

THE MORNING AFTER

TOWN OF ROSS NEWSLETTER

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Mayor's Corner



Elizabeth Robbins
Mayor

In March, Branson filed an application to amend its use permit seeking to increase the school's enrollment from 320 to 420 students. Residents have been asking about the steps Town staff and the Town Council will take to evaluate this application.

Branson's history in Ross began in 1922, when Branson moved to a 16-acre campus on Fernhill Avenue as a small boarding school for girls. In 1978, the school's enrollment was increased to its present enrollment of 320 commuter students.

The Town requires use permits for non-residential use of property in residential neighborhoods. Branson's current use permit dates from 1978, when conditions

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Council Begins Manager Recruitment

At the July Council meeting, the Town Council selected the executive search firm Avery Associates for Town Manager recruitment services to replace outgoing Town Manager Joe Chinn. The firm will begin the recruitment process immediately and will be working with the goal to fill the position within three months before Mr. Chinn's departure.

Joe Chinn announced his retirement effective in October 2021. He has been Town Manager since August 2015 after serving as the Assistant City Manager in Rancho Cordova for nine years; previously he was the Finance Director for the City of Elk Grove. He is known for leading teams that provide a high level of services and as a leader in government finance.



Joe Chinn

"Joe Chinn has been an excellent Town Manager," said Mayor Elizabeth Robbins, MD. "His leadership skills have served the town well: Many new projects are underway, including a flood control project, renovation of the town facilities, and undergrounding utilities. The town's financial status is excellent, with balanced budgets and annual payments that have reduced the town's pension obligations. We anticipate recruiting another outstanding candidate, but we will miss working with Joe."

"Town Manager Chinn has been a dedicated professional with a strong work ethic, impeccable character and integrity. He has delivered the highest standards of excellence in government," Councilmember Julie McMillan commented. "His knowledge, support of Town employees, and commitment have served our community extremely well. In addition, his tireless efforts have ensured that our Town runs seamlessly, especially over the last 16 months with the unprecedented pandemic."

During Chinn's tenure, the Town has provided a high level of responsive services and enhanced the Town's financial position, while investing and rehabilitating facilities such as Natalie Coffin Greene Park's historic shelter and picnic grounds, Frederick Allen Park courts, expanding and improving the Ross Common, and rehabilitating the roadway condition to be one of the best in the Bay Area. "It has been a tremendous privilege and honor to have served as the Ross Town Manager for the past six years," Chinn said. "Together with the Town Council and the staff, we have worked hard to preserve and enhance what makes Ross a truly extraordinary community."

were established to minimize impacts to the Town and its residents as Branson transitioned from a boarding school to a commuter school. The use permit has been amended several times in the years since its adoption, including a 2007 amendment to accommodate construction of the student commons building.

Branson's application proposes to amend the use permit, which caps enrollment at 320 students, by increasing enrollment to 420. As part of their use permit application, Branson has submitted a transportation management plan that proposes an increased use of buses and carpools and decreasing student drop-offs to keep traffic "net neutral".



To process Branson's application, the Town has contracted with Urban Planning Partners. Staff and consultants are determining whether additional information is needed to complete review of the application. This includes a determination on the appropriate level of environmental review for the project. Traffic and other operational impacts are some of the items being evaluated. Once staff review is complete, the application will be presented to the Town Council, which will consider the environmental review and use permit for the increased enrollment. In the meantime, if you have any questions about this project, please do not hesitate to contact Patrick Streater, Planning and Building Director at pstreater@townofross.org. ■

Town Hall Offices Reopen



Town Hall offices of Administration, Building, Planning, and Public Works have been closed to the public since the start of the COVID pandemic in March 2020. During this time, staff have

provided all services remotely through the website, email, and by phone. This new way of doing business has worked surprisingly well with minimal disruption. Anyone wishing to continue to conduct their business with the Town remotely can certainly do so.

Now as COVID restrictions have eased, the Development Services building which houses Building, Planning and Public Works will reopen on Monday, July 12, 2021, for in-person counter service from 9:00 am to noon, Monday through Thursday (closed on Friday). The Recreation Department summer office hours are Monday through Friday 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. As a reminder to those visiting Town Hall offices, the Town is strictly following the California Department of Public Health's directive that anyone not fully vaccinated entering Town facilities must wear a face covering for everyone's safety. Thank you for your cooperation.

Bicycle Thefts in Ross

The Police Department has reported that at the end of the school year, they saw a trend of bikes stolen from Allen Avenue near the Ross School. The bikes were properly secured, and in each case, the locks were cut. We believe this case was resolved with the help of our neighboring law enforcement partners in Fairfax, College of Marin, and David, the school Crossing Guard, all who assisted in identifying a suspicious car and its occupants seen near bikes. The occupants in the car were both on probation and cited. Unfortunately, the stolen bikes were not recovered.



Pro Tip: One of the biggest problems with stolen and recovered bicycles, is reuniting them with their owners. To release stolen property, serial numbers or unique ID numbers must be etched in them. It is easy to record these numbers by taking a photograph of them. Also, did you know that the shop where you purchased your bike usually keeps the serial numbers on file? A call or visit to them should get you the information you need to get your property back.

Town Appeals Regional Housing Allocation

In 1969, the State of California passed legislation that all cities, towns, and counties must plan to meet the housing needs of all residents. This state mandate is called the Housing Element and Regional Housing



Needs Allocation, or RHNA. As part of RHNA, the California Department of Housing and Community Development, or HCD, determines the total number of new homes that a region needs to build—and how affordable those homes

need to be - in order to meet the housing needs of people at all income levels. Each jurisdiction is responsible for updating the housing element of its General Plan to demonstrate that it can accommodate the RHNA.

The RHNA process follows an 8-year planning cycle. HCD has allocated a total of 441,176 housing units to the Bay Area for the next Housing Element planning period which begins in January 2023. This allocation is more than twice the number of housing units assigned to the Bay Area in the previous housing cycle (187,990 units). The total housing units assigned to the Bay Area are further distributed to each jurisdiction in the region through the development of a methodology administered and approved by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission/Association of Bay Area Governments (MTC/ABAG). Based on this methodology, the Town of Ross is assigned a total allocation of 111 units with an income level distribution of 34 very low income, 20 low income, 16 moderate income, and 41 above moderate income units. This allocation represents a sixfold increase over the Town's previous allocation of 18 units.

At its July meeting, the Town Council discussed the upcoming RHNA cycle and directed staff to file an appeal of the allocation assigned to Ross. While the Town remains committed to doing our part in addressing the State's housing needs, the number of units is unrealistic and the methodology used to assign them was flawed for not taking into account the lack of vacant lots, the floodplain, fire severity zones, slope stability, availability of public services and utilities, and the housing-jobs balance.



Thank you Ross Police Officers Association for providing popsicles and watermelon on the Common on the 4th of July! Although no parade celebration was held this year due to COVID, residents got a chance to meet Police Chief Pata and some of our Police Officers while enjoying some cool summer treats. The event attracted approximately 100 people (many families with kids), as well as joggers and bicyclists passing through.

New Drinking Fountain in Service at NCG Park



A new drinking fountain is now in service in the parking lot of Natalie Coffin Greene Park near the footbridge to Three Bear Hut. The water is provided by MMWD through a nearby Town-owned meter connection utilizing excess water allotment credits. The process began in 2017 when the Town staff suggested the idea of a drinking fountain at

the park to MMWD. With the help of the Ross Property Owners Association (RPOA), the project finally became feasible when MMWD reactivated a nearby potable water line in 2020. A small portion of the parking lot pavement has also been reconstructed and striped to provide a safe path of travel from the accessible parking stall currently located near the portable toilets. A portion of the project was funded by the local "Zero Waste" grant, with the remaining costs split 50% by the Town and 50% by the RPOA.

Mindfully Mulch with Wildfire Preparedness in Mind

UC Marin Master Gardeners like the mantra, *mulch, mulch, mulch*. Adding wood mulch to your landscape helps to improve soil structure and fertility. In a fire-smart landscape, it's



important to take precautions when using mulch. Please follow these guidelines to create defensible space around your home:

- **Zero to five feet from your house:** use only non-combustible mulch such as stone, rock and gravel.
- **5 feet to 30 feet from your home:** use composted wood chips or bark nuggets. Limit mulch depth to two inches to prevent embers from smoldering. Separate continuous wood chip areas with non-flammable materials such as decomposed granite, gravel and rocks.
- **30 feet and beyond from your home:** Use composted or medium to large wood chips up to a depth of three inches.
- **Do not use fine, stringy mulches.** They burn faster than larger chunks.

Evacuation Tags for Your Home

Pick up your free evacuation tag and help first responders conduct evacuations quickly during a disaster. In an evacuation emergency, every second counts and time can save lives. Using evacuation tags is a new tool to help first responders quickly identify which homes and buildings have been evacuated. Every household and business should have an evacuation tag.

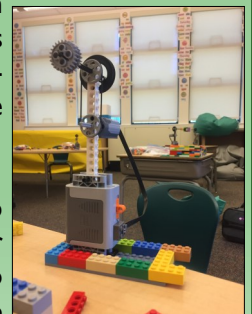
The tags and instructions are available to pick up from the black mailbox located in front of the Ross Police Department, at 33 Sir Francis Drake Blvd. Please take one for you and your neighbor.

RECREATION NEWS

Summer Camps are in full swing here at Ross Recreation and it has been so wonderful seeing these kids come back together and have fun. We are currently running Top Gun, Sporty Girl, Holly Hoppin' Nature Camp and Art Camp. We will be starting Chess Camp and Hip Hop Camp next week. There are still spaces in some of our camps so please reach out or go on our website (www.rossrecreation.org). If any of these sound like a good fit for your child, we are happy to get your child registered or on a waitlist.



Fall 2021 Soccer is LIVE! We decided to go live with our Fall Soccer program early this year and classes are filling up. The soccer program we offer is for K -2nd grade. They will have one practice during the week and then games on Saturdays. We ask for parent coaches to help out and it's a wonderful way to participate in your child's extracurricular activities, build community and most importantly, have fun!



We will also be adding the First Step Soccer program later this month for the Pre-K age group. There are no weekend games for the Pre-K group but they get two practices a week. Keep an eye out for our e-mail letting you know when that goes live.



We hope that you and your family are having a wonderful summer break! We are here all summer in the office if you have any questions about our summer or fall programs. Our summer office hours are Monday-Friday, 9am-1pm, so feel free to stop by and say hi!

ROSS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JULY 2021

Jul 5	-- --	Town Hall offices closed for Independence Day
Jul 8	6:00 pm	Council Meeting (<i>virtual meeting</i>)
Jul 11	9-11:00 am	Pixie Park Open House, Marin Art & Garden Center
Jul 20	7:00 pm	Advisory Design Review Group Meeting (<i>virtual meeting</i>)

AUGUST 2021

Aug 1	9-11:00 am	Pixie Park Open House, Marin Art & Garden Center
Aug 12	6:00 pm	Council Meeting (<i>virtual meeting</i>)
Aug 17	7:00 pm	Advisory Design Review Group Meeting (<i>virtual meeting</i>)

SEPTEMBER 2021

Sep 5	9-11:00 am	Pixie Park Open House, Marin Art & Garden Center
Sep 6	-- --	Town Hall offices closed for Labor Day
Sep 9	6:00 pm	Council Meeting
Sep 21	7:00 pm	Advisory Design Review Group Meeting
Sep 24	5-9:00 pm	Town Dinner, Ross Common

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Planning/Building Director - pstreeter@townofross.org	415-453-1453 x121	Ross Valley Fire Dept	415-258-4686
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We welcome suggestions for future issues. Email llopez@townofross.org

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