for Zoom invite, contact <a href="mailto:jeffkoblick@comcast.net">jeffkoblick@comcast.net</a></i> )
Feb 11	6:00	pm	Council Meeting ( <i>virtual meeting</i> )
Feb 15	--	--	Town Hall offices closed for President's Day
Feb 16	7:00	pm	Advisory Design Review Group Meeting ( <i>virtual meeting</i> )

## CONTACT US

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Bldg Inspection Hotline - <a href="mailto:erobbe@townofross.org">erobbe@townofross.org</a>	415-453-1453 x170	Recreation - <a href="mailto:rossrec@rossrecreation.org">rossrec@rossrecreation.org</a>	415-453-6020
Planning/Building Director - <a href="mailto:pstreeter@townofross.org">pstreeter@townofross.org</a>	415-453-1453 x121	Ross Valley Fire Dept	415-258-4686
Planner - <a href="mailto:mweintraub@townofross.org">mweintraub@townofross.org</a>	415-453-1453 x116	Town Manager - <a href="mailto:jchinn@townofross.org">jchinn@townofross.org</a>	415-453-1453 x107

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Visit us at [www.townofross.org](http://www.townofross.org)



Email

We welcome suggestions for future issues. Email

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