

THE MORNING AFTER

TOWN OF ROSS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Volume 13 | Issue 6 | June 2019

Mayor's Corner



Beach Kuhl
Mayor

This month the Council will be approving procedures for creating a special district for undergrounding utilities. Currently there is a group of homeowners centered on Glenwood Avenue, and extending

down Fernhill, Norwood, Lagunitas Road, Shady Lane and Ames Avenue who are contemplating creating such a district. The Council will principally be concerned with setting the percentage of homeowners in the district who must approve the process for it to proceed and also to ultimately approve any future assessment district. The process is long and not inexpensive, but obviously will improve the environment and views in the area if it goes forward. If you are interested in the details, they are spelled out

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Fire Safety - Create Defensible Space Now



Creating defensible space is essential to improve your home's chance of surviving a wild-fire. It's the buffer you create between a building on your property and the grass, trees, shrubs, or any wildland area that surround it. This space is needed to slow or stop the spread of wildfire and it protects your home from catching fire - either

from direct flame contact, radiant heat or ember showers. Defensible space is also important for the protection of the firefighters defending your home. Some simple steps can make a big difference:

- Remove all dead plants, grass and weeds (vegetation).
- Remove dead or dry leaves and pine needles, cones, small branches, from your yard, roof and rain gutters.
- Remove branches that hang over your roof and keep branches 10 feet away from your chimney.
- Relocate wood piles away from structures and decks.
- Remove or prune flammable plants and shrubs near windows.
- Remove vegetation and items that could catch fire from around and under decks.
- Cut or mow annual grass down to a maximum height of 4 inches.
- Create a separation between trees, shrubs and items that could catch fire, such as patio furniture, wood piles, swing sets, etc.
- Create horizontal spacing between shrubs and trees, and vertical spacing between grass, shrubs and trees.

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Annual Ross 4th of July Celebration



Come join the fun at the annual Town of Ross 4th of July celebration on Thursday, July 4th. The parade kicks off the celebration at 11:00 a.m. Everyone is welcome to join the parade. A picnic on Ross Common

follows the parade. Enjoy music, games, face painting, and much more! Let's Be Frank will have hot dogs and sausages for sale, and the Ross Police Officers Association will be providing hamburgers. To join the parade, please contact rossrec@rossrecreation.org.



in the staff report which can be found on the Town website by clicking [here](#).

As we have already seen, the fire season has gotten an early start in Northern California. A recent Marin County civil grand jury report focused on the need for action to be taken to prepare on a community basis suggests several steps that are already underway in the County and more specifically in the Ross Valley, but each of us should heed the suggestions for individual preparation which we have already read numerous times, particularly with the recently added possibility of PG&E cutting off power in threatened areas during periods of high fire danger. Be sure your family is ready.

On a somewhat more cheery subject, we have in Marin County a facility doing some amazing work on a subject that affects all of us, the Buck Institute for Research on Aging. It was established with money left by Ross resident Beryl Buck and its current president is Ross resident Bill Poland. It is located in Novato in a facility designed by renowned architect I. M. Pei and offers tours by reservation. I urge you to arrange a visit. What goes on there is truly amazing.

As our Town government is organized on a fiscal year which terminates on June 30, and the term of office of our mayor rotates on a yearly basis among the members of our Town Council, my time in that office ends shortly. I have greatly enjoyed the privilege of serving our community in that capacity and I want to sincerely thank all off our Town staff, my fellow Council members and particularly you, the members of our community for your support in moving our town along in so many ways throughout this year. ■

Mayor & Mayor Pro Tem Appointed

At the June meeting, the Council appointed Elizabeth Brekhus to serve as Mayor, and Julie McMillan to serve as Mayor Pro Tempore. Each year, the Council appoints one of its members to serve in these positions for a one-year term. Council Member Brekhus has been on the Town Council since 2012 and was previously Mayor in FY 2014-15. This year, the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem term will be shorter as we move



Elizabeth Brekhus
Mayor

the Council election cycle to follow the California Primary Election which has moved to March of even-numbered years. The next Ross Council election will be held in March 2020, and the next election of Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem will occur once the March election results are certified and new Council members are sworn in at the April 2020 Council meeting.

Mayor Kuhl will be recognized for his service and second term as Mayor at the July Council meeting.

The current Council Members and their terms are:
Elizabeth Brekhus (2016-2020) 2nd Term
Beach Kuhl (2016-2020) 2nd Term
Julie McMillan (2018-2022) 1st Term
Elizabeth Robbins (2018-2022) 2nd Term
Rupert Russell (2010-2014, 2016-2020)

Create Defensible Space Now -

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Fire-resistant landscaping isn't necessarily the same thing as a well-maintained yard. This type of landscaping uses [fire-resistant plants](#) that are strategically planted to resist the spread of fire to your home.



HARDENING YOUR HOME

Flying embers can destroy homes up to a mile from a wildfire. "Harden" your home now before a fire starts by using ember-resistant building materials.

- Keep your roof clear of dead pine needles, leaves and other dry material.
- Vents on homes create openings for flying embers. Replace or cover vents with Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) compliant vents or metal mesh no greater than 1/8").
- Screen or enclose rain gutters to prevent accumulation of plant debris.
- Install weather stripping around and under the garage door to prevent embers from blowing in.

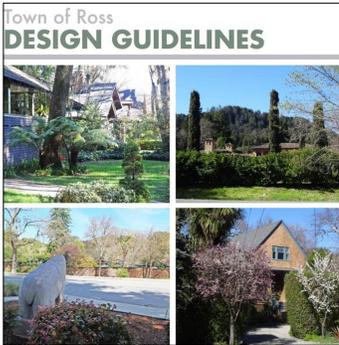
The Town and Ross Valley Fire Department are here to assist you in preparing your home for wildfire. Please visit Fire Safe Marin www.firesafemarin.org for additional information on defensible space, hardening your home, plant choices and emergency alert systems. ■

PLANNING RESULTS

The Town Council took the following action on planning applications at the June Council meeting. Staff reports and audio for the meeting can be found on the Town's website [June 13th meeting page](#). The minutes for this meeting will be posted after adoption by the Council at the July 11, 2019 Council meeting.

Address: 1 Woodside Way
Applicant: Gino & Marianne Canori
Council Action: Continued
Vote (for/against/abstain): 3-2-0 (Brekhus/Robbins opposed)

Design Guidelines Adopted



The Town of Ross is a special place in an extraordinary setting with significant natural resources, high quality architecture, and a strong community identity. Ross residents value its traditional character, small-town charm, tree-lined streets, wooded hillsides,

and meandering creeks. As Ross continues to attract investment in its neighborhoods through alterations and improvements to existing building, including new construction, the question always remains as to how can these changes be accommodated while respecting the design traditions and character of the Town?

With the help of Winter & Co., the Town's consultant, community input, Advisory Design Review Group review, and Town Council review, the Town Council has adopted new Design Guidelines for residentially zoned properties in the Town consistent with General Plan Implementation Program 3.D. The purpose of the Design Guidelines is to establish a common understanding of design principals and standards that would help maintain the unique character of the Town of Ross and to help articulate the community's expectations for design. Unlike objective development standards or specific codified regulations, the Design Guidelines define and provide a range of qualitative options and appropriate responses to a variety of specific design issues. The Design Guidelines are also intended help facilitate the Design Review process and



Design Guidelines - Continued

provide a basis for making consistent decisions about the appropriateness of new development and improvements to existing properties. For more information on the Design Guidelines, please contact Heidi Scoble, Planning and Building Director at hscoble@townofross.org or to access a copy of the Town Council approved Design Guidelines, please click on this link: <https://www.townofross.org/planning/page/design-guidelines>. ■



FY 2020 Budget Highlights

The Town Council passed the Fiscal Year 2019-20 (FYE20) General Fund and Special Revenue Funds budget last night. The budget is the Town's financial plan for the upcoming year and includes revenues and expenses related to Town operations and capital improvements. The budget was developed based on the continuing objectives of providing high quality services to the community in an efficient, effective, responsive, and financially responsible manner. The overall budget for all Town Funds is \$10.7 million for FYE19. The budget is prudent and provides for a small General Fund surplus (revenues in excess of expenses).

The Town utilizes a five year financial forecast and five year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to better understand and plan for the future and provide services at a sustainable level while strategically maintaining and improving the infrastructure and facilities which serve Ross residents. The budget includes over \$2.5 million for improving Town infrastructure and facilities such as roadway rehabilitation of Bolinas, Olive, and Walnut Avenues; Bolinas Avenue drainage improvements; Winship Bridge replacement design; resurfacing of tennis courts; Ross Common restoration; and update and addition of street lights downtown.

The budget includes providing the current services to Town residents as well as new projects and programs such as: update the Town Emergency Operations Plan (EOP); Ross Valley Fire vegetation management and defensible space inspections; update building codes including fire prevention items; downtown revitalization and zoning review; workforce housing policies; establish a historic preservation program; develop Action Plan for Age Friendly Community program; new recreational programs to meet community needs; and analysis of facilities at the Civic Center site.

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Update on Underground Utility District Policy

The Town Council voted to approve the key elements of a draft policy developed by Town staff for the formation of Underground Utility Districts (UUD) by private property owners. The discussion of the complete policy, which includes a Town-approved petition, guidelines, and voting procedures, follows up on the initial presentation made by staff at the February 14, 2019 Council meeting. The key focus of last night's discussion were centered on the various voting thresholds required during the formation of the UUD including the required number of signatures on the initial petition of interest and the final vote to form the district by the property owners within the district boundary. A highlight of the key decisions made by Council are as follows:

- 65 percent of property owners within the approved district boundary are required to sign the Town-approved petition before the Town will proceed with forming the UUD. A boundary map containing the parcels within the district, an estimate of the total cost of the proposed project to be financed by the proposed assessment district must be prepared and reviewed by staff before the petition can be considered.
- In order for Council to consider moving forward with the creation of the UUD, no more than 50% of weighted assessments within the district boundary returning a ballot can oppose the formation of the UUD without the proposed District failing. Additionally, a majority of parcels returning the ballot must approve.

Council also approved the format and wording of the petition which will allow interested property owners to begin the formal petitioning process. The body of the policy itself will be reviewed by a subcommittee for further refinement.

Budget Highlights - Continued from Page 3

We strive to provide high quality services to the community in a financially responsible manner. Please contact Town Manager Joe Chinn, if you have any questions related to the Town services, finances and budget. ■

RECREATION NEWS

The annual Ross Recreation middle school girls field hockey clinic was held at Redwood High School on Sunday, June 2. Aline Copp, Assistant Coach for the Redwood High field hockey team, led the participants in skill development drills and scrimmages.



The spring program is winding down and the last lacrosse games will be played at Ross Common on Saturday, June 15. Both boys and girls enjoyed instruction and games throughout the Spring.



Turf restoration is complete at Ross Common and the fence was removed on June 10. The area under the oak trees was seeded with shade tolerant grass and should enhance the experience of our annual 4th of July picnic.



Registration is open for Ross Recreation Summer Camps. Come join the fun! Register for programs at www.rossrecreation.org



Summer Fun for Everyone
Ross Recreation 2019

6 WEEKS of CAMPS

Camp Safari (3-5 years)	Plus...LEGO Camp
Kindergarten Explorers (6-9 years)	Fishin' Camp
Marin Explorers (6-9 years)	Tennis
Sporty Girls (6-11 years)	Holly Hoppin'
Top Gun Sports (7-14 years)	Academic Enrichment
Adventure Camp (8-15 years)	Art Camp...and more!

415-453-6020
RossRecreation.org

ROSS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JUNE 2019

June 10	7:15	pm	Ross Property Owners Association Meeting, Town Hall
June 13	6:00	pm	Council Meeting, Town Hall
June 25	7:00	pm	Advisory Design Review Group Meeting, Town Hall

JULY 2019

July 4	11:00	am	Ross 4th of July Parade & Celebration, Ross Common <i>(see Page 1)</i>
July 4	--	--	Town Hall offices closed for Independence Day
July 8	7:15	pm	Ross Property Owners Association Meeting, Town Hall
July 11	6:00	pm	Council Meeting, Town Hall
July 23	7:00	pm	Advisory Design Review Group Meeting, Town Hall

AUGUST 2019

Aug 5	7:15	pm	Ross Property Owners Association Meeting, Town Hall
Aug 8	6:00	pm	Council Meeting, Town Hall
Aug 27	7:00	pm	Advisory Design Review Group Meeting, Town Hall

RECURRING EVENT

Thursdays, May - October Ross Farm Stand, 11:30 am - 7:30 pm, Ross Common

CONTACT US

Administration	415.453.1453 x105	Public Works Director	415.453.1453 x115
Building & Public Works	415.453.1453 x106	Recreation	415.453.6020
Bldg Inspection Hotline:	415.453.1453 x170	Ross Valley Fire Dept	415.258.4686
Planning	415.453.1453 x121	Town Manager	415.453.1453 x107
Police	415.453.1453, Option 2		

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Visit us at www.townofross.org



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

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