

THE MORNING AFTER

TOWN OF ROSS NEWSLETTER

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Mayor's Corner



Julie McMillan
Mayor

As of Wednesday, Ross has [59] COVID-19 cases -- a [59%] increase from just one month ago. I sound like a broken record, but it bears repeating: With the new, indefinite stay at home order, we all

know to avoid gatherings and travel, keep wearing masks and washing hands, and maintain social distance. Vaccinations are on the horizon, so while we may be (hopefully) almost there, everyone still needs to remain vigilant.

Last night we heard another report on modernizing Town facilities for fire, police, paramedics and administrative services, with results from the recent community questionnaire. Thank you to the 336 residents who participated.

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Community Questionnaire Results

Over the past several months, Town staff and the Council have engaged the community regarding the deteriorating conditions of our town facilities, particularly those of our public safety personnel. The police station and the fire station, with the exception of the two fire engine bays, are physically and functionally obsolete



with significant structural deficiencies. Both were built in 1927, long before the 1986 Essential Service Act (ESA), which established requirements for public safety building construction. Public safety personnel generally consider the Ross police and fire facilities to be in among the worst physical and functional condition of any facilities in Marin County. Several studies have concluded that renovating the facilities would likely cost more to correct all the issues than constructing a new facility and some problems are not feasible to fix with a renovation. Under any rebuilding scenario, the Town Hall building that houses the Council Chamber will remain.

On August 13 and October 29, 2020, the Town held public meetings to discuss the longstanding need to improve town facilities. The August meeting discussion included a summary of the various studies conducted up to that point. On October 29, 2020, the Town held a community workshop related to the town facilities and services. Based on the questions heard at the community workshop and other comments received from the community, a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document was prepared and circulated. All of the meeting materials, links to the background documents, and video of the community workshop are available on the [Town's website](#).

In December, the Town conducted an online community questionnaire to gather additional information from the public concerning the Town's facilities and services. A total of 336 participants responded to the questionnaire. Responses indicated that medical response, police in the community, and wildfire safety were important community issues.

The questionnaire tested the public support for tax levels for two of the building options. For the \$14.6 million option (rebuild police, para-

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This was an opportunity for the Council to ask more questions about how best to address these physically and functionally obsolete facilities. We hope to make a decision about these issues at our February or March meeting. In the meantime, if you have questions or feedback, please email Joe Chinn (jchinn@townofross.org) or Patrick Streeter (pstreeter@townofross.org), who are coordinating this project.



In addition, last night we considered whether to change the street name Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. Since June, Elizabeth Brekhus and I have represented Ross on an ad hoc committee with other elected representatives from Larkspur, San Anselmo, Fairfax and the County. I thank Elizabeth for serving with me on this committee – I have enjoyed our robust discussions.

Finally, following the Council's recent review of the Town's Climate Plan, I will start Resilient Neighborhoods' five-part workshop later this month. Resilient Neighborhoods has helped over 1,500 Marin residents reduce more than 8.6MM pounds of carbon pollution. The free, online workshop's goals are to reduce our carbon footprint and prepare for emergencies. If you would like to participate (spaces are still available) or learn more, please visit <https://www.resilientneighborhoods.org/>. ■

Questionnaire Results - *continued from Page 1*

medic, and administrative space with fire services being relocated to a neighboring station) the question was: Are you willing to pay a tax of approximately \$189 per year per \$1 million of property assessed value (for example, \$490/year for the average property assessed at \$2.6 million) to replace police, paramedic, and administrative facilities? Most respondents (63%) indicated they are willing to pay a tax of approximately \$189 per year per \$1 million of property assessed value to replace police, paramedic, and administrative facilities. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of respondents replied "no" and 9% responded "I don't know."

For the \$28.4 million option (rebuild the fire station, police, paramedic quarters, and administrative space) the question was: Are you willing to pay a tax of approximately \$520/year per \$1 million of property assessed value (for example, \$1,350/year for the average property assessed at \$2.6 million) to keep a fire engine in Ross and maintain current response times, in addition to replacing police, paramedic, and administration facilities? Most respondents (55%) indicated they are not willing to pay a tax of approximately \$520 per year per \$1 million of property assessed value to keep a fire engine in Ross and maintain current response times, in addition to replacing police, paramedic, and administration facilities.

A summary of the questionnaire can be read [here](#). The approach to modernizing town facilities is an ongoing conversation and the Council will be meeting on this topic at the March Council meeting. ■

Sir Francis Drake Boulevard *To Rename or Not*



Ross is one of five jurisdictions participating in a discussion to consider changing the street name of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard (SFD) that traverses east-west across the central part

of Marin County. The other jurisdictions which SFD passes through are the County of Marin, Fairfax, Larkspur and San Anselmo. An Ad-Hoc Working Group consisting of appointed officials from each jurisdiction have been participating in a series of public forums (community listening and learning sessions) and three Working Group meetings. The Working Group agreed that members should present the issue to their respective jurisdictions of whether to move forward with the renaming of SFD. Each jurisdiction was asked to complete its community process and make a final decision on whether to rename or not no later than March 31st.

At the January Council meeting, after much community input and discussion on the topic, the Council voted 4-1 not to change the street name of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.

PLANNING RESULTS

The Town Council took the following action on planning applications at the January Council meeting. Staff reports and video for the meeting can be found on the Town's website [January 14th](#) meeting page. The minutes for this meeting will be posted after adoption by the Council at the February 11, 2021 Council meeting.

Address: 3 Allen Lane
Owner: Andrew Dodge & Alea Stein
Council Action: Approved
Vote (for/against/abstain): 5-0-0

Marin Sanitary 2021 Rates

The Council approved the Marin Sanitary Service (MSS) rate increase of 4.24% for 2021. The Town of Ross participates in a Franchisor's Group comprised of San Rafael, Fairfax, Larkspur, San Anselmo, Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District, and a portion of Marin County. The group meets several times a year to oversee MSS's operations and work together to conduct a single annual rate review analysis rather than each jurisdiction having to conduct and pay for a separate review. This year, R3 Consulting Group, Inc., has determined a 4.24% rate increase is appropriate for ratepayers in Ross which include residential homeowners, apartment owners, commercial property owners, and other businesses and tenants.

The MSS solid waste service collection, processing, disposal, and recycling service cost in Ross increases from \$41.36 per month in 2020 to \$43.11 per month in 2021, for the 32-gallon cart service. The proposed 2021 rates are not available for other jurisdictions yet, so this summary compares proposed Town 2021 rates to other jurisdictions' 2020 actual rates, which will certainly increase. Using this comparison, the Ross proposed rate of \$43.11 is slightly lower than the Marin County average of \$46.98 and slightly higher than the Bay Area average which is \$40.95.



Employee

Recognition Program

Each year, the Town recognizes employees who have reached a 5-year anniversary milestone. At the January Council meeting, the following three employees were recognized for their years of dedicated service: Police Officer Danny Moy (15 years); Town Clerk and Administrative Manager Linda Lopez (15 years); and Office Assistant Donna Redstone (5 years). Each received a gift of appreciation and a BIG thanks.



Danny Moy

Danny Moy is celebrating his 15th year with the Ross Police Department. Danny grew up in southern California and began working in the family business in the food service industry. He made a career move to law enforcement attending the Napa Police Academy and was hired in Ross in 2005. Danny is the department Firearms instructor and has trained our personnel in response to school active shooter scenarios. He is also an evidence technician. Danny lives in Napa with his wife, Gina, and his two teenage daughters. Danny is a golf enthusiast and has played in annual law enforcement and community tournaments. Thanks Danny, for your service.

Linda Lopez joined Ross in 2005 bringing a strong background in office management. Starting as an Administrative Assistant she quickly took on many new duties such as the Town's website, Town communications, payroll and accounts payables/receivables as well as covering the Town Clerk duties. With these new duties, in 2009, she was promoted to Administrative Manager, and in 2012, she was officially appointed Town Clerk by the Council. Through the years, her position has consistently grown to encompass just about everything. Her strong work ethic, professionalism, and exceptional skills have made her an invaluable employee. Linda is very creative and in addition to producing The Morning After newsletter, she enjoys photography and creating calendars and greeting cards. Thank you Linda!



Linda Lopez

Donna Redstone was hired in the newly created position of Office Assistant in 2015. The position was created to primarily assist the Town Clerk's Office with the preparation of the Council meeting packets, meeting noticing, ordering office

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TENNIS COURT RULES

There has been very high demand for the recently renovated Ross Town Tennis Courts with so many people staying close to home. A townwide email was sent out earlier this week with a full list of the court rules and the temporary COVID-19 guidelines. If you didn't see the e-mail, please contact Gretchen Castets, at gcastets@townofross.org, for the list. One point of confusion has been what is and is not allowed



regarding lessons. The only lessons that are allowed (private or group) are those approved by the Ross Recreation Department. The lessons that we have currently run

Wednesday mornings from 9am-12pm. There are no other lessons allowed on the courts.

Under the Shelter In Place order, singles only play is encouraged to ensure physical distancing. Doubles for tennis or paddle ball is approved if players from the same household share a side. Masks must be worn at all times when you are not playing and it is strongly encouraged that you wear them while playing as well. With the increased number of people wanting to use the courts, we ask that you follow the 1 hour rule of playing so that others have the opportunity to play. Thank you for respecting the guidelines and working as a community to keep the courts safe and fun!

Employee Recognition - continued from Page 3



Donna Redstone

supplies, office errands and other general office tasks. Donna has been invaluable in handling these day-to-day tasks, as well as assisting other Town departments as needed such as Planning, Public Works and the Town Manager with special projects. The Town has not had a "go to" person before to assist with these

projects, and Donna has fulfilled that role splendidly. We appreciate her willingness to do whatever is asked and all the support she provides to staff. A native of Colorado, Donna is an avid skier and enjoys trips to Tahoe with her family. Thank you Donna! ■

RECREATION NEWS

We hope everyone had a safe and happy holiday season! Our Winter Session just began this week and includes outdoor hip hop, outdoor ballet, basketball (skill & drills) and Holly Hoppin' aftercare at Phoenix Lake. We also are running a few virtual programs that have openings including LEGO, chess, and coding.



The Ross Recreation Department is working to provide safe and fun programs that get your child's body and mind activated and engaged. All of our classes are held outdoors at this time so they are able to breathe fresh air and have social distanced interactions with their peers.



Our hoops programs are all skills & drills and our instructors have found creative ways to help the kids build their skill set and have fun while following all of the CDC guidelines.

Our new creative ballet program is going to be held on the Ross School outdoor stage where the children will learn to appreciate the beautiful art of ballet in a fun and playful environment. Storytelling through dance and classical music allow kids to feel creative and nurture coordination. Lauren Duchene has been a ballet teacher to children for 20 years and grew up locally dancing in Marin where she now raises her own two children.



Holly Hoppin' Science & Art after-school program will be held up at Phoenix Lake as long as the weather allows and we have the use of the Ross Commons/Classroom on rainy days. You sign up weekly for this and each week can be pro-rated (2 days per week minimum). We are so lucky to have the Natalie Coffin Park as a Town resource and the children in this

program have been able to connect with nature and their peers all while learning about science and doing fun art projects. Holly makes it a priority to listen to the children to understand what inspires them and builds her projects around that.

As we move through 2021, we are hoping to open more programs for both youth and adults. If you don't already receive the Ross Recreation e-mails, please contact us at rossrec@rossrecreation.org, to get on our e-mail list.

ROSS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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 (for Zoom invite, contact jeffkoblick@comcast.net)
Jan 14	6:00	pm	Council Meeting (virtual meeting)
Jan 18	--	--	Town Hall offices closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday
Jan 19	7:00	pm	Advisory Design Review Group Meeting (virtual meeting)

FEBRUARY 2021

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

MARCH 2021

Mar 8	7:00	pm	Ross Property Owners Assn (for Zoom invite, contact jeffkoblick@comcast.net)
Mar 11	6:00	pm	Council Meeting (virtual meeting)
Mar 16	7:00	pm	Advisory Design Review Group Meeting (virtual meeting)

CONTACT US

Administration - llopez@townofross.org	415-453-1453 x105	Police	415-453-1453, Opt. 2
Building - breher@townofross.org	415-453-1453 x106	Public Works Director - rsimonitch@townofross.org	415-453-1453 x115
Bldg Inspection Hotline - erobbe@townofross.org	415-453-1453 x170	Recreation - rossrec@rossrecreation.org	415-453-6020
Planning/Building Director - pstreeter@townofross.org	415-453-1453 x121	Ross Valley Fire Dept	415-258-4686
Planner - mweintraub@townofross.org	415-453-1453 x116	Town Manager - jchinn@townofross.org	415-453-1453 x107

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Visit us at www.townofross.org



Email

We welcome suggestions for future issues. Email

llopez@townofross.org

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