

THE MORNING AFTER

TOWN OF ROSS NEWSLETTER

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Mayor's Corner



Elizabeth Robbins
Mayor

After nearly 15 hours of discussion over three separate meetings, the Ross Town Council approved The Branson School's application to increase its enrollment from 320 to 420 students on February 15.

Branson initiated this process several years ago by beginning a campaign to change the town's ordinance that limited enrollment to 320. Voters approved Measure F in March 2020, allowing the school to apply to the Town Council for a change to its use permit to increase enrollment by up to 100 additional students. Use permits are required for non-residential use of property in residential neighborhoods.

A key element of Branson's proposal to

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Housing Element Update is Underway

At the March 10th Town Council meeting, the Council approved a Consultant Services Agreement with the Bay Area consulting firm, Dyett & Bhatia Urban and Regional Planners, to prepare the Town's State-mandated 2023-2031 Housing Element Update. The Housing Element is one of seven required elements of a jurisdiction's comprehensive planning document, the General Plan. The purpose of the Housing Element is to assess local housing conditions, needs, and constraints and establish plans, policies, programs, and strategies to facilitate the construction and preservation of housing



for all income levels within a community. Local jurisdictions are assigned new housing unit production targets by the State. These targets are referred to as Regional Housing Needs Allocations (RHNA). For this 2023-2031, Sixth Cycle, the Town of Ross has been assigned a RHNA of 111 new units, with 54 of those units for low- and very low-income households. This is a substantial increase over the prior Fifth State Housing Cycle of 18 units. The State is aggressively working to attempt to address the ongoing statewide housing crisis with substantially increased housing targets across the state and requiring more detailed analyses by jurisdictions of potential housing sites to assure the feasibility of developing those sites and at the densities suggested. Additionally, the State will be focusing on a community's ability to demonstrate that affordable units are being equitably distributed throughout a community, referred to as Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH). Staff will be working with the community, the Town Council, and the selected consultant to successfully satisfy State requirements, while maintaining the valued character of the Town of Ross. There will be a significant public outreach and engagement component to this project, including soliciting feedback and providing information through surveys, informational forums, open houses, pop-up events, social media, and Council meetings. Overall, this project will have several aspects as follows: updating the Town's Housing Element, updating its Safety Element, and preparing a focused environmental impact report to address possible impacts of these actions. Additional and ongoing information will be posted on the Town's website about this project through its completion.

increase student enrollment was its promise, made in campaign and ballot documents, to keep traffic net neutral with any enrollment increase. Net neutral traffic was also a requirement for the enrollment increase to be exempt from further CEQA environmental review. Branson prepared a Traffic Demand Management Plan to outline strategies for maintaining traffic at the current level.

Much of the discussion at council meetings was focused on whether the traffic plan included adequate monitoring and enforcement to ensure that traffic would remain net neutral. Branson and Town lawyers worked together to finalize the monitoring and enforcement conditions that were ultimately approved. These included traffic monitoring in the fall and again in the spring, with enrollment adjustments or fines if traffic levels exceed the baseline. Traffic monitoring results will be available to Branson during monitoring periods so that it can alter traffic patterns if necessary; this should ensure that enrollment adjustments and fines are never needed.

Branson and the Town had similar approaches to ensure that Branson's promise of net neutral traffic was achieved; the Town's conditions were more robust. Both proposed conditions that would slow the initial addition of 100 students if traffic increased, and both proposed conditions that would include enrollment rollbacks (and fines in Branson's proposal) if traffic increased after enrollment reached 420. The approved conditions should result in net neutral traffic while ensuring that Branson remains a vital member of the Ross community.

The Council now turns its attention to another topic of broad community interest: how Ross, a town of 800 homes, can meet the state's requirement to add an additional 111 housing units by 2031. These discussions began last night. ■

Police Sergeant Campa Retires



Gianfranco Campa

Long-time employee Police Sergeant Gianfranco Campa retired on February 15, 2022, after serving in the Ross Police Department since 2003.

Sergeant Campa was born in Italy and immigrated to the United States in 1990. In 2002, he changed his career path to law enforcement, and was hired by the Marin County Sheriff's Office, working in the Jail. He began patrol duties in Ross in 2003, and was promoted to Sergeant in 2010. Sergeant Campa handled the Police Department statistics and training programs.

He is an avid cyclist and soccer fan and in his spare time, has written history and political articles for Italian online publications. He maintains a home in the Puglia region of Italy and travels there as often as he can to visit relatives.

We extend to Gianfranco and his family our best wishes for a happy and healthy retirement filled with many new and exciting adventures.

Council Approves Ross Valley Fire Dept JPA Amendment

The Council approved the third amendment to the Ross Valley Fire Department Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) at last night's Council meeting. Over the past year, the Ross Valley Fire Department (RVFD) Board of Directors



has been meeting to study the potential impacts of the closure of the Ross Fire Station. A thorough analysis of operational and fiscal impacts was presented to the RVFD Board and the Ross Town Council in November 2021. Eight options were considered during these meetings and the RVPA Board unanimously endorsed Option #2 which eliminates the Ross Fire Station (Engine 18) and shifts personnel to other stations. The Town Council's of San Anselmo and Fairfax have also unanimously approved Option #2 and the amendment to the JPA.

Further detailed information on the amendments to the JPA can be found in the [Staff Report \(Attachment 1\)](#) on the Town's website.

PLANNING RESULTS

The Town Council took the following action on planning applications at the February 15 and March 10 Council meetings. Staff reports and video for the meetings can be found on the Town's website pages [February 15th](#) and [March 10th](#). The minutes for these meetings will be posted on their respective pages after adoption by the Council.

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

Address: 58 Shady Lane
Applicant: Robert & Madeline Wiginton
Council Action: Approved
Vote (for/against/abstain): 4-0-1 (Robbins recused)



Join Ross Auxiliary for its annual [Spring Fling Event](#) on Saturday, April 16th 10:30 am - 12:30 pm at the Ross School Blacktop to celebrate all things Spring. Kids can enjoy a petting zoo, The Bay Area Discovery Museum's Try-It-Truck, Mr Shap's balloon art, cookie decorating, Earth Day activities, live kids music and an egg hunt! This year includes Early Bird Tacos for purchase as well as healthy green salads, fruit salads, and wraps from Infusion Craft Street Food. Beverages include Nixie Sparkling Water, Peet's Coffee and mimosas.

Be sure to [PRE-ORDER our Paint Your Own Cookie Decorating Kits](#) and pick them up at Spring Fling. Take them home to enjoy or decorate at the event.

Questions? Please contact hello@rossauxiliary.com.

Adapt to Wildfire Campaign Launched



The Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA) and [Fire Safe Marin](#) have collaborated to develop a new public information campaign that focuses on empowering residents to take part in reducing community risk from wildfire. A variety of messages have been developed and each one outlines a unique motivation for adapting to wildfire. The series of ads route residents to the Fire Safe Marin [website](#) to learn how to take proactive action to prepare for wildfire. MWPA's mission is to lead the development of a fire adapted Marin County and Fire Safe Marin is helping to further that mission through resident outreach.

"One of the goals of this campaign is to change social norms from one of fear and apathy to an empowered, adaptive culture here in Marin," Rich Shortall, Executive Coordinator at Fire Safe Marin explained. "We think that focusing on people's motivations for adapting can really become a conversation starter with the community."

"If people want to live anywhere in the west right now, they need to learn to adapt to wildfire. Everyone has a role to play in making that happen," stated Mark Brown, Executive Officer of MWPA. "This campaign builds awareness about a necessary culture shift in the face of longer and more intense wildfire seasons. People need to understand that the biggest actions they can take to protect themselves and their families is to become active participants in adapting their homes and properties for wildfire."

Low-Income Senior Tax Exemption Available from MWPA Parcel Tax

Did you know there is a low-income senior parcel tax exemption available to homeowners from the Measure C – Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority parcel tax? To qualify you must meet certain criteria and you must re-apply every year. To learn more or to apply for the exemption, go to <https://www.marinwildfire.org/resident-info/senior-exemption>.



Traffic Enforcement in Ross

Traffic problems are the #1 issue in most communities. Last month Ross Police Department proactively stopped 68 drivers for a variety of reasons. 12 drivers were cited and 56 were warned. We are trying to slow and improve traffic issues in our Town. We conduct traffic enforcement all over Ross, and are currently responding to complaints from our residents at the following locations: Left turn violations on Bolinas Avenue at Shady Lane; U-Turn violations on Ross Common; Speed and lane violations on Sir Francis Drake from Bolinas Ave to Laurel Grove; Stop Sign violations on Fernhill at Glenwood and Norwood; and speed violations on Laurel Grove near Canyon.

You may not see us at each location every day but we are there doing our best to address your complaints. Calls to our dispatch center are the best way to have an officer address a traffic or any problem that is not an emergency and is occurring at that moment. You can reach the Town Police at our non-emergency number 415-453-2727. ~ Ross Police Department

AGE FRIENDLY CORNER

Tips to live long and well in Ross



Avoiding Falls and Fractures - Tripping on a rug or slipping on a wet floor can change your life. Here are a few tips to help you avoid falls and broken bones:

1. Stay physically active.
2. Stand up slowly.
3. Wear well fitted non-skid shoes.
4. Fall proof your home.
5. Always tell your doctor if you have fallen even if you are not hurt.

For more information, check out these excellent websites: <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/prevent-falls-and-fractures>
<https://www.cdc.gov/falls/facts.html>
www.homemods.org
<http://www.ncoa.org/center-for-healthy-aging/falls-resource-center/>

RECREATION NEWS

If you have been downtown lately, you may have noticed that the field is open. Please come down and kick a soccer ball around or have a picnic with friends or family. We love to see the Ross Common come alive with those from the community and beyond and we hope it serves as a place to build connections and memories for years to come!



The winter session is coming to an end and spring session will be starting at the end of the month. Some programs are full for the spring, but we have openings in Lacrosse, PeeWee T-ball, Soccer (pre-k & k-2), Yoga, Chess, Sandrick's Sports and many more. To register, go to <https://www.rossrecreation.org/>, or reach out to the Recreation team at rossrec@rossrecreation.org, to help you find a class that would be a good fit for your child(ren).

Summer camps are LIVE! We have some of our long time camps on the schedule including Top Gun, Sporty Girl, Holly Hoppin' Nature Camp, LEGO Camp and Gone Fishin'. We also have new camps added that include: Chess Camp, Ross Bears Kinder Camp (limited to incoming Ross School kindergarteners), Hip Hop Camp, and Hoops with Sandrick. We feel fortunate to have so many wonderful instructors on board to create a safe and fun environment for your family to enjoy their summer break.



Ross Age Friendly Group Event

Lastly, the Ross Age Friendly Group along with the RPOA will be hosting a breakfast at Crown & Crumpet on Tuesday, April 12th from 9:00-11:00am for older Ross residents. There will be a \$10 fee to attend, which we will collect at the event. Space is limited - please RSVP to Gretchen Castets at gcastets@townofross.org, if you would like to participate in this wonderful community building event.

ROSS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH 2022

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>)
Mar 30	4-6:00	pm	Spring Climate Action Workshops - Click here to sign up

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 (<i>see Page 3 for details</i>)
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>)

MAY 2022

May 9	6:00	pm	Ross Property Owners Assn (<i>Zoom link, contact jeffkoblick@comcast.net</i>)
May 7	5:00	pm	Ross Auxiliary Spring Dinner Fundraiser - Click here to purchase tickets
May 12	6:00	pm	Town Council Meeting
May 14	4:30	pm	RPOA's Live on the Common
May 17	7:00	pm	Advisory Design Review Group Meeting
May 30	--	--	Town Hall offices closed for Memorial Day

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
- dwoltering@townofross.org		Town Manager	415-453-1453 x107
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Email

We welcome suggestions for future issues. Email

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