

# THE MORNING AFTER

## TOWN OF ROSS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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### Mayor's Corner



Katie Hoertkorn

Ross has been a town for 107 years, and whether we have recently arrived or have family roots dating back to its inception, we love Ross for its historic character, excellent school, trees, unique, beautifully maintained homes, as well as its small town charm. We are a true community.

It is the Town Council's role to direct Town business, ensure performance of services, oversee finances and resources, determine policies, and plan for the future in a transparent manner. I am most fortunate to be the new Mayor with a Council that is dedicated, hard working, fair, and has one agenda: the welfare of the Town of Ross and its citizens. And it is my pleasure as well to be able to work with a new Town Manager, Joe Chinn,

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### A Message from the Town Manager



Joe Chinn

I want to start by thanking the Council, staff, and residents for the warm welcome I have received since being here as the Town Manager since August 1. Ross is a charming community both in its physical beauty and in the warmth of its residents. One knows the second they arrive in town that there is something special about Ross. The roads are well maintained; there is lush landscaping and trees; beautiful development; and a strong feeling of community. Ross co-exists with the natural environment. There is a wonderful sense of place as many people can be seen walking, biking, and gathering in and around the Commons, the downtown, and the Marin Art and Garden Center.

I look forward to working to preserve and enhance Ross. My goal is to work with the elected Town Council, staff, residents, and organizations to find ways to improve the quality of life in the community through effective, efficient, and responsive services while ensuring financial stability. It is critical that the Town be wise in managing and best utilizing your tax dollars and other funds to provide quality services while maintaining long-term financial stability.

I also believe that collaborative efforts and partnerships with organizations and residents are critical to improving the services and quality of life in the community. In my prior positions, I implemented many innovative partnerships with other government entities; the private sector; not-for-profit organizations; and resident groups to improve community services. Sometimes the Town will have the role as "doer" but often we can succeed and be more cost effective and efficient by acting as a facilitator or partner to utilize the skills and talents of others in the goal of community building. We will strive to be innovative in providing services.

Ross has an excellent, knowledgeable, and caring Town Council; a dedicated and diligent staff that look to provide outstanding services to the residents; a strong network of organizations in the Town; and the caring residents who are proud to call Ross their home. I am honored to serve as the Town Manager and look forward to meeting you! ■

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who brings to Ross a long and broad career in municipal management and oversight.

Ross has not been immune to the vicissitudes of the U.S. economy. For a number of years, the Town had significant deficits which were ended three years ago. The last Town Manager, Rob Braulik, put in place policies and procedures to reduce expenditures and initiated cost based budgeting so that we can match expenditures with revenues. However, two other key factors were critical to our financial stabilization: rising property resale values and passage of Measure D, the public safety tax.



This year's budget is \$7.2M with a small planned contingency surplus. Our expenditures are primarily Fire (\$1.8M), Police (\$1.5M) and general government (\$1.1M). We continue to have the smallest staff in the County. We also now include Ross Recreation revenues of \$1.1M in our budget, but those revenues just cover the expenditures of this valuable enterprise. The Town's actual non-Measure D revenues comes from one primary source, property taxes, which are challenged to grow as fast as expenses. Our property taxes this year will be \$3.9M, rents (Post Office) and other miscellaneous income is expected to approximate \$.5M. Without

the generosity of Ross property owners via Measure D, we simply could not fund Town operations, specifically Safety. Importantly, we will continue to have hefty charges from CalPERS for unfunded retirement costs created by rosy actuarial projections in past decades and the underperformance of CalPERS investments. Our current outstanding assessment is \$3.7M. An important side note is that we do not have unfunded medical retirement benefits, which most municipalities do.

The Council and Town Manager have begun work on these key objectives:

- An independent study and review of Planning and Building Fees to determine accuracy and fairness of current pricing;
- Creating a plan for the ultimate repayment of CalPERS debt;
- Reviewing the Ross Valley Fire Department JPA and attendant costs;
- Review and updating as needed of our Codes;
- Reviewing Design Review;
- Negotiations for a new Police contract;
- Facilities overview which will encompass all Town owned properties;
- Staff organization;
- Improving the use of technology to increase service levels and efficiencies.

**The Wednesday morning before the Thursday council meeting** (meetings are the second Thursday of every month), I will be in front of the Post Office from 9:30 – 11:00 a.m. seeking clarity from any resident on any topic. Next month that will be September 9<sup>th</sup>.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the Post Office has agreed to again deliver mail addressed to a street address even without the post office box number. Of course it is very important to try and make sure your mail does have the box number, but the new Post Office Manager has agreed not to refuse the mail, provided they can figure out the correct box number.

Please remember the Town dinner the last Friday of September.

With gratitude,  
Katie Hoertkorn ■

## PLANNING RESULTS



Leann Taagepera  
Contract Planner



Ali Giudice  
Contract Planner

The Town Council took the following action on planning applications at the August Council meeting. Staff reports and audio for the meeting can be found on the [August 13th](#) meeting page. The minutes for this meeting will be available on this page after adoption by the Council at the September Council meeting.

**Address: 2 Fallen Leaf**  
**Applicant: Zack & Casey Georgeson**  
**Council Action: Approved**  
**Vote (for/against/abstain): 5-0-0**

**200 Hillside Avenue Continued**  
**188 Lagunitas Road Continued**



## FLOOD UPDATE

Town staff is taking a number of steps in preparation for the wet season and potential flood hazards. Ross Public Works is on the schedule for the August Marin County Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program (MCSTOPPP) Project Coordination Meeting

to review flood hazards in the Town. Among other items, we plan to seek regulatory agency direction regarding removal of the small alders growing in Corte Madera



Creek near Lagunitas Bridge. We will also be requesting advice on the permit procedures for dredging the creek channel. However, regulatory permits for dredging will likely take six months to secure.

The Town will be undertaking drainage infrastructure maintenance in the next few months, and additionally there are Capital Improvement Projects for drainage repairs for culverts on Fernhill Avenue, Brookwood Lane, and Allen Avenue. In addition, Public Works will be sending out notifications to property owners for general and specific drainage/creek maintenance actions, including vegetation and debris removal as appropriate.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

### BURGLARY - Suspect Posing as Construction Worker

On July 28<sup>th</sup>, a Ross resident reported a theft from their home. At about noon, a man posing as a construction worker knocked on their door and asked to come inside to check the water. He said they had broken a water pipe and wanted to check the resident's water. The resident let him inside and the suspect acted as if checking the water. The suspect was alone for only a few minutes. After the suspect left, the residents found that some jewelry had been taken and notified the police. Ross Police learned there was a similar case in Strawberry area on July 21st and others in the Bay Area.



Please care when workers ask to come into your home. It is unusual for a construction/utilities company to do this without making an appointment. Call the Police to verify someone that appears without an appointment.

The photos are from a Los Altos case in early July. ■





## 2016 Council Meeting Dates

The regular Council meetings are held once a month on the second Thursday of the month, unless otherwise indicated. The Council adopted the following dates for the 2016 regular Council meetings:

- Thursday, January 14
- Thursday, February 11
- Thursday, March 10
- Thursday, April 14
- Thursday, May 12
- Wednesday, June 8 (\*date change)
- Thursday, July 14
- Thursday, August 11
- Thursday, September 8
- Thursday, October 13
- Thursday, November 10
- Thursday, December 8

### Ross Rejoins Marin County Major Crimes Task Force



The Council agreed to rejoin the Marin County Major Crimes Task Force (MCTF). They had previously taken the action of withdrawing from the MCTF last year due in large part to the City of San Rafael and Sausalito not participating in the MCTF by contributing funds to support its mission. The Council had also agreed to reconsider joining MCTF if the City of San Rafael rejoined.

This year, the City of San Rafael rejoined the MCTF for one year, and is now sharing the cost of the program. This year's annual contribution cost for Ross is anticipated to be \$9,377. The Council may reconsider next year's participation should San Rafael fail to continue funding for the MCTF.

## RECREATION NEWS



Ross Recreation Fall program registration will be available online beginning the week of August 17th. New program offerings highlight the fall season.

**Let's Explore** is an enrichment program offered in collaboration with Bay Area Discovery Museum for children ages 3 to 6.

**Magic and Stage Presence** instruction will be offered this Fall for students in grades K through 8.

In conjunction with All West Lacrosse, Ross Recreation will be offering introductory **Youth Lacrosse** skills instruction for children ages 3.5 to 5 years of age.

Please visit our website at [www.rossrecreation.org](http://www.rossrecreation.org) to register for these exciting new offerings, in addition to our ongoing programs at Bacich and Ross Schools.

Look for our Fall Brochure coming soon in the mail!

# ROSS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## AUGUST 2015

August 13 6:00 pm Council Meeting, Town Hall  
 August 25 7:00 pm Advisory Design Review Group Meeting, Town Hall

## SEPTEMBER 2015

Sept 1 -- -- Town Hall offices closed Labor Day  
 Sept 8 6:00 pm Recreation Advisory Committee Meeting, Town Hall  
 Sept 10 6:00 pm Council Meeting, Town Hall  
 Sept 22 7:00 pm Advisory Design Review Group Meeting, Town Hall  
 Sept 25 5:00 pm Annual Town Dinner, Marin Art & Garden Center

## OCTOBER 2015

Oct 8 6:00 pm Council Meeting, Town Hall  
 Oct 13 6:00 pm Recreation Advisory Committee Meeting, Town Hall  
 Oct 27 7:00 pm Advisory Design Review Group Meeting, Town Hall

## RECURRING EVENTS

Thursdays thru October Ross Farm Stand, 12:00-7:30 pm, Ross Common  
 Thursdays Jun 25-Aug 13 Free Summer Concert Series, 5:00-7:00 pm, Marin Art & Garden Center

## CONTACT US

|                |                        |                  |                   |
|----------------|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Administration | 415.453.1453 x105      | Public Works     | 415.453.1453 x106 |
| Building       | 415.453.1453 x106      | Recreation       | 415.453.6020      |
| Planning       | 415.453.1453 x121, 122 | Ross Valley Fire | 415.258.4686      |
| Police         | 415.453.1453, Option 2 | Town Manager     | 415.453.1453 x107 |

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Visit us at [www.townofross.org](http://www.townofross.org)



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