

January 8, 2026

Dear Mayor and Council Members,

My name is Kim Kieckhefer and my husband, John, and I have been residents since 1988 – 37 years. At the young age of 24 when we bought our first home here, we knew the value of purchasing a home in an incorporated Town with its own fire, police, and emergency services. For interest's sake, I looked up the definition of an incorporated town and besides the obvious, what caught my eye was the statement, "It's essentially a self-governing entity with a corporate status granted by the state, **giving residents greater local control.**"

That said, I come to this podium for another reason, I know what it means to lose a home to fire. My brother and his family lost their home in the 2020 Glass Fire. It took them 3 years to rebuild, and I would say they are just now regaining a sense of normalcy in their lives. The financial and emotional impacts have been devastating.

Some would argue that Friends of FORF are working in a silo of magical thinking. I would argue the opposite. This dedicated, qualified, professional and accomplished group of individuals have proven in a very short time that rehabilitating our Public Safety Building including the fire station is in fact feasible. And, I would argue that, not by choice, this group of citizens has had to subject themselves to a marketing campaign to wake-up our citizens and Council members.

I might argue that the silo exists in the opposition.

- How is it that the decision was made to tear down a historical building without a structural analysis of a rehabilitation versus rebuild?
- How is it that navigating CEQA to rebuild a new Civic Center wasn't included in the estimate?
- How is it that a "deal" was made where Ross has been paying 23% percent of the cost but is only 9% of the population as compared to San Anselmo, Sleepy Hollow, and Fairfax?

- How is it that the Town's \$14m estimates in 2021 has gone from \$14m to \$25m today? And, how come we are just hearing about this now?

Hindsight is 20/20. We now know that Alten Construction, who is a very reputable family-owned builder that I can personally vouch for through friendship, has shown that we can remodel our fire station for \$11.2m (not \$25m). We now know that a CEQA exemption is possible. We now know that the Public Safety Building is indeed structurally sound and can be remodeled.

I am certain that **if** our Town took a poll asking its citizens if they originally bought in this town with the understanding that it had its own fire department, the answer would be nearly 100% "yes". This is not an "us" versus "them" issue.

Unfortunately, I think the hard work has just begun. We **CAN** rehabilitate our fire station – it **IS** feasible. I also believe it is responsible for a future that feels very unknown given climate change, state mandates, initial reports of slowed response times, and population density, to name a few.

I urge you to put your grievances aside, collaborate with your citizens who have the expertise and who have proven they are capable, and figure out how we will navigate our agreements with Ross Valley Fire Department and Ross Valley Paramedic Authority once our fire station gets remodeled.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Kieckhefer

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