

Cyndie Martel

From: Jeff Kroot <jkarch2@comcast.net>
Sent: Tuesday, August 12, 2025 5:51 PM
To: CouncilAll
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ross Town Council Meeting 8/14/25, Agenda Item No. 12

Mayor McMillan and Ross Town Council Members,

I'm sending you this email in regard to Item No. 12 on your meeting Agenda of August 14, 2025. I had hoped to address you in person, but August 14 is my wife's birthday and I have another commitment.

The following is a little about my background; I've lived in San Anselmo for 46 years and have had my architectural office on San Anselmo Ave. for almost 50 years. Over the years, I've had the honor to design several additions, remodels and new homes in Ross. I am also a four term San Anselmo Council Member and former Mayor. Needless to say my entire career has been spent working with our community and perfecting our built environment. That is why I'm writing you this email.

I strongly ask that you vote against the Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) application for the San Anselmo Flood Risk Reduction (SAFRR) project to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This is the worst case of rewriting a law because it does not agree with what you want to do. When I was young architect, Geotechnical Engineer Jay Nelson of Earth Science Consultants took me aside to explain the rules of the road and in particular, how FEMA works. My design for a new house showed a winter only swale being relocated around the house. Mr. Nelson pointed out that no one is allowed to relocate drainage swales or in anyway increase or change the flow of water in a creek or stream. His memorable comment was that one or more of the people downstream of the relocated swale could say, "we never had any problem with flooding until that architect, Mr. Kroot changed that swale!" He further pointed out that I would be responsible for any real or imagined water damage for the rest of my career.

This situation is exactly the same as what Mr. Nelson taught me. CLOMR is attempting to change FEMA's rules about downstream flooding. It will not work and will only give attorneys more ammunition against the Town of Ross the next time there is a flood. Your decision could cost the Town of Ross millions the next time there is a flood. These floods come about every 20 - 25 years so the next one may not be so far away. It could even happen next winter.

The following are a few additional reasons to vote against CLOMR's rule change to allow the destruction of BB2:

1. CLOMR and the County of Marin Public Works Dept. have grossly underestimated the number of houses that are effected by removing Building Bridge 2 (BB2). As an architect I inspected several badly flooded houses in Ross after the 2005 New Years Eve flood. The houses were located on Sylvan Way, Shady Lane (badly flooded) and Kent Ave. (the house was totaled by the flood and a new house was built). This is only a small portion of the Ross Valley. There are many more houses on many more streets that will be damaged then the hand full noted by the County of Marin Public Works Dept.

2. The purpose of CLOMR's request to change FEMA's rules is to demolish Building Bridge 2 (BB2). This will be the great contributor to downstream flooding and the future lawsuits for flood damage to the Town of Ross. To remove the bridge the most recent estimate was \$11,000,000! Since none of this makes sense the County of Marin has created dialogue that BB2 was a dangerous structure and needed to be removed for public safety. Nothing could be further from the truth. There are four engineer's reports on BB2 and all of them say for a fraction of the cost (ca \$3000,000 or less than 3%) BB2 can be made secure permanently. Only one report implies if BB2 was full of people and there was a major earthquake it could collapse! This line is at the end of the report and appears to have been added to strengthen the argument. A careful reading indicates ambiguity.

3. Ross residents often use San Anselmo's shops, restaurants and even the library. For a few years during the pandemic, BB2 was open to San Anselmo Ave. and used as park. On Friday afternoons high school kids would show off their music skills. People would use BB2 for lunch or pizza and beer. It was very popular with the community - too popular and the County of Marin, so in the dark of night they put up a five foot fence around it, based on the one engineer's report of weakness in earthquake. The County put a strain gauge on the bridge to show if it was moving and a danger. In fact the strain gauge has shown no movement at all! BB2's structure is very stout, it used to be a gas station. Cars and trucks would drive on it to fill up for many years until it was used for commercial buildings.

4. The demolition of BB2 will be a disaster. One can not just dump tons of concrete into a creek. It will have to be done carefully with a structure built under BB2 to catch the tons of concrete debris that will not be allowed by FEMA to end up in the creek. Much of San Anselmo Ave. near BB2 will need to be closed for several months for all of the heavy diesel equipment that will have to be brought for demolition and truck away the debris. It will be a mess on San Anselmo Ave. and will have a negative effect on store owners and shoppers.

5. Several of the beautiful redwood trees in the grove at the back of BB2 will have to be removed. What are they thinking?

6. It is unlikely that the removal of BB2 will create meaningful flood reduction in San Anselmo. Downtown San Anselmo is the pinch point of 27 square miles of tributary area for flooding. Any reduction in flooding will be a small fraction of an inch if at all. There is also a building just to the west of BB2 that equally obstructs flood waters. Yet there are no plans to remove the commercial building at 638, 702 and 708 San Anselmo Ave.

I can't think of any positives in the demolition of BB2. A wonderful community asset will be destroyed at great cost while creating huge liability for the future of our communities. Please stop CLOMR.

Thank you for your time and attention. I'm available if you have any questions.

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