

Cyndie Martel

From: Christa Johnson
Sent: Sunday, October 5, 2025 4:25 PM
To: Robert Herbst
Cc: Julie McMillan; C. William Kircher; Mathew Salter; Elizabeth Robbins; Cyndie Martel
Subject: RE: Comment on \$85,000 consultant budget proposal for Ross firehouse initiative

Thank you for the comment. I will cc Town Clerk Cyndie Martel here as she will collect public comments for distribution to the council.

Christa Johnson
Town Manager, Town of Ross
PO Box 320
Ross, CA 94957-0320
415-453-1453 x107
cjohnson@townofrossca.gov

From: Robert Herbst
Sent: Sunday, October 5, 2025 12:42 PM
To: Christa Johnson
Cc: Julie McMillan ; C. William Kircher ; Mathew Salter ; Elizabeth Robbins
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment on \$85,000 consultant budget proposal for Ross firehouse initiative

Please include in public comments for tomorrow's agenda item for Ross firehouse ballot initiative:

Dear Mayor & Town Council,

Friends of Ross Firehouse is dismayed to learn that the Town intends to spend another \$85,000 of Ross taxpayer money on yet more consultant studies to defend the original heavily consultant driven decision to demolish our beautiful historic Ross firehouse, and replace it with a \$21+ million Civic Center Campus that houses only 17 full time employees at a cost of over \$1.2+ million/employee (and doesn't include a firehouse).

Why are we continuing to spend good money after bad? The design consultant's expensive \$21+ million plan (which includes a 5% design fee by the way), will require 2/3rds approval of Ross voters for a large new bond measure. Meanwhile, in only six weeks of signature gathering (6 months were allowed to us by law), we gathered 329 signatures of Ross voters who oppose this plan and instead support the ballot initiative to rehab and reopen our historic firehouse. Only 903 Ross residents voted in the last Ross election, so it seems pretty clear from these numbers that the Town's plan will fail to achieve 2/3rds voter approval at the ballot box.

The agenda report for Monday's hearing (scheduled yesterday with only 3 days notice to residents) states that the \$85,000 in additional consultant spending is necessary to inform Ross voters of the impacts of the firehouse initiative. However, the Town recently published a 30 page voluminous FAQs sheet exhaustively addressing the firehouse issue, based on several hundred thousand dollars of previous consultant studies. Please let's not let this turn into another Ross Flood Control Tax where most of the money seems to go to consultants instead of actual construction.

Friends of Ross Firehouse includes Ross residents with deep real life commercial construction experience who have volunteered their own time and money to develop a plan to rehabilitate our historic town firehouse in a cost effective manner. We have completed our interior redesign with BRW Architects, and we are confident we can deliver the firehouse rebuild at a fraction of the \$15-\$17 million cost estimate provided by the Town's design consultant (and on which basis the Town Council originally voted to close the firehouse).

As we have offered numerous times, Friends remains eager to work cooperatively with the Town to achieve the vision of a revitalized and re-opened Ross firehouse, built and operated with a heavy emphasis on careful and close stewardship of Ross taxpayer dollars. The Town Council has the option under ballot initiative law to adopt the firehouse initiative and work together with us to achieve this vision. Friends encourages you to do so.

Best regards,
Bob Herbst-President
Friends of Ross Firehouse

Sent from my iPhone