

THE MORNING AFTER

TOWN OF ROSS NEWSLETTER

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Mayor's Corner



Elizabeth Robbins
Mayor

The Ross Town Council is on track to approve Branson's application to amend its existing use permit to increase student enrollment.

The Town requires use permits for non-residential use of property in residential neighborhoods. Last March, Branson filed an application to amend condition #1 of its use permit to increase the school's enrollment from 320 to 420 students. This followed voter approval of Measure F in March 2020, which allowed a total student enrollment of up to 420 students, subject to the approval of a use permit by the Town Council. A key element of Branson's campaign was its promise to keep traffic net-neutral with any enrollment increase.

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Defensible Space Grants Available Now

The Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA) has launched a \$500,000 grant program to allow Marin residents to obtain funding for expenses related to the creation of defensible space and home hardening on their properties. The grant funds are available to qualified residents who complete a home and property evaluation from their local fire agency. "To become a fire resilient community, we must help residents become aware



of risks on their property and give them resources to offset the costs of making these improvements," stated Mark Brown, Executive Officer of MWPA. "With these grant opportunities, there are available funds to serve as a natural extension to our Defensible Space and Home Hardening Evaluation program where evaluators inspect properties for fire resiliency and produce a report for residents to reduce wildfire risks to their home and property."

Qualified residents will now be directed to available grants as part of their evaluation report allowing them to submit a funding request through an automated system. Based on local evaluations conducted from May to October of this year, over 80% of assessed properties have identified risks that would qualify for the grants. To learn more about the requirements and to apply for the grant program, residents should visit the [MWPA grants webpage](#). The grant funds are broken into two categories: Defensible Space grants and Home Hardening grants. Current funding is available through the 2021-22 fiscal year ending on June 30, 2022.

Defensible Space grants intend to help residents create a buffer between structures on their properties and the grass, trees, shrubs or vegetation that surround it. MWPA's Defensible Space grants are available to families with children, older adults, low-income and other residents with Access and Functional Needs as defined by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, for parcels in the MWPA jurisdiction. \$250,000 in Defensible Space grants are awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis to residents in amounts between \$100 (minimum) to \$1,000 (maximum) per year, and eligibility documentation is required.

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Branson's current use permit dates from 1978, when Branson, which started as a small girls' boarding school, transitioned to a larger school with an enrollment of 320 students. The use permit established conditions to ensure that the school's impact on the neighbors and the Town did not increase as Branson grew.

At its January meeting and at a special meeting February 8 the Council indicated that the enrollment increase could be 100 students (25 students/year over 4 years), as requested by Branson, and that the enrollment increase was exempt from CEQA, based on no net increase in traffic. The Council discussed whether existing conditions in the use permit needed to be updated. The most important conditions of approval relate to Branson's promise to keep traffic net neutral. The school has developed a comprehensive plan to achieve this. Much of the discussion has focused on how to monitor and enforce the plan to ensure that traffic is maintained at current levels.



The Council is expected to consider whether to approve Branson's application at its continued special meeting February 15 (starting at 8:30 am), bringing this process to a close. This will allow Branson to send out offers of admission next month consistent with the approved use permit. ■

Council Approves Interim Planning & Building Director



David Woltering

The Council approved the appointment of David Woltering to serve as part-time Interim Planning and Building Director while the Town recruits for a permanent appointment.

Mr. Woltering has over 30 years of experience in community planning and development. He has previously worked for the cities of San Bruno, Clayton, Cotati, Windsor and Rocklin before retiring in 2018. Since his retirement, he has formed the independent consulting firm of Woltering Community Planning LLC, which provides Community Development services to public agencies and the private sector. Most recently, Mr. Woltering served as Interim Director in Healdsburg.

Mr. Woltering begins on Wednesday, February 16 and will work approximately 24 hours per week. He will serve in the interim position until the Planning and Building Director position is filled. Mr. Woltering's contact information will be dwoltering@townofross.org.

Town Council Election Filing Period February 14 – March 11

The next election to fill two Council seats for a four-year term will be held on Tuesday, June 7, 2022. The terms of Council Members Elizabeth Robbins and Julie McMillan will expire at that time.



To qualify to run for Council, you must be a Ross resident and a registered voter. The filing period for Council candidates begins **February 14th and runs through March 11th**. If any of the incumbents *do not* file for re-election by March 11th, the filing date is extended to Wednesday, March 16 (for non-incumbents only).

Contact Town Clerk Linda Lopez at (415) 453-1453 ext. 105, or via email at llopez@townofross.org, if you are interested in running for a Council seat or have any questions regarding the process. An appointment with the Town Clerk is necessary in order to obtain the nomination papers.

PLANNING RESULTS

The Town Council took the following action on planning applications at the February Council meetings. Staff reports and video for the meetings can be found on the Town's website pages for [February 8th](#) and [February 10th](#). The minutes for these meetings will be posted after adoption by the Council at the March 10, 2022 Council meeting.

Address: 39 Fernhill Avenue
Applicant: The Branson School
Council Action: Continued to February 15
Vote (for/against/abstain): 5-0-0

Address: 36 Glenwood Avenue
Applicant: 36 Glenwood LLC
Council Action: Approved
Vote (for/against/abstain): 5-0-0

Address: 21 Fernhill Avenue
Applicant: Stephanie & Russ Haswell
Council Action: Approved
Vote (for/against/abstain): 4-0-1 (Robbins recused)

Address: Corte Madera Creek Flood Risk Management Project
Applicant: Marin County Flood Control
Council Action: Approved
Vote (for/against/abstain): 5-0-0

Town to Install Public EV Charging Stations



In October 2021, the Town Council approved the installation of three new Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations for public use at the Post Office parking lot. One charging head will be installed for accessible parking only, and two charging heads will be available at two standard parking stalls. Over half of the cost of the purchase and installation of the stations will be funded by grants from TAM Measure B and Marin Clean Energy (MCE) EV station rebate programs. The EV stations are scheduled to be available for public use this Spring.

Dog Licensing in Marin



The Marin Humane Society reminds us that a dog license is required by law for all dogs over the age of four months who live in Marin County.

Why is it important to get your dog licensed?

- Licensing your dog is the law in Marin County per County Ordinance No 8.04.030.
- If your dog gets lost, a license tag on your dog's collar is the fastest way to reunite you and your dog. Even if your dog is microchipped, a license tag is immediately visible and doesn't require a scanning device to read.
- A current license lets people know that your dog has received the required vaccination to protect your dog from rabies.
- The fee you pay for your dog's license or license renewal helps support the animal shelter.
- Your dog's license shows that you are a responsible guardian.



For more information about licensing your dog, updating your record, address changes, or notification of deceased pets, call 415-506-6220. To purchase or renew a dog license visit the [Marin Humane Society](#).

Fire-Smart Landscaping Tip



Trees and Shrubs - Consider spacing

- Remove dead trees
- Consider creating separation by increasing spacing between tree canopies while considering flat vs sloped terrain.
- Maintain vertical clearance of at least 3X the shrub's height between the tops of shrubs and the bottom of the tree canopy. This can be done by pruning the shrub down, or by pruning smaller, easily ignitable tree branches up, or by using both methods.
- Plant spacing, size control and maintenance are more important than type of plant.

Additional Information can be found on the [UC Marin Master Gardeners website](#).



Grants Available

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Home Hardening grants address

the most vulnerable components of your house with building materials and installation techniques that increase resistance to heat, flames, and embers that accompany wildfires. \$250,000 in Home



Hardening grants will be awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis in amounts between \$100 (**minimum**) to \$500 (maximum) per year and this grant program requires a 50% match from the applicant. Eligibility documentation is required. MWPA's Home Hardening grants are available for all parcels in the MWPA jurisdiction. ■

AGE FRIENDLY CORNER

Tips to live long and well in Ross



Tips for Lowering Sodium Intake – Jenna Ray, RD Senior Nutritionist, Marin County Aging & Adult Services

- Reducing sodium intake can help lower blood pressure & protect against heart disease. Most dietary sodium comes from packaged, processed or pre-made

foods. Recommendation for sodium = no more than 2,300 milligrams (mg)/day; no more than 1,500 mg/day for those with high blood pressure. One teaspoon equals ~ 2,300 mg of sodium.

When shopping: Read labels & compare products to find the least amount of sodium per serving; Buy fresh, frozen or canned fruits & vegetables with no salt or sauces added; Choose packaged foods labeled “low sodium,” “reduced sodium,” or “no salt added”; Choose prepared meals with less than 600 mg of sodium per serving.

At home: Eat more fruits and vegetables; Limit sauces, condiments, mixes & “instant” products; Use onions, garlic, spices, herbs, vinegar, and citrus juices to flavor your foods instead of salt; Make rice, pasta, beans & meats from their most basic forms (dry or fresh).

Dining out: Ask that no salt be added to meal; Make takeout or fast food an occasional treat; Taste your food before adding salt; If you need more flavor add fresh pepper or lemon juice.

RECREATION NEWS

The winter session is in full swing and as much as we need the rain, it has been wonderful to be able to hold many of our programs outdoors and take advantage of this beautiful weather! The spring session (which begins in March) is open for registration. Some of the programs are full, but not all. We have space in PeeWee T-ball, Hip Hop, Chess, Soccer, Lacrosse, Ballet and much more. Please see our website at <https://www.rossrecreation.org/> for the full listing of programs and reach out to us with any questions or if you need help registering.



The Recreation Department follows the school schedule and has camps during most school breaks. We have a mid-winter break camp in February that will be held at Phoenix Lake (weather permitting). There are only a couple spots left in that one, so reach out ASAP if you would like a spot.

You can sign up for the week, or we can prorate it as well for however many days you need. We have more spots open in our Spring break camp and that will also be held at Phoenix Lake. Both camps are taught by Holly Salamun and she combines science, art, nature exploration and so much more.

Summer Camp registration will open the first week of



March. If you are not already on our e-mail list, please go to our website (rossrecreation.org) and click the “get on the list” link on our homepage. This way, you will know right when camps open.

Some of the camps we will have include Holly Hoppin’ Nature Camp, LEGO camp, Chess Camp and Top Gun, just to name a few. All camps will be one week sessions. We are looking forward to having a summer full of fun with friends old and new.

ROSS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY 2022

Feb 8	5:00	pm	Special Town Council Meeting (<i>virtual meeting</i>)
Feb 10	6:00	pm	Town Council Meeting (<i>virtual meeting</i>)
Feb 15	8:30	am	Special Town Council Meeting (<i>virtual meeting</i>)
Feb 15	7:00	pm	Advisory Design Review Group Meeting (<i>virtual meeting</i>)
Feb 21	--	--	Town Hall offices closed for Presidents Day

MARCH 2022

Mar 7	6:00	pm	Ross Property Owners Assn (<i>Zoom link, contact jeffkoblick@comcast.net</i>)
Mar 10	6:00	pm	Town Council Meeting (<i>virtual meeting</i>)
Mar 15	9:00	am	Annual Council Strategic Workshop (<i>virtual meeting</i>)
Mar 15	7:00	pm	Advisory Design Review Group Meeting (<i>virtual meeting</i>)

APRIL 2022

Apr 11	6:00	pm	Ross Property Owners Assn (<i>Zoom link, contact jeffkoblick@comcast.net</i>)
Apr 14	6:00	pm	Town Council Meeting (<i>virtual meeting</i>)
Apr 16	10:30-12:30pm		Ross Auxiliary Spring Fling
Apr 19	7:00	pm	Advisory Design Review Group Meeting (<i>virtual meeting</i>)
Apr 28	9:00	am	Special Council Meeting - Annual Budget Workshop (<i>virtual meeting</i>)

CONTACT US

Administration Office	415-453-1453 x105	Police Department	415-453-1453, Opt. 2
- llopez@townofross.org		- rpata@townofross.org	
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	
Planner	415-453-1453 x116	Ross Valley Fire Dept	415-258-4686
- mweintraub@townofross.org		Town Manager	415-453-1453 x107
		- cjohnson@townofross.org	

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Email

We welcome suggestions for future issues. Email

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