

THE MORNING AFTER

TOWN OF ROSS NEWSLETTER

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Mayor's Corner



Elizabeth Robbins
Mayor

Should the Ross Common be re-imagined? Should the Common simply be repaired and maintained? Are there minor changes that would enhance the Common? Ross residents are welcome to share their opinions as the Council discusses

the extent of work to be undertaken in the heart of our town.

Council first discussed the topic of making changes to the Common last spring when town staff reported that the pathways in the Common needed to be replaced. Since the pathways needed repaving, the question then arose as to whether there should be changes to any of their locations (there are currently paths that cut across the Common, as well as a

Continued on Page 2

New Town Manager Announced



Christa Johnson

At the October 14 Council meeting, the Council approved an employment agreement with Christa Johnson to serve as Town Manager of Ross. She will be replacing retiring Town Manager Joe Chinn and will begin her new job in November.

Mayor Elizabeth Robbins commented: "We're extremely pleased to appoint Christa Johnson as our Town Manager. With many years of experience in

local government management Christa will be a great asset to our Town." In advance of the Thursday meeting, Ms. Johnson said, "I'm thankful for the opportunity to work with the Town Council, staff and residents to maintain and enhance the quality of life in such a beautiful and engaged community."

Ms. Johnson has over 25 years of local government management experience, most recently serving as City Manager of the City of Del Mar in San Diego County. She was Assistant City Manager of the City of Laguna Beach, in Orange County, from 2011-2020, and served in the same capacity for the Town of Windsor, in Sonoma County, from 2006-2011. Prior to that, she held positions with the City of Alameda for eight years and the County of Alameda. In the mid-90's, she worked locally for an environmental education non-profit, the Headlands Institute, located in the Marin Headlands.

In Windsor, Ms. Johnson focused on the areas of economic development, communications, affordable housing development, emergency preparedness/response, and solid waste/recycling management. In Laguna Beach she oversaw several city departments, human resources, special projects and programs such as economic development, open space acquisition/real estate management, homelessness, recreation, cultural arts and other Council initiatives. In Del Mar, she led a full-service organization that provides planning and community development, police, fire, marine safety, recreation, public works, water, and wastewater services. In response to severe pandemic impacts on revenues, she developed a plan to reduce the budget by 30% that maintained essential services to the community.

Ms. Johnson has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from UC Santa Barbara and a Master of Public Administration degree from San Francisco State University.

IN THIS ISSUE

2. Ross Town Dinner Highlights
3. Planning
3. Dogs on Ross Common
3. Common Improvement Plan
3. Defensible Space Evaluations
4. Age Friendly Corner
4. Recreation
5. Calendar

Mayor's Corner - continued from Page 1

perimeter path). Other topics raised included whether parts of the Common should remain as grass or have structures added such as tables, benches, and places for games; how the grove area should be used, including whether dogs should be leashed; and whether more trees should be planted.

Ross residents were emailed a questionnaire in late July seeking feedback about the Common. The responses showed that Ross Common is beloved by residents. Many saw no need for changes other than routine maintenance; some liked some of the potential changes and additions to the Common. Many asked if it would be possible to add bathrooms. Some commented about traffic, an issue that the Council will address later as part of an overall assessment of downtown parking, traffic, and safety.



At the August Council meeting a landscaping consultant presented proposals for potential projects on the Common. These included widened pathways, new concrete patios with tables and chairs, a game area in place of grass adjacent to the post office, and changes to the post office crosswalk and parking. Council members agreed that the paths need repaving and that the hedge and grass should be replanted after the drought but asked the consultant to return with scaled down plans for the other proposals; these are now being discussed. Images of the consultant's proposals can be found in the [October 14 staff report](#) on the Town's website.

The Council is expected to finalize the extent of work on the Common at its November or December meeting. In the meantime, we welcome input from residents at towncouncil@townofross.org, or please contact Planning and Building Director Patrick Streeter at pstreeter@townofross.org. ■

Highlights of Annual Ross Town Dinner



The Town Dinner held on Friday, October 1st drew 500+ residents to dine with their neighbors and friends potluck style under the grove on the Ross Common. This very popular community event has been a Town tradition since 2005. It was not held last year due to COVID and its return this year drew record numbers. We couldn't have asked for better weather or a more perfect evening!



Huge thanks go to Gretchen Castets, and her staff, Jeneane Wagner and Maya Talmage, for their hard work and efforts in making this event such a success. Thanks also to the Ross Police Department, Anthony Alcozer, Zack Baker, Bob Scott All Star Band, Town Council, and Joe Chinn.



PLANNING RESULTS

The Town Council took the following action on planning applications at the October Council meeting. Staff reports and video for the meeting can be found on the Town's website [October 14th](#) meeting page. The minutes for this meeting will be posted after adoption by the Council at the November 4, 2021 Council meeting.

Address: 86 Glenwood Avenue
Owner: Gilbert & Kelli Fleitas
Council Action: Approved
Vote (for/against/abstain): 5-0-0

Address: 3 Newell Road
Owner: Newell Road Trust
Council Action: Approved
Vote (for/against/abstain): 5-0-0

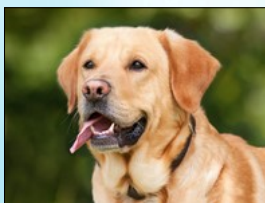


Ross Common Improvement Plan Update

Last night, the Council continued its discussion of repairs, rehabilitation, and improvement of the Ross Common. Town staff, in partnership with landscape architects Gates + Associates, has engaged the community for feedback over the past several months. The Town hosted an online questionnaire that ran from July 22, 2021, to August 5, 2021. The Town received 381 responses to the questionnaire. In addition, Gates + Associates held several focus group meetings that included representatives of Ross School, Age Friendly Ross, Ross Property Owners Association, and other community stakeholders. On August 12, 2021, the Ross Town Council was presented with a summary of the questionnaire results and provided direction on an initial concept for the plan. On September 21, 2021, Gates + Associates and Town staff presented the revised concept to the Advisory Design Review Group (ADR) for comment.

A concept, reflective of the outreach and engagement to date, was presented to the Council at Thursday's meeting. The Council approved of near-term projects, including repair of asphalt pathways, restoration of landscaping, planting of additional trees and vegetation screening, and adding a few benches. Additional concepts such as full restoration of the turf will be further considered in the future as funding becomes available.

Dogs on Ross Common Revisited



The Ross Common has been a central location for gathering and recreation for the Town since 1911. It has often been the topic of discussion with regards to its use and maintenance.

In 2004, the Ross Town Council discussed the possibility of prohibiting off-leash dogs on the Ross Common. The primary drivers for the discussion were hygiene and cleanliness, the comfort of other users of the park, and the safety of children, particularly considering the adjacency of the Ross School. The discussion ultimately resulted in the Council's adoption of Ordinance No. 585, which prohibits dogs, leashed and unleashed, on the open lawn portion of the Common where the athletic fields and playground are located. The topic came up again in August of 2020, when the Council expanded the prohibition of dogs to include the shaded grove area of the Common to facilitate social distancing during the 2020/21 school year and summer. The expanded prohibition was removed in August 2021. At last night's meeting, the Council directed staff to prepare for consideration an ordinance that would require dogs to be leashed during the hours that children are arriving or departing from Ross School.

Defensible Space Evaluations Coming to Wellington & Winship Neighborhood



The Ross Valley Fire Department (RVFD) will be conducting defensible space and home hardening evaluations on residential properties in the Ross neighborhoods of Wellington

and Winship Avenue starting the week of October 11. RVFD will be going door to door in the neighborhood so property owners should be on the lookout for signs posted in the neighborhood indicating that RVFD is conducting evaluations. Contact dspace@marinwildfire.org with any questions.

In addition, roadside vegetation management will be conducted soon in the areas between Upper Toyon Drive and Winding Way. More information on this will be sent out when it becomes available.



Halloween & COVID

Shady Lane will not be closed for Halloween this year to discourage thousands of trick-or-treaters from gathering in one area. The Town has spoken with several Shady Lane residents who have indicated they are not participating in Halloween this year due to COVID concerns.

We recommend celebrating Halloween in smaller gatherings and avoiding large crowds to reduce the risk of transmitting COVID. Take extra steps while trick-or-treating: Try to maintain social distancing, practice appropriate hand hygiene (use of hand sanitizer) while collecting/giving out candy, pass treats out from outside your home, or place them on an outdoor table. We wish everyone a safe and spirited celebration!

AGE FRIENDLY CORNER

Successful breakfast gathering for older residents in Ross

On September 29th, the Ross Age Friendly Task Force, with the support of the Town of Ross and the Ross Property Owners' Association, held its first social gathering for older residents in Ross at the lovely outdoor patio of the Crown and Crumpet Café.



Police Chief Pata gave an excellent presentation about phone and email scams and how to avoid them. The food was delicious and the socializing was enjoyable. A great way to reacquaint with old friends and meet new ones.



The Ross Age Friendly Task Force will be holding more social events like this in the near future, so stay tuned to find out when the next event is.

If you have any questions or want to know more about the Age Friendly Task Force, please contact Gretchen Castets (gcastets@townofross.org), or Teri Dowling (mtdowling55@gmail.com).

RECREATION NEWS

Fall has arrived and the leaves (and acorns!) are falling. We are moving towards the holiday season and already planning for our winter session. We are currently in the middle of our fall session with soccer practices and games in full effect. We still have a few spots open in Hip hop & Bacich Kinder Science, if you are interested in joining, let us know and we can prorate the cost and get your child registered.



Basketball K-4th grade registration is LIVE! Many of the practice slots are already full, but there are still openings in some, so check it out and sign up before all the spots are gone. Also, it's always a good idea to get on the wait-



list for your desired practice day and we will let you know if a spot opens up. Practices and games will begin in January 2022 and be held at both Ross School and Bacich Elementary (see website for full details on practice time and location). We weren't able to have a basketball season last year, and we are excited to have it return and see the kids on the court.

Important information on the Ross Town tennis courts. We will be re-keying the courts on **Tuesday, October 19th**.



The new keys are now available for purchase at the Recreation Office for \$200 and the keys are good for two years. The Recreation Office will be open Monday to Thursday from 2pm-5pm to drop in and purchase a key. If those days/times do not work for you, send an email to rossrec@rossrecreation.org, and we can schedule another time to pick up. Please make sure to bring proof of being a Ross resident (utilities bill or something similar). Feel free to reach out with any questions pertaining to the key change and the tennis courts.

ROSS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCTOBER 2021

Oct 14 6:00 pm Town Council Meeting (*virtual meeting*)
 Oct 19 7:00 pm Advisory Design Review Group Meeting (*virtual meeting*)

NOVEMBER 2021

Nov 4* 6:00 pm Town Council Meeting (*virtual meeting*) *note date change
 Nov 8 7:00 pm Ross Property Owners Assn (*for Zoom link, contact jeffkoblick@comcast.net*)
 Nov 11 -- -- Town Hall offices closed for Veterans Day
 Nov 16 7:00 pm Advisory Design Review Group Meeting (*virtual meeting*)
 Nov 25-26 -- -- Town Hall offices closed for Thanksgiving holiday

DECEMBER 2021

Dec 4 6:00-8 pm Winter WINEland, Branson School lawn
 Dec 6 7:00 pm Ross Property Owners Assn (*for Zoom link, contact jeffkoblick@comcast.net*)
 Dec 9 6:00 pm Town Council Meeting (*virtual meeting*)
 Dec 21 7:00 pm Advisory Design Review Group Meeting (*virtual meeting*)
 Dec 24-31 -- -- Town Hall offices closed for the holidays

CONTACT US

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

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Email

We welcome suggestions for future issues. Email

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