



February News 2013

I am focusing this month's E-news on several topics that have been in the news recently and may have raised questions for you. Among them: the armored rescue vehicle purchase, the 101/Greenbrae project, and the relocation of the Civic Center press room. I have a quick update on the Ross Valley Flood Protection and Watershed program and am also providing information regarding the upcoming discussion and consideration of a Stream Conservation Area Ordinance that will apply to creek and streamside property owners throughout unincorporated Marin.

As always, if you have any questions or comments, don't hesitate to call me at 415-473-7331 or email to krice@marincounty.org.

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Bear Cat G3 Rescue Vehicle Acquisition

Yes, it's true. The Marin County Sheriff's Department in collaboration with its counterparts in Sonoma, Napa, and Solano Counties (which comprise the North Bay arm of the Regional Urban Area Security Initiative), applied for and won federal grant monies to purchase a Bear Cat G3 Rescue Vehicle. While the Board of Supervisors' role regarding this purchase was limited and virtually an accounting exercise versus a policy decision, I wanted to provide residents of District 2 more context and my thoughts regarding the purchase and process.

Marin County falls within the North Bay Region Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) which operates under the broader Bay Area UASI. The UASI has access to grant funding from the federal U.S. Department of Homeland Security UASI program for "unique, multi-jurisdictional, multi-discipline planning, equipment, training etc. related to high-threat, high density urban areas."

Last year, the Marin Sheriff/Office of Emergency Services (OES) and North Bay Regional UASI partners determined the Bear Cat G3 armored vehicle was a desired/necessary piece of equipment to add to Regional UASI capability for homeland security purposes. They applied for and won the federal grant funding for this equipment.

The Board of Supervisors took actions last November and then in December to approve acceptance of the Homeland Security grant and a Federal UASI grant specifically designated for purchase of this vehicle. At our board meeting on February 12, the associated budgetary adjustments needed to finalize purchase were approved as part of the consent calendar.

While it seems improbable that an event that might warrant use of this vehicle will ever actually occur here in Marin or in the broader North Bay region, I do think decisions about what purchases/programs/training are necessary to support regional emergency response and/or disaster operations are best made by our public safety officials.

Highway 101 Greenbrae/Twin Cities Corridor Project

Generating much interest in the broader Marin community is a project proposal to make improvements to the Greenbrae/101 interchange, and to bike, pedestrian and transit facilities in the Greenbrae/101-Twin Cities corridor.

I have touched on this project in past newsletters because I believe District 2 residents are the primary local (versus regional) users of this interchange and related transit facilities. Most of us use 101 and the Greenbrae Interchange either to travel north or south on 101, or to access or egress 101 to/from Sir Francis Drake Blvd - whether we do so in our cars, via transit, by bike or foot or to access the ferry. This project is all about improving safety, traffic flow and transit connectivity for all modes of travel in the Greenbrae/101 area.

Caltrans is the lead agency on the project working in partnership with the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM), which is the state-mandated Congestion Management Agency for the County. TAM is comprised of one representative from each city/town council in Marin and the five Marin County Supervisors.

The Greenbrae/101 Corridor project was initiated in the 1990's through requests from Larkspur and Corte Madera Town Councils concerned with safety and congestion in the corridor. The project as proposed today, aims to reduce congestion and improve safety through the corridor, as well as transit connectivity and bike/pedestrian pathways. It is a complex project that involves reconfiguration of existing US 101 interchanges, the construction of auxiliary lanes and collector-distributor roadways in addition to bike, pedestrian and transit improvements.

The cost of the project as proposed would be upwards of \$150 million. This funding would come from the Regional Measure 2 program (toll funds from state operated Bay Area bridges) specifically designated to fund various transportation projects within the

region that have been determined to reduce congestion or to make improvements to travel in the toll bridge corridors.

More than a decade in public process and design, and one of dozens of iterations explored, the current proposal reflects a solution that attempts to meet project aims while responding to concerns, requests and input from stakeholders throughout the corridor. The recently released environmental document has re-kindled interest and public focus on the project and has generated expressions of significant concern from various stakeholders with regards to some design elements, functionality and need.

Hence, a pause in the process has been declared by the Transportation Authority of Marin during which an advisory committee will be formed to allow for a fresh look at the project and alternatives and to make recommendations to the TAM Board.

I may or may not be a member of the advisory committee, but ultimately, the decision to move forward with this project or any version of it, will rest with the TAM Board of which I am a member. So, during this pause, I invite you to become educated about the proposal, and share your thoughts, concerns, and opinions with me at krice@marincounty.org.

To learn more about the project, including video and animated simulation go to <http://www.tam.ca.gov/index.aspx?page=164>. For a recent informative article on the project, visit http://www.pacificsun.com/news/local/article_f48de786-7632-11e2-a01c-0019bb30f31a.html.

The Civic Center Press Room – Relocated to Smaller Space

In January, the Board of Supervisors voted to relocate the Civic Center press room from its original location adjacent to the Supervisors and Planning Commission chambers, to a smaller space just down the hall. The new press room is still in close proximity to the chambers and offices; however, it is smaller than the original press room. The decision to relocate the press room was made for two reasons: 1) the original press room, designed to accommodate representatives from multiple media sources, has been underutilized for years; and 2) conference room space at the Civic Center, for both staff meetings and for meetings with residents and community groups, is limited. With the relocation of the media to a smaller, but completely serviceable and appropriate space, the old, larger press room can be used as a conference room.

Please know that I value the role the press plays in covering local government news and in doing so keeping residents informed and the pressure on for accountability and transparency. I am completely satisfied that the relocation of the Civic Center press room will not in any way inhibit or compromise the media's ability to cover the work that goes on in county government.

Ross Valley Flood Protection and Watershed Program

A quick update. Over the course of the last two months, the Flood Zone 9 Advisory Board has met, council members and staff from the four Ross Valley cities and towns

came to the Civic Center for status update on the program, and I traveled to Washington D.C. to meet with US Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) staff and key congressional and administrative staff regarding the ACOE project in Ross.

The Flood Zone 9 Advisory Board meeting was held on January 31 at San Anselmo Town Hall. The focus of the meeting was to provide updates on the Phoenix Lake project in Ross and proposed detention basins at Memorial Park in San Anselmo and Lefty Gomez Field and Loma Alta in Fairfax. The next Flood Zone 9 Advisory Board meeting will be held in April (date/time TBD).

You can visit <http://www.marinwatersheds.org/rossvalleywatershed-org/> for agendas, minutes and documents for Flood Zone 9 meetings, more information about the broader Ross Valley Watershed program and to sign up for electronic notifications of future zone meetings, events and updates (click on "Subscribe for Updates"). Note that the Ross Valley Flood Protection and Watershed Program Annual Report for Fiscal year 2011-2012 will be posted at the end of the month and focuses on detention basins and how/why they are used.

Marin County's Stream Conservation Area Ordinance

The County is developing a Stream Conservation Area (SCA) Ordinance that will apply to all unincorporated areas of the County. The current SCA policy was adopted as part of the 2007 Countywide Plan and provides the guidelines for the ordinance. The County is currently under court order to adopt an ordinance implementing the SCA policy.

The intention of the policy and ordinance is to protect the hydraulic function, habitat value, and water quality of our creeks and streams. Properties throughout unincorporated Marin will be affected. If yours is one, you will be notified directly by the County during this review and adoption process. Additionally, County staff will be out in the community meeting with property owners associations and homeowners groups to provide a direct opportunity to learn about the ordinance and ask questions.

A community-wide public open house to present the draft SCA Ordinance will be held on Thursday, March 14 at 7pm in the Planning Commission Chambers of the Marin Civic Center (Room 328). The ordinance will be scheduled for consideration by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors later this spring.

For more information on the draft ordinance and the review process and to find out if your property is included within the Stream Conservation Area, go to <http://www.co.marin.ca.us/sca>. The draft ordinance along with FAQ's will be posted in early March.

Public Workshop on County's Development Review (Planning) Process and Customer Service

The County's Community Development Agency (CDA) will hold a public workshop on Thursday, March 7 from 6:30-8:30pm in the Planning Commission Chambers (Room 328) at the Civic Center to provide an opportunity for the public to give input on

strategies for facilitating development review and improving customer service.

The County recently initiated a process to identify and evaluate strategies for more efficiently reviewing and processing development applications for projects in the unincorporated areas of the County. This process is spearheaded by an Advisory Committee that will identify opportunities to reduce bureaucracy, achieve a more timely process for reviewing development proposals, while still ensuring consistency and compliance with all County planning, building, zoning regulations, environmental review requirements and adequate public process. The Advisory Committee also seeks to improve the process to allow for greater consumer choice and flexibility for permit-related services.

For more information, contact Debra Stratton at 415-473-6278 or visit the Regulatory Improvements Advisory Committee website at <http://www.marincounty.org/RIAC>.

Upcoming Local Events

Restoring Partnership with Nature: The Philosophy and Principles of Indigenous Gardening in the Wild

Wednesday, February 27, 7pm

Fairfax Library, 2097 Sir Francis Drake Blvd

A talk by Kat Anderson, author of *Tending the Wild: Native American Knowledge and the Management of California's Natural Resources*. In this lecture, co-sponsored by The Friends of the Fairfax Library and the Marin Chapter of the Native Plant Society, Kat Anderson will share her thoughts on indigenous gardening in the wild and what we can learn from these practices.

Hiking in Baltimore Canyon

Thursday, February 28, 10am – 2pm

Meet at the gate at the end of Crown Rd in Kent Woodlands.

We will use a car shuttle to allow us to start this walk on a ridge above Phoenix Lake and spend the day meandering down to our original meeting place. We will look for early flowers like fetid adder's tongue and Indian warrior, and listen for the song of the orange-crowned warbler to remind us that spring is right around the corner. This walk is for adults. We request that no animals (except service animals) attend. Heavy rain may cancel. If questionable weather, call (415) 893-9527 on the morning of the walk for a recorded message to see if the walk is cancelled. David Herlocker will lead. Questions: Contact David at (415) 893-9508 or DHerlocker@marincounty.org.

Hiking White Hill to the Top!

Saturday, March 2, 10am-2pm

Meet at the White Hill trailhead on Sir Francis Drake Blvd; park in the big gravel pullout on the right side, below the crest of the hill.

We'll aim for lunch at the summit, but we'll make the 1,000 foot ascent at a pace that will allow us to enjoy all of the wildflowers and wildlife we encounter along the way. The birds should be plentiful (don't forget your binoculars). We might even hear the songs of Townsend's Warblers and Ruby-crowned Kinglets tuning up before they depart for the

north. This walk is for adults. We request that no animals (except service animals) attend. Heavy rain may cancel. If questionable weather, call (415) 893-9527 on the morning of the walk for a recorded message to see if the walk is cancelled. David Herlocker will lead. Questions: Contact David at (415) 893-9508 or DHerlocker@marincounty.org.

The Doctor is “IN” – The All Dr. Suess Show for Ages 4-9

Tuesday, March 5, 7pm

Fairfax Library, 2097 Sir Francis Drake Blvd

Storyteller/Ventriloquist Sandi Sylver entertains ages 4 to 9 with material from the Good Doctor. She and “The Girls” return for another rollicking good storytime featuring the works of Dr. Seuss!

For a complete listing of County events and meetings, visit <http://www.marincounty.org/main/calendar>.

Contact Info:

Supervisor Katie Rice

415-473-7331

krice@marincounty.org

District 2 Aides:

Sandy Laird

415-473-6159

slaird@marincounty.org

Nancy Vernon

415-473-7351

nvernon@marincounty.org