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January 29, 2010

A WORD FROM THE TOWN MANAGER

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Tip-Toeing through this Economy

2010 is upon us, marking the half-way point in our fiscal year and mid-year budget review time. Our situation remains stable, but the downturn in the economy has made even deeper inroads into Town revenues than expected. Before going into the specifics, I want to make the observation that Tiburon and most governments lag in experiencing the effects of a down economy. A good example is that a house in the works when economic woe strikes stands a good chance of being completed, but those contemplating new home construction are likely to put their plans on hold. Thus we don't immediately see a reduction in activity, but the permit "pipeline" starts drying up and revenues begin to decline. Similarly, property taxes do not drop immediately in a place like Tiburon when the market goes south, but downward pressure creeps in over a few years.

So how do we look at mid-year? We still project a balanced budget at the end of the fiscal year (June 30), but several important revenue sources are down even more than we projected. Sales and hotel taxes are lower than last year and our budget estimate, so too are building and planning permit revenues as fewer people build or remodel homes. Even fines are down, due to decreased economic activity. Our saving grace is that property taxes are stronger than our very conservative projection. We also had an unbudgeted award of attorney's fees in a case that settled last year.

How does it look going forward? In a word: tight. In two words: very tight. In the past, all California cities could expect an automatic 2% increase in across-the-board property tax valuations (the Prop 13 formula). That valuation is the basis on which property tax is applied. For next year, however, the state has determined that all property valuations will be adjusted downward slightly



"DID YOU KNOW?"

Where did the POTHLES come from?

You may be wondering why potholes have popped up along Tiburon Boulevard near Trestle Glen, or on Reed Ranch Road near Corte Las Casas, when both locations have just recently been resurfaced. The short answer is the substantial rain that has fallen lately.

When a significant amount of water finds its way under the foundation of a road it can significantly undermine it, resulting in a pothole or even a sinkhole. The water can sometimes be traced to a broken water line or natural spring; other times it is a mystery, as in the case of our two locations. Our peninsula is marked by a network of

because the cost-of-living has dropped (this will differ for properties that recently sold). For Tiburon, this means our "bread and butter" revenue will be flat or may even decline. In anticipation of this and continuing economic sluggishness, we are tightening our belts more than ever. We have indefinitely frozen three positions. Most staff have not received a salary adjustment in two years, and that will likely remain the case. We are examining every opportunity to cut back on operating costs, especially where doing so really affects the bottom line. While the general economy may have turned a corner and slowly be getting stronger, we believe the picture for Town revenues will get worse before it gets better.

All of this affects our *operating* budget most directly, because our credo is to not spend any more than we take in each year. Our reserves remain strong, however, which protects us against unforeseen events and allows the Town Council to continue funding select capital improvement and other periodic, rather than annual, projects around town. Fortunately, we have made great strides in infrastructure improvements over the past few years, especially raising the quality of our streets with many miles of repaving, so our current physical condition is largely sound.

In sum, despite this gloomy prognostication, Tiburon continues to be blessed with a solid financial standing along with its other myriad charms. I remain confident we will weather this deep recession, and do so far better than most California communities, but the economic contraction will get quite a bit tighter before it releases its grip on us.

Sincerely,

Peggy Curran

NEWS BRIEFS

Enhancing Stairs, Paths and Pedestrian Connections around Town



Public Works is excited to be starting two federally-funded projects which will improve pedestrian safety and access in several neighborhoods including the Del Mar Middle School area.

The first is the enhancement of three

subsurface water seeps that have a curious way of changing when the physical environment around them is altered.

The resurfacing of these roads, a two-inch overlay, does strengthen and lengthen the life of the road but cannot correct for, or eliminate the possibility of, subsurface failures here and there.

Caltrans has temporarily filled and is monitoring the potholes on Tiburon Boulevard.

The Town, which is responsible for Reed Ranch Road, has cordoned off part of the pavement there and will make final repairs when weather permits.

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Keep your questions coming!
Contact Town Clerk
[Diane Crane Iacopi](#).

public pathways: the connection of two discontinuous segments of Cayford Drive, the Jefferson Path and Steps, and the Lower Raccoon Lane Path. Improvements include new stairs, curb ramps, decomposed granite and concrete pathways, header boards, handrails and bike gutters for easy transportation of bikes up steps. Work will begin on Monday, January 25, taking approximately 30 days and concluding on Friday, March 5 (weather permitting!).

Also starting up is the Safe Routes to School project aimed at improving pedestrian and bicycle travel routes for Del Mar Middle School children. Enhancements include new curb ramps, crosswalks, pedestrian barricades, new signage and a larger and safer staging area for students at the corner of Tiburon Boulevard and Avenida Miraflores. This work will be performed during the same approximate timeline, as described above.

These projects may require temporary closures, creating some inconvenience during this process, so the Town requests your cooperation and patience during construction. Should you have questions about the projects, contact Matt Swalberg in Public Works Department at 435-7354.

Nicholas Nguyen, Director
Department of Public Works/Town Engineer

Art Auction for Haitian Relief



The Town of Tiburon is hosting an art auction for Haitian earthquake relief on Sunday, February 21, at Town Hall. Artwork will be on exhibit, with silent auction bidding, from Noon until 4:30 p.m. The live auction begins at 5 p.m. The auctioneer is the celebrated exhibition designer and curator, Ted Cohen.

Included are contemporary and traditional paintings and sculpture, fine crafts by Bay Area artists, folk and ethnic art and a selection of vintage wines.

100% of the proceeds will be donated to The American Red Cross, Doctors Without Borders, Partners in Health, and UNICEF. These organizations are involved directly with the current Haitian emergency, as well as the massive reconstruction necessary in the future.

The Tiburon Fire Department is donating food and will host a barbeque in the parking lot. Oakville Ranch Vineyards has generously donated the wine for the event.

Virginia Breier, the event organizer, held a similar, successful auction for victims of the Tsunami in Southeast Asia five years ago in her San Francisco Gallery.

Please contact Virginia at 789-5276 for more information.

Diane Crane Iacopi
Town Clerk

Help Save our Rare Native Plants - Join the Tiburon "Weed Whackers"

The serpentine soil on the Tiburon Middle Ridge Open Space parcel supports four plant species--Tiburon jewelflower, Marin dwarf flax, Tiburon paintbrush, and Tiburon buckwheat (shown here)--that are recognized by Federal and State governments as needing protection.



Wouldn't you like to help protect these plants that are severely threatened by invasive weeds?

Whatever your motivation for volunteering, the rewards are many--the good feeling that comes from being involved with your community, keeping busy, making new friends, doing something different from your regular job, learning something new, not to mention enjoying spectacular views on a south-facing slope--all these can be had by joining a new group of volunteers, the Tiburon "Weed Whackers."

The "Weed Whackers" will meet for the first time on Tuesday, February 2, and again on Saturday, February 13 for two hours. They will continue to meet during the winter months, while the soil is damp and it is easier to remove the weeds.

Local botanist and Tiburon resident Eva Buxton will give an account of the rare plants the first time that the group meets, and describe the threats to them from non-native species, and what to do to protect these special species and their habitat.

Once volunteers are familiar with the weeds to remove

and where to do it, they can work on their own time. But the group will still meet on the designated days, at least for a while. To borrow the Marin County "Broom Busters" slogan: "Come when you can; leave when you must!"

Time to Meet: Every other Tuesday and Saturday of the month, between 10 a.m. and Noon, starting Tuesday, February 2 and Saturday, February 13.

Equipment to bring: Waterproof pad to sit on; gloves; pick axe or pulaski (small trowel); sturdy shoes/boots; layered clothing; plenty of water. Broom wrenches will be provided.

Where to meet: At the junction of Gilmartin Drive and the fire road that leads to the "Hippie Tree", 0.35 mile from Tiburon Boulevard, just before Gilmartin's sharp turn to the right. Parking is available below the double yellow lines on Gilmartin Drive.

Contact Eva Buxton at evabuxton@sbcglobal.net for more information.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

HAITI RELIEF ART AUCTION

Sunday, February 21 - Noon until after 5 p.m.

Silent auction from Noon to 4 p.m.

Live Auction begins at 5 p.m.

Tiburon Town Hall
1505 Tiburon Boulevard

ARTIST LAUREATE WORKSHOP

Saturday, February 27, 10:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Town Hall Community Room (2nd Floor)
1505 Tiburon Boulevard

Workshop Title: "Keep it Simple, Continued"
Open to the Public

Guest artist Christina Marcu, a classical pianist turned painter, will teach us to hear the music in our hearts and then to see it on canvas.

Bring your own painting supplies and equipment in any medium: watercolor, oil, pencil, charcoal, acrylic, etc.

For more information, contact Artist Laureate Mary Musalo at 435-2775, or marymusalo@aol.com.

BEL-TIB LIBRARY COMMUNITY CALENDAR

For the scoop on events and meetings sponsored by local not-for-profit community and government organizations on the Tiburon Peninsula, visit the Belvedere-Tiburon Library's excellent [community calendar](#).



COUNCIL AND COMMISSION MEETINGS



Town Council: 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, at 7:30 p.m.; the February 3rd meeting has been cancelled.

Design Review Board: 1st and 3rd Thursdays, at 7 p.m. (February 4 and February 18)

Planning Commission: 2nd and 4th Wednesdays, at 7:30 p.m. (February 10 and 24)

Heritage & Arts Commission: 4th Tuesday at 6 p.m. (February 23)

All meetings listed are in the Council Chambers at Tiburon Town Hall, 1505 Tiburon Boulevard.

Sincerely,

Town Staff
Town of Tiburon
435-7373

Editor: Diane Crane Jacopi

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