



THE MORNING AFTER

TOWN OF ROSS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Volume 13 | Issue 11 | November 2019

Mayor's Corner



Elizabeth Brekhus
Mayor

Forefront on our minds is the terrible power outage that we experienced at the end of last month. This is the kind of event that immediately has town and city elected officials and staff

asking what could have prevented this, what did we do well, what do we need to improve and what other things can we do going forward. The Town will be looking at our ordinances that regulate noise and effect generator use in an effort to give residents direction on what is allowed and what generators would violate noise regulations.

Town Hall was open and operating during the outage because it has a back-up generator. However, some people commented to me that whereas other towns

Continued on Page 2

Branson Initiative Approved for Ballot



On June 26, 2019, representatives of the Branson School filed a Notice of Intent to Circulate an Initiative Measure Petition. The proposed initiative seeks to amend the 1978 adopted ballot measure that capped Branson student enrollment at 320 by increasing the student enrollment cap to 420 students. Because the

1978 ballot measure stipulated that the measure could only be amended by a vote of the people, in order for the Branson student enrollment to be eligible for an increase from 320 to 420 students, the voters must approve such a change. At the November 7th Council meeting, the Town Council approved placing the Initiative on the Tuesday, March 3, 2020 ballot to be voted on by the voters of Ross. The Initiative requires a majority positive vote in order to pass.

At the November 7th Council meeting, staff presented a Report pursuant to State Elections Code 9212 addressing various potential impacts of the Initiative on the Town. The report addresses the impact of Branson on the fiscal impact to the Town, consistency with the General Plan and zoning regulations, impacts to infrastructure and community services, and impacts to business, employment, and housing among other things as well as providing a brief history of Branson School and its relationship to the Initiative.

The full Report on the proposed Initiative can be found on the Town's website at [Branson Report](#) or at:

https://www.townofross.org/sites/default/files/fileattachments/town_council/meeting/2781/branson_report.pdf.

IN THIS ISSUE

- 2. New Town Maintenance Worker
- 2. Underground Utilities Update
- 3. Planning
- 3. Winter Sing
- 3. Wildfire Home Hardening
- 4. Generator Information
- 4. Recreation
- 5. Calendar

Are You Registered to Vote?

The deadline to register to vote in the March 2020 election is Monday, February 17, 2020. Register to vote at <https://www.marincounty.org/depts/rv/voter-registration/register>.



and cities opened facilities such as libraries or community centers for residents to power up, the Town of Ross did not have facilities within the Town that were available to residents. This is a valid concern. But unfortunately, our Town buildings are small and cramped for Town staff and we do not have a lot of room. We may want to consider this fact when upgrading our civic center buildings or we may want to look into collaborating with Ross School, the Marin Art & Garden Center or other facilities in Town for these purposes. It is certainly a worthy discussion that we need to have. Another issue is the lack of cell phone coverage during the emergency that was very concerning and I think we need to look into that and see if a local solution to that problem is possible.

There has also been some discussion among Council members from different jurisdictions about whether the Marin County Council of Mayors and Council Members (MCCMC) which is made up of all Council members in the County, should be enacting resolutions that express our frustration with these power outages and urge the State to do more to prevent them. As the President of MCCMC, we are looking at whether or not a collective response from this group is appropriate and supported by the members.

I think all of us on Council would agree that if there is anything we can do as elected officials to improve this situation, it is incumbent upon us to take action. I do believe Town staff can be commended for giving as much information as we were getting about the power outages and for providing information to residents about locations where they could power up in Marin County. I do believe that elected officials need to step up and take action on this issue because the more collective effort of all in problem-solving this terrible situation is needed. If you have any thoughts or concerns regarding the Town's response to the power outage, feel free to contact me. ■

New Maintenance Worker Joins Public Works Dept.



Zack Baker
Maintenance Worker

The Town is pleased to welcome Zachary Baker to the Public Works Department as our new Maintenance Worker. Zack joined the Town staff on November 4th. He will be working alongside Anthony Alcozer (Senior Maintenance Worker), taking care of the Town's streets, parks, trees and grounds. The Public Works Department has been down one position since Robert Maccario retired in September.

Zack grew up in the Shenandoah Valley in northern Virginia and moved to Marin as a teen. Zack worked for over 3 years with the Town of Corte Madera Parks and Recreation and brings extensive personal and on-the-job experience in building and landscape maintenance to the Public Works Department.

Zack spends most of his personal time in the outdoors and enjoys camping, fishing, and hiking, and enjoys working hands-on to solve problems. His latest project is rebuilding a '72 Chevy truck, having an interest in all things mechanical.

Underground Utility Policy Update

There has been considerable interest from Town residents in the past year about undergrounding utilities in Ross. At the November 14 Council meeting, the Town Council voted to approve a local policy for forming Underground Utility Districts (UUD) in the Town. The undergrounding of overhead utilities along private property frontages are funded through the creation of UUD's and are normally paid for by assessments levied on those properties receiving a benefit from the undergrounding project. At the August 8th Council meeting, staff was directed by Council to meet with a group of residents to address the issues and questions raised by the public, clarifying certain items into a revised UUD policy. Staff returned with a more refined draft UUD policy based on those meetings. In addition, the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document was updated to provide more information about common undergrounding questions and the undergrounding process.



The Town of Ross supports the undergrounding of overhead utility wires and poles as a means to improve public safety under fire, earthquake and high wind conditions, as well as reducing utility company maintenance costs for tree trimming to maintain overhead lines and equipment, and improve the visual characteristics in neighborhoods. The UUD Policy and FAQ can be found at [UUD Report](#).

PLANNING RESULTS

The Town Council took the following action on planning applications at the November Council meeting. Staff reports and audio for the meeting can be found on the Town's website [November 14th](#) meeting page. The minutes for this meeting will be posted after adoption by the Council at the December 12, 2019 Council meeting.

Address: 19 Sir Francis Drake Blvd.
Applicant: Elizabeth Foster & Paul Furusho
Council Action: Approved
Vote (for/against/abstain): 5-0-0

Address: 39 Fernhill Avenue
Owner/Applicant: Branson School/Kent Middle School
Council Action: Approved
Vote (for/against/abstain): 5-0-0

Address: 39 Fernhill Avenue
Owner/Applicant: Branson School/Ross School PTO
Council Action: Approved
Vote (for/against/abstain): 5-0-0

Address: 39 Fernhill Avenue
Owner/Applicant: Branson School/Town of Ross
Council Action: Approved
Vote (for/against/abstain): 5-0-0



Photos from Ross School Halloween Parade

ROSS ANNUAL WINTER SING

The Ross Auxiliary invites you to join them for the annual Ross Winter Sing on Sunday, December 8th from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm on Ross Common. You will enjoy holiday choir performances, a tree lighting ceremony, and of course a special visit from Santa Claus.

Help them spread holiday cheer by bringing new, unwrapped art supplies to donate to Gilead House which provides transitional housing for moms and kids.



Reminder - March 2020 Council Election Filing Period is Now Until December 6th

The next election to fill three Council seats for a 4-year term will be held on Tuesday, March 3, 2020. To qualify to run for Council, you must be a Ross resident and a registered voter. The filing period for Council candidates begins on **November 12, 2019 and runs through December 6, 2019**. If any of the incumbents *do not* file for re-election by December 6th, the filing date is extended to Wednesday, December 11th.

If you are interested in running for a Council seat or have any questions regarding the process, please contact Town Clerk Linda Lopez at (415) 453-1453 ext. 105, or via email at llopez@townofross.org. An appointment with the Town Clerk is necessary in order to obtain the nomination papers that must be completed as part of the nomination process.



TAM Grant Awarded

On October 24, 2019 the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) Board awarded a \$400,000 Measure AA "Safe Pathways to School" grant to the Town of Ross for the Laurel Grove Pedestrian Pathway Project. The Laurel Grove project, which was vetted through the Town's 2018 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan update, was one of 13 large (\$400,000 maximum) projects to be funded in this cycle of Safe Pathways to Schools call for projects. Public outreach efforts and professional engineering design services are scheduled for 2020.

Wildfire Home Hardening Workshops Tuesday, November 19

FireSafe Marin is sponsoring two FREE Home Hardening workshops on Tuesday, November 19th at Embassy Suites, 101 McInnis Parkway, San Rafael:

- 1) Home Hardening Workshop for Building Industry Professionals, Seminar 2:00-4:00 pm
- 2) Home Hardening Workshop for Homeowners, Live Fire Demo 5:00 pm, Seminar 6:00-7:30 pm

Online registration is required. Go to www.firesafemarin.org/events to register.

Generator, Anyone?



With the recent power outage we all experienced due to PG&E's Power Safety Power Shutoff, we have received many questions from residents asking for information and permit requirements for owning a generator. The Planning & Building Department has developed a Generator Information Sheet to help answer all of your generator questions. The document can be found on the Town's website at [Generator Information Sheet](#). Please contact Matt Weintraub in the Planning & Building Department at (415) 453-1453 ext. 116, if you need additional information.

RECREATION NEWS

The Ross Recreation youth soccer program held its final Fall season games at Ross Common on Saturday, November 2nd. Boys and girls, grades K through 3, enjoyed after school practices and weekend games during the six week program, which began in September. All players received a jersey and instruction from long time Ross Rec staff member, Jean Marc Shafer. Ross Recreation mini soccer balls were distributed to the participants during the final weekend games.

Winter Program registration is open. Programs offered include futsal, ballet, game design coding, art and Adobe photoshop. Ross Recreation youth basketball leagues are full however, Ross Recreation will be offering youth basketball clinics in December led by Jean Marc Shafer and Sandrick Jackson. The clinics will focus on basic skill development and incorporate scrimmages. Clinics will be held in the Ross School gymnasium.



Players from the Falcons and Cobras, Boys Kindergarten Division



Jean Marc Shafer with players from the Falcons

Register for classes
at www.rossrecreation.org

ROSS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NOVEMBER 2019

Nov 7	6:00	pm	Special Council Meeting, Town Hall
Nov 11	--	--	Town Hall offices closed for Veterans Day
Nov 12-Dec 6	--	--	March 2020 Election Filing Period for Council Candidates
Nov 14	6:00	pm	Council Meeting, Town Hall
Nov 28-29	--	--	Town Hall offices closed for Thanksgiving holiday

DECEMBER 2019

Dec 7	10:00-2	pm	Pixie Park Annual Bake Sale & Open House, Marin Art & Garden Center
Dec 8	4:00-6	pm	Annual Winter Sing, Ross Common (<i>see page 3</i>)
Dec 9	7:15	pm	Ross Property Owners Association Meeting, Town Hall
Dec 12	6:00	pm	Council Meeting, Town Hall
Dec 24-31	--	--	Town Hall offices closed for Christmas/New Year's holiday

JANUARY 2020 - Happy New Year!

Jan 1	--	--	Town Hall offices closed for New Year's Day
Jan 16*	6:00	pm	Council Meeting, Town Hall (<i>*note date change</i>)
Jan 20	--	--	Town Hall offices closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday
Jan 28	7:00	pm	Advisory Design Review Group Meeting, Town Hall

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 x116	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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