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June 28, 2013

## A WORD FROM THE TOWN MANAGER



### Permit Services

Elsewhere in this issue is an article by Scott Anderson, our Community Development Director, about the Town's recent survey of permit services users. Readers may recall that I wrote about this survey late last year. It was prompted by some complaints about the Town's building permit services in particular. In response to this

feedback, we examined our practices and implemented some changes, principally streamlining the residential building report (RBR) process (the inspection that is conducted when a property is sold). A checklist approach was created and implemented, resulting in RBRs that are faster and more predictable as to what will be inspected.

However, we wanted to move beyond simply reacting to anecdotal feedback. This was in part to understand it better (determine how representative it was) and to discover what other comments and concerns might be out there. This led us to commission a comprehensive user survey. To ensure objectivity and allow for anonymous responses, the Town engaged an outside firm, Godbe Research, to devise and administer the survey. The firm felt the mailed survey should not go out until after the holidays, so it was sent out this past January and results became available last month. The "report card" we received was quite positive, as the article describes. We are very pleased about that affirmation, but we also realize that there is always room for improvement. In addition to asking about the quality of services received, the survey included an open-ended solicitation of ideas for improvement. We intend to scrutinize those responses for opportunities to make our good service even better. I want to thank those of you who received and responded to the survey. We appreciate it.

### Summertime

This summer promises to be one to remember. In addition to some better-than-ever Friday Nights on Main (including one tonight), the Art by the Bay element of the Tiburon Art

[Peninsula Chamber of Commerce](#)

[Bel-Tib Recreation Department](#)

[County of Marin, 3rd District](#)

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[Tiburon Peninsula Foundation](#)

Festival, ten days of literally colossal art along the shoreline, is coming in August and should be stunning. Of course, the America's Cup sailing competition will be in the City later this summer; we don't expect a significant impact from that here in Tiburon although we are likely to see more visitors than usual. We are, however, playing a unique role with the America's Cup, and that is hosting America's team for the Youth America's Cup, a brand new competition this year (more info is [available here](#)). Young sailors from Team USA45, as it is called, ages 19-24, are staying with local families and are practicing out of the Corinthian Yacht Club with ground support from San Francisco Yacht Club in Belvedere. Many of our local restaurants and businesses are also supporting the team with discounted meals and donated office and retail space. There will be some private events here in Town, along with one public fundraiser - stay tuned for that - to help the team. The Town is not paying anything directly for this arrangement; it is more of an in-kind services swap in which we help them out by connecting them to local resources, and they help get the word out that Tiburon is a great part of the San Francisco Bay Area.

In closing, I wish you and your loved ones a safe and enjoyable Independence Day. Enjoy the low summer traffic on the peninsula, the beautiful weather and the fact that we live and work in an extraordinarily lovely place brimming with good community spirit.

Sincerely,



Peggy Curran

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## NEWS BRIEFS

### Who Let The Dogs Out?



At a meeting earlier this month, Council adopted an ordinance amending the Town's animal regulations to address the impacts of individuals walking large numbers of dogs in public places. Members of the public had expressed safety

concerns about walkers' lack of control over large numbers of dogs (often off-leash), failure to pick up after the dogs, and dogs causing damage to sensitive biological plants and habitats. The revised regulations are intended to address all of these concerns and enhance public health, safety and the

natural environment.

The new regulations will have no effect on anyone walking three or fewer dogs at one time in Town, other than prohibiting dogs from entering "biologically-sensitive areas", which will be identified by signage. The Dog Walking Permit Program, described below, will affect primarily "commercial" dog-walkers who are paid to walk dogs and often walk large numbers of dogs at one time.

Starting July 19, walking more than three dogs will only be allowed with a permit, and then only in limited locations. Dog Walking Permits will be issued by the Public Works Department, which will also provide maps showing the locations of designated fire roads within Town-owned open space where walking more than three dogs will be permissible. The maximum number of dogs to be walked at any one time is six. No more than three dogs may be off-leash at any one time, and they must be kept under close voice control and within permitted areas.

Permit applicants will be required to carry a copy of the permit, liability insurance, and a numbered, Town-issued, highly visible vest for identification purposes. The Dog Walking Permit application fee is \$150, and after permit approval the permit holder may obtain additional vests for use under that permit by payment of \$20 per vest (non-refundable) and a deposit of \$50 per additional vest (refundable upon vest return). The Tiburon Police Department will enforce the provisions, primarily on a complaint basis or through violations observed while on patrol. Violators may be cited and fined.

The Town is confident that the program will assist in promoting the safety and convenience of people using the Town's parks and open spaces and help protect some of the peninsula's rare and endangered plant species as well.

To obtain a Dog Walking Permit application, please contact the Tiburon Public Works Department at 415-435-7354.

Sincerely,

Department of Public Works  
Tiburon Police Department

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## **Permit Services Survey**

In late 2012, the Town commissioned a user survey of its permit services functions, including building and zoning permits, encroachment permits, and residential resale inspections. Satisfaction surveys are one management technique used to gauge performance, find out what an organization is doing well, and potentially discover any system-wide shortcomings or areas where improvement is



needed. The Bay Area firm of Godbe Research was retained to prepare the survey, receive and tabulate the responses, and prepare a report describing its findings and conclusions.

The anonymous survey was mailed to all homeowners, applicants, contractors, realtors, and design professionals whose names appeared on permit application forms received between September 2011 and September 2012. After elimination of duplicates, a total of 1,733 survey forms were mailed out on January 23, 2013. A total of 237 completed surveys were returned to Godbe Research, which characterized the nearly 14% rate of return as "good" for this type of survey.

The survey elicited information on numerous aspects of service encountered during the Town's permit process, both across the board (for all permit types) and specifically for building field inspection services. These service aspects included timeliness, competency, helpfulness, ability to communicate clearly, ease of submitting an application, accuracy, courtesy and professionalism, cost of permit application, timeliness of resolving problems, staying focused on inspections, completeness of inspection, consistency in applying codes and standards, and businesslike demeanor.

The Town received the Godbe report in May 2013. It concluded that "...the Town of Tiburon is doing a good job providing permitting and building inspection services in terms of almost all dimensions of service...."

Godbe Research noted that surveys of this specific nature are rare for government services, so there is little comparable survey information available from Marin County or other California jurisdictions. However, the report noted that the Town's services compared very favorably with the other limited local results available.

The report identifies "cost of permit applications" as the area of the (relatively) lowest satisfaction by respondents when rating aspects of all permit services. The report indicates that "consistency in applying codes and standards" rated relatively lower than the other aspects of building inspection services.

The survey concluded with an open-ended question seeking opinions and comments regarding ways to make the Town's permit services better. It yielded a range of responses, but no common themes. The Godbe report concluded that no statistically significant patterns emerged from the comments that could point to a perceived structural or persistent problem with service.



While Town staff and the Town Council, which heard a presentation of the Godbe results at its June 19 meeting, were pleased with the positive report card, we still believe there is always room for improvement. Staff has already implemented changes to the residential resale inspection process that make it faster and more predictable (using a checklist rather than an open-ended format) and we are reviewing the individual (but anonymous) comments that have been forwarded to search for ideas to enhance an already well-functioning permit services program.

Sincerely,

Scott Anderson  
Director of Community Development

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## The Importance of Vegetation Management



During the summer months, we remind property owners of the importance of managing the vegetation around their homes for several reasons: traffic safety, fire safety, and resource protection.

### **Private Property Owners' Responsibility**

It's not uncommon for private landscaping to encroach onto the public street right-of-way. These improvements serve to beautify homes, enhance neighborhoods, and enhance privacy. Over time, however, some of these improvements are not maintained and grow far beyond their original boundaries. The result can be vegetation that obstructs sight lines for motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists, creating a safety hazard for all roadway users.

Take note of the vegetation around your home. If it blocks or obstructs lines of sight of the public street, have it trimmed back or down. This is particularly important on corner lots and roads lacking sidewalks. If your plants are not set back from the road far enough or are higher than 30 inches, they

are likely to be in violation of Town ordinances (Section 16-5.6.6) and are a public nuisance. In certain instances, through our door-hanger noticing process, the Tiburon Police Department or the Public Works Department will ask homeowners to take necessary action. Failure to do so may result in citation and being billed for the work if the Town must step in to handle the situation.

### **Fire Safety and Prevention**

Overgrown vegetation, non-native weeds and trees can become fire hazards. Invasive species such as Scotch Broom, Pampas Grass, and Blue Gum Eucalyptus are rampant in Town and can present a potentially formidable fire fuel load. Although they may have aesthetic value, we urge property owners to abate these risks by aggressively removing these plants or trimming trees.

It is also important to follow the Tiburon Fire Protection District guidelines of clearing a 100-foot buffer between your home and dense vegetation. If you need to encroach onto the Town's open space to achieve this buffer, please contact the Town and we will facilitate the process for you. Contact Jessica Power of the Fire District at 435-7200, [jpower@tiburonfire.org](mailto:jpower@tiburonfire.org), or Public Works at 435-7354.

### **Protect our Native Species**

Finally, it's good to remind ourselves of how lucky we are to be living in an area of such unique natural beauty. Did you know that the Tiburon Peninsula has a rare and endangered plant that grows nowhere else in the world? It is called the Tiburon



Jewelflower, and is found on the rocky serpentine outcroppings of our peninsula. Another endangered plant species is the Tiburon Paintbrush. Preserving the scarce habitat for these plants is important, but it is a constant challenge due to competition from highly invasive non-native species.

Please help us preserve our natural resources by removing non-native invasive vegetation (particularly Scotch Broom and Pampas Grass) and consider native plants for your yard that are drought-tolerant and non-seeding. By doing your part with vegetation management, you will help preserve the beautiful natural resources of our peninsula and make it a safer place for all of us.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Nguyen  
Public Works Director/Town Engineer

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

### La Dolce Vita -- Tonight at Friday Nights on Main






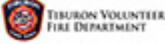

Friday, June 28 - 6 until 9 p.m.  
Main Street



The 2013 season of Friday Nights on Main kicked off on Friday, May 31, with "A Little Bit Country" and continues tonight with "La Dolce Vita". So come and enjoy the good life as you meet your neighbors and friends tonight in downtown Tiburon from 6 to 9 p.m.

With Main Street closed to cars for the evening, you'll be able to stroll along the street, dine al fresco at one of the many restaurants on Main Street, and enjoy the music of Roscoe Gallo & James Henry with "4 on Fire", performing Italian favorites. Strolling opera singers will entertain with songs from your favorite Italian operas. For Italian car fans, a new model Maserati will be on display.

Friday Nights on Main this year will each have a special theme so you won't want to miss out on any of them!

<b>May 31</b>	A Little Bit Country	
<b>June 28</b>	La Dolce Vita	
<b>July 26</b>	Youth America's Cup	
<b>Aug 30</b>	America's Cup Salute	
<b>Sept 13</b>	Oktoberfest	
<b>Sept 20</b>	Annual Firemen's Ball	
<b>Sept 27</b>	RCP Tiburon Mile	

Friday Nights on Main is hosted by the Tiburon Peninsula Chamber of Commerce. For more information, contact the Chamber at 435-5633, or visit our [website](#).

## Call For Artists: Plein Air Competition

**Saturday, August 10**  
**Noon to 4:30 p.m.**  
**Downtown Tiburon**



All Bay Area artists are invited to participate in the annual Plein Air competition of the Tiburon Art Festival.

Artists are allowed one 16 x 20 inch (or smaller) blank canvas, board or paper. All paintings will remain unframed for judging and silent auction.

Painting sites are selected by the Heritage & Arts Commission and will be disclosed at the 11:30 a.m. check-in on Saturday morning.

There are cash prizes too! \$400 for Judges' Favorite, \$400 for People's Choice, and four

Honorable Mentions at \$50 each.

For more information, contact [Joan Palmero](#) at 435-7373.



## Calling All Golfers!

**SAVE THE DATE: Tuesday, September 10**  
**San Geronimo Golf Club - Nicasio**  
**(Register by July 31 to save money!)**



The Belvedere-Tiburon Landmarks Society invites you to the 18th Annual Belvedere-Tiburon Open Golf Tournament to be held on Tuesday, September 10, at the beautiful San Geronimo Golf Club in Nicasio.

Our thanks to the City of Belvedere and the Town of

Tiburon for designating Landmarks as this year's tournament beneficiary. The proceeds will help Landmarks manage and maintain our historic sites--Old St. Hilary, the China Cabin, the Railroad Ferry & Depot Museum, and the Art and Garden Center.

Form a foursome, or sign up as a single player and we will add you to an open slot.

This year's player fee (\$140) is LOWER than last year's and includes greens fee for 18 holes, BBQ lunch before the shotgun start, appetizers and drinks post play, a raffle and lots of prizes! REGISTER BY JULY 31st and PAY ONLY \$120 per player!

To register, visit our [website](#) and click on "GOLF NOW", or call the City of Belvedere at 435-3838, or Belvedere-Tiburon Landmarks at 435-1853.

The Annual Belvedere-Tiburon Open promises to be a lot of fun, and participants can take pride in the fact that they are supporting Belvedere-Tiburon Landmarks Society.

If you have questions, [email](#) Alan Brune or call me at 435-1853.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Fore!

Sincerely,

Alan K. Brune  
Executive Director  
Belvedere Tiburon Landmarks Society  
1550 Tiburon Boulevard, Suite M  
Tiburon, CA 94920

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## Council and Commission Meetings

**Town Council:** First and third Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m.  
(July 3 cancelled; July 17).

**Design Review Board:** First and third Thursdays at 7 p.m.  
(July 4 cancelled; July 18).

**Planning Commission:** Second and fourth Wednesdays at  
7:30 p.m. (July 10 and July 24).

**Heritage & Arts Commission:** Fourth Tuesday at 7 p.m. in  
the Town Hall Conference Room (July 23).

**Parks, Open Space and Trails Commission:** Third Tuesday  
every other month at 6 p.m. (next meeting is July 16).

Unless stated otherwise, all meetings are held in the Town  
Council Chambers located at 1505 Tiburon Boulevard, Tiburon,  
CA 94920.

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## Community Calendar

For the scoop on events and meetings sponsored  
by local nonprofit community and government  
organizations on the Tiburon Peninsula, visit the  
Belvedere-Tiburon Library's excellent [community  
calendar](#).



Sincerely,

Town Staff  
Town of Tiburon  
435-7373

Editor: Diane Crane Iacopi

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