



San Anselmo News

Debra Stutsman, Town Manager
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March 6, 2009

Public Trash Receptacles

Town staff has noticed a sharp increase in the volume of personal and business trash being deposited in the public street and park trash receptacles. In these tough economic times, this may be seen as a way of avoiding paying for additional refuse services.

However, the trash receptacles located on public streets and in parks are for the convenience of passersby and park users. They help keep our street areas and parks clean and clear of trash. They are not intended to accommodate private use. Placing large amounts of refuse in these receptacles fills the cans up quickly and leaves no room for the intended use. This, in turn, causes overflowing cans and complaints from residents and park users.

Please help us out by using the public trash receptacles only as intended. Your cooperation is much appreciated.

Streamside Management Planning

The Marin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District is launching a new streamside management program to assist landowners with severe erosion problems on their creekside property.

The “*Streamside Management Plan for Landowners (SMPL)*” is part of the comprehensive effort launched by Supervisor Hal Brown, the Flood Control District, and the County of Marin Department of Public Works to build a long-term, flood damage reduction program in the Ross Valley.

The District has contracted with the Urban Creeks Council (UCC), a nonprofit headquartered in Berkeley, www.urbancreeks.org, for the streamside management plan. They will provide free consultations with private property owners who need assistance in determining erosion control measures for their creekside properties.

The UCC contract will fund consultations for at least 50 properties. UCC will assist in identifying the causes of the problem and recommend appropriate solutions. In some cases, UCC may also be able to assist with design and permitting of repair work as well.

In order to take part in this program, streamside property owners can fill out an application online at the website for the Ross Valley Watershed program, www.rossvalleywatershed.org. Follow the link on the opening page of the website.

To make this application form easier, a list of creekside property owners in the Ross Valley is built into the form and it will automatically fill in property information once an address or parcel number (APN) is entered. If you find that your property does not show up after that, you can call the program manager at 415-499-3051 who will provide a printed application by fax or email.

If you do not use the internet, you can pick up an application at the Civic Center, Room 304 or at one of the town halls in the Ross Valley. Once applications are received, they will be reviewed and prioritized and site visits will be scheduled.

UCC expects to begin site visits in April/May 2009. Creekside property owners are encouraged to take advantage of this program and participate in the Ross Valley flood damage reduction effort.

If you have any questions, please call 415-499-3051.

Elders Garden Work Party

The Elders Garden is located adjacent to the Millennium Playground at Memorial Park, near the San Francisco Blvd. entrance to the park. The garden was suggested by neighbor and Master Gardener Rohana McLaughlin in 2000 when the Millennium Playground was being designed and built.

Her suggestion was to create a landscaped seniors sitting area that would include shade trees, drought tolerant plantings, a game table, fountain and comfortable benches. The project was accepted by the Marin Master Gardeners as a community service project and construction of the garden went ahead.

The Elders Garden is a wonderful passive place to sit and enjoy the natural setting and the sounds of children playing nearby in the playground. Rohana continues to organize the community to volunteer to keep the Elders Garden in good shape.

The Marin Master Gardeners has recently recertified the garden as a Master Gardener Project, largely due to the continuing community volunteer support.

The next Elders Garden work party will be held on Saturday, March 21, from 9 a.m. to noon, weather permitting. The long-awaited rain that has fallen recently has helped to nourish a big crop of weeds that need pulling!

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March 13, 2009

Volunteer for San Anselmo Beautification

Spring is here, and along with it is our annual crop of weeds. The Town's Economic Development Subcommittee (Ford Greene and Peter Breen) are working to enlist the community's support in a Town beautification effort.

The Town Council has made a commitment to having a healthy community, and thus we do not use any herbicides on Town property. All the weeds that appear on Town property must be hand weed whacked or mowed. The Public Works crew will handle the big, high visibility median areas, but there are many smaller areas that need attention.

Volunteers are needed to help with this effort. The subcommittee is planning a Town-wide cleanup day on Saturday, April 25, 2009, beginning at 9 a.m. Please mark your calendars!

Please contact Anna Frost at anna@liveinmarin.com or 459-5901 if you'd like to help.

Open Space Annual Benefit

The 20th annual benefit for open space in the Ross Valley is scheduled for Saturday, April 4, at 6:30 p.m. at St. John's Episcopal Church, 14 Lagunitas Road in Ross.

The evening will begin with appetizers, homemade desserts and wines. At 7:30 p.m. a film by Ron Elliott, entitled "The Man in the Grey Suit" will be shown. A raffle drawing for fabulous prizes will take place at 8:30 p.m.

Ron Elliot is a veteran diver. More recently he has shifted his focus from sea urchin diving to underwater filming. He has since been featured in several films and novels, highlighting his experiences and undersea life in coastal waters. The film to be shown at the fundraiser is a personal work of Ron's home-away-from-home amongst the salty depths and the grand creatures who live there.

Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door. For more information or tickets, call 456-5476.

Town Council Meeting Notes

At the meeting of Tuesday, March 10, the Town Council took the following actions:

- Approved the contract with Jim Baum to provide Farm Stand services on the Town Hall Plaza between June and October 2009.
- Approved the ordinance adding a youth member to the Parks & Recreation Commission.
- Authorized filing a notice of completion for the Tunstead Bridge walk and rail replacement project.

- Continued discussion to March 24, 2009 on the Red Hill Community Park regarding responsibilities for maintenance and scheduling of the park as well as dog park rules and regulations.
- Received a status report on the Greenfield Undergrounding Utility Project and authorized Town funding to install historic street lights similar to the ones on San Anselmo Avenue.
- Placed a lien on the property at 830 Sir Francis Drake Blvd. for costs of repairing the sidewalk in the amount of \$2,372 plus 6% interest.
- Introduced an ordinance changing the zoning ordinance, including simplifying the permitting procedures by adding a new category for minor exceptions, changing some of the parking requirements, and modifying the design review findings in the flatlands.
- Directed staff to come back with proposed ordinance changes regarding view.
- Approved an amendment to the contract with Marin Sanitary, extending the Franchise Agreement to December 31, 2009 to allow the Refuse and Recycling Subcommittee to work with Marin Sanitary on a new agreement.
- Approved a contract with HFH Consultants, LLC to perform a rate review of San Anselmo's current refuse and recycling rates.

Interim Department Heads

I am pleased to announce that the Town has engaged the services of two capable professionals for interim positions in the Recreation Department and in the Public Works Department.

John De Lorenzo, who recently retired as the Community Services Director for the City of Fairfield, is working in our Recreation Department in that same capacity. John brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the position, and we are grateful that he accepted the position.

In the Public Works Department, Jack Curley is serving as the interim Director. Jack is a member of the County of Marin Public Works engineering staff. Jack's name may be familiar to many of you because of his good work with the Ross Valley Watershed project. We are very happy to have Jack on staff, even temporarily, and grateful to the County of Marin for their generosity in lending him to us.

Recruitments are underway for both the Community Services Director and the Public Works Director, and we hope to have both positions filled by May 1.

U-Turns on San Anselmo Avenue

Town staff is receiving a number of complaints from residents about illegal U-turns being made on San Anselmo Avenue, particularly in the center of the downtown area. Since I have a birds-eye view of this part of San Anselmo Avenue from my office, I can attest to this problem. I see people travelling southbound on San Anselmo Avenue who spot a parking space on the northbound side of the street, and make a quick u-turn into the parking spot. The Police Department advises that this is a dangerous practice and is also against the law! Please pass the word.

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March 20, 2009

Red Hill Community Park Grand Opening

The grand opening of the Red Hill Community Park will take place on Sunday, April 5, at 10 a.m., followed by a scheduled youth baseball game.

The grand opening is a celebration of many years of effort by the Tamalpais Union High School District, Town of San Anselmo, Ross Valley School District, Sunny Hills Children's Services, San Anselmo Baseball Association and many, many caring residents, parents and dog owners.

Phase 1 of the park is now complete, and the playing field will be used by Drake High School for afterschool sports, by the Town for youth and adult sports and summer programs and by the San Anselmo Baseball Association, in conjunction with West Marin Little League, for baseball. It will also be available for various youth and adult sports activities.

In addition, a one acre fenced dog park will be opened in early May that will provide an area for dog exercise and socialization.

The community is invited to attend the celebration at Red Hill Community Park, located on Shaw Drive behind the Red Hill Shopping Center.

More Upcoming Events:

Open Space Annual Benefit - The 20th annual benefit for open space in the Ross Valley is scheduled for Saturday, April 4, at 6:30 p.m. at St. John's Episcopal Church, 14 Lagunitas Road in Ross. The program film is entitled "The Man in the Grey Suit" and is about the Sharks of the Farallones. Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door. For more information or tickets, call 456-5476.

Poetry Night – In honor of National Library Week and National Poetry Month, the Friends of the Library are sponsoring a "Night of the Poets." It will be held on Thursday, April 9, at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Council Chambers. Refreshments will be served following the program.

Flashlight Egg Hunt – The Recreation Department is sponsoring a flashlight egg hunt on Friday, April 10, beginning at 7:50 p.m. for kids ages 8 and up. Bring your own flashlight and a basket for eggs. Meet at Memorial Park on field one, the field nearest the parking lot at 1000 Sir Francis Drake Blvd.

Eggstravaganza – For kids ages 7 and under, come to Memorial Park, field one, on Saturday, April 11 at 11 a.m. for an eggstravaganza. Bring a basket for eggs and be prepared for fun.

Townwide Cleanup Day – Mark your calendars for Saturday, April 25, at 9 a.m. to participate in our Townwide Cleanup Day. The goal is to tackle all the spring weeds at one time so that our Town is all dressed up for spring.

Green Business Night – The Quality of Life Commission is sponsoring a presentation for businesses on how to become a Green Business. Jamie Tuckey of the Marin County Sustainability Team will make the presentation on Thursday, April 30 at 7 p.m. in the Town Hall Council Chambers.

MMWD Pipeline Replacement Project

The MMWD Pipeline Replacement Project will begin next week. The work will occur primarily at night, from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. Monday through Thursday. The night work will be mostly in March and April.

San Anselmo Avenue will be closed in the work area during work hours. During non-work hours, all streets will be open and accessible with temporary pavement. Some paving and other work will occur during the day.

The Town required that the work be done during the night hours to avoid closing the main business district during the day and causing economic hardship on our merchants.

Both the contractor and MMWD will make every effort to minimize traffic disruptions and noise during construction and to ensure public health and safety.

Some people have asked why the work is being done now. Originally planned for last summer, MMWD rescheduled for this spring in order to do the work in the cooler months when nearby residents would be more likely to have their windows closed.

I've also been asked why MMWD is doing this project when the merchants are struggling mightily in this tough economy. My answer is that we are doing our best to accommodate the merchants by doing the work at night. The tough economy has actually worked in MMWD's and the Town's favor with respect to getting the entire job done, including repaving the street, at a very competitive price.

MMWD has provided a hotline number to call for further information: 945-1541. Both the Town and MMWD apologize in advance for any disruption caused by this project. The end result will be a brand new water main down San Anselmo Avenue that will not have to be replaced for years to come.

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March 27, 2009

MMWD Project Update

The Marin Municipal Water District pipeline replacement project down San Anselmo Avenue has begun.

In order to keep San Anselmo Avenue clear of parked cars for the night work, it is necessary to post the street with signs that state “No Parking 9 p.m. to 6 a.m.” California law requires that temporary “no parking” zones be posted 24 hours in advance. Without this advance notice, the Police Department would be prevented from towing cars that are inadvertently left in the construction area, thus slowing the work.

Unfortunately, many shoppers are not reading the signs and assume that the no parking is in effect during the day time hours. The contractor has amended the signs, adding “**Night Work**” to the sign, in order to make it clear that the no parking rule is in effect during the night time hours of 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. only.

Please be advised that during the MMWD construction work, San Anselmo Avenue and the downtown businesses are open to shoppers as usual and that all the regular parking is available.

During these tough economic times, it is critical to our downtown merchants that we all keep shopping locally!

Parking Survey results

Recently the five San Anselmo business associations, in conjunction with the Police Department, conducted a survey of members and some customers regarding business district parking. The questions in the survey asked opinions about parking meters and parking pay stations, free holiday parking, parking enforcement and two or four hour parking time limits.

The results of the surveys were fairly conclusive:

- 90% of the respondents do not favor more parking meters or pay stations.
- 89% of the respondents prefer to keep free parking during the holiday season.
- 91% of the respondents prefer to keep parking enforcement to six days a week (no Sunday enforcement).

Results were mixed, about half and half, on whether parking time limits in business areas should be two hour or four hour. At the present time, we have both two and four hour parking areas.

From the results of the survey, it appears that most people like things the way they are! Other comments and suggestions are always welcomed.

Community Services Director Dave Donery

I am very pleased to announce that David Donery has accepted the position of Community Services Director for the Town.

A long-time San Anselmo resident, Dave got his start in Recreation at the age of 11 when he volunteered to be a counselor-in-training (CIT) in San Anselmo Recreation day camps! He received his BA degree in Recreation Administration from San Francisco State University.

Dave is currently serving the City of San Rafael as Community Services Supervisor, managing the Pickleweed Community Center facilities. He has been with San Rafael for 20 years, beginning his career there in 1989 as a Youth Services Coordinator. Staff members from the City of San Rafael have let me know in no uncertain terms that Dave will be sorely missed by all in San Rafael.

In addition, Dave has been serving the Town of San Anselmo as a Parks & Recreation Commissioner for the last several years, a position that he will, of course, be vacating.

We are thrilled to have Dave join our San Anselmo staff. He will begin work on Monday, April 13. Come by the Recreation Offices at 1000 Sir Francis Drake Blvd. to meet Dave.

Town Council Meeting Notes

At the meeting of Tuesday, March 24, the Town Council took the following actions:

- Approved the rules for the dog park at the Red Hill Community Park.
- Proclaimed April 12-18, 2009 National Library Week.
- Proclaimed April 19-25, 2009 National Volunteer Week
- Adopted the zoning ordinance amendments to include: simplifying the permitting procedures by adding a new category for minor exceptions; changing some of the setback standards for minor structures; and modifying the design review findings in the flatlands.
- Introduced an ordinance affecting the zoning at the Isabel Cook Community Center and the Robson Harrington House clarifying the rental of these facilities to both non-profit and commercial tenants.
- Requested that staff work with the Planning Commission to study the issue of whether San Anselmo should consider design review findings addressing view in the residential districts.

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