

## **Fairfax Suggestion Box Summary** – Late Jan. – March 2007

Here is summary of the Suggestion Box messages submitted and responded to over the past two months. I have been busy with many projects and did not post the summaries for a while so they backed up on me. Thus, the following is a long list. All suggestions were read by me and Mayor Larry Bragman and were responded to in a timely manner. Please keep those suggestions coming!

**Suggestion:** I would like to Fairfax finally allow a cellular antenna. I believe it was denied due to health concerns. Please research current data. My understanding is there is more radiation exposure from TV than from a cell antenna. It's time to move into the 21st century!!!!

**Response:** This has been a controversial topic in our Town for some time, it's my understanding. Town staff has recently been looking into some potential cell tower locations on Town-owned property away from residential areas. There is also an initiative at the County level regarding a wireless "mesh network" that would entail small transmitters on street light poles. Any proposal for cellular transmission equipment would have to go through the Planning Commission and the public hearing process. Cell companies are still interested in locating transmission poles in or around Fairfax, and I hope that someday we will find a compromise location.

**Suggestion:** I enjoyed reading the Suggestion Box summary this morning. Someone beat me to the suggestion to install a stop sign where the yield sign is at the intersection of Creek and Porteous. There is an equally dangerous situation coming off of Bolinas onto Creek/Porteous. Who has the right of way? I always yield to both Porteous and Creek but have noticed as I head out that those heading home rarely do. If I am correct, there should be a yield sign before a driver heads up Porteous or continues on Creek.

**Response:** Referred to the Towns' Traffic Safety Committee for consideration and to the Police Chief for a response.

**Suggestion:** I think that Fairfax could be more pro-active about enforcing zoning/building codes as a source of revenue. There are two properties in the Manor circle area that are storing dead cars and lots of rotting wood. These are at Manor and Olema and Olema and SFD (old Chinese restaurant site near Library). I think these are environmental issues and and if we have suffer eyesores - let the town get some \$ from it. Thanks!

**Response:** One of the properties you refer to is in the process of code enforcement abatement and the other is the subject of a future proposed development. We are keeping an eye on these properties and are in contact with the owners.

**Suggestion:** I must have missed some facts about why the SFD safe routes to school bike lane is situated on such a busy road to begin with. I walked my kids from Marinda Oaks to Manor as well as White Hill School for 9 years using Olema Road. We crossed over at the bridge to get back on SFD to get to the Crosswalk with a crossing guard for Manor and followed Olema to the end to cross over to White Hill. Why would anyone think it was a good and safe idea to place bike riders and walkers on such a busy road anyway. As I see it the town should have paid the owners of the property who lost parking something for the decrease in value that their homes now have. I personally do

not know anyone who lives in the houses involved but I think all persons involved with the decision should park their cars blocks away from their own homes for a year so they can understand the impact that the town has imposed upon these poor homeowners. Why is it so hard to hire people that can think ahead. Really this whole situation seems like a transportation 101 class project. Now area that really needs attention with crossing is the Albertson to Fair Anselms Shopping Center. It needs to light up or have a flashing light just like the Marinda Oaks / St. Rita's cross walk. The suggestion box is a great idea.

**Response:** I know this was a difficult project as we ended up having to narrow the roadway because we did not have funding to place the sidewalk as close to the creek as the original design had called for. The Council and I were not made aware of this until the sidewalk was installed and by then the Council was faced with a narrow range of options. The grant was for a "Safe Routes to School Project." Fairfax has four schools on Sir Francis Drake -- Manor School, Cascade Canyon School, St. Rita's and White Hill. Olema Road does not provide direct access to the schools, SFD is necessary for this access. The Town makes public safety as a top priority, and the bike lanes are necessary for public safety of school children as well as other cyclists. In addition, the Town accepted a grant to install those bike lanes, which also paid to resurface the road, improving safety for motorists. At the present time, the parking in the 2300 block was moved further west, still providing three parking spaces in that block. We are still monitoring the traffic/bike and pedestrian safety in this area. We will have a new pedestrian bridge installed and a new crosswalk at Manor by the end of this summer.

As far as the crosswalk at Fair-Anselm shopping center, the Center Blvd. redesign project (scheduled for this year) will reconfigure the street with a new crosswalk which should be a big improvement.

**Suggestion:** I am wondering if you are the right folks to contact regarding usage of the town meeting notice sign that's located at the front of Fairfax along Sir Francis Drake. I've seen it used to announce when there is a town meeting. I have an idea to also use it to notify drivers when it's a Spare the Air NIGHT. Are you aware of those? There have been MANY this year. You can sign up to receive email alerts at: <http://www.sparetheair.org/>. During the winter it is asked that residents of the Bay Area not light fires to reduce air pollution. I would imagine most people do not know about Spare the Air nights or the free email alerts. I would like to alert more of our residents and visitors about this and encourage them to not light fires during these specified nights. I have read that the Spare the Air organization has very little funding for educating the public about the winter night issues so I believe it's up to the communities to do our part. My thought is to put a sign up whenever I receive an email alert on the main town sign. It might read something like this:

Spare the Air Tonight!  
Please do not burn wood  
[www.sparetheair.org](http://www.sparetheair.org)

I'm not affiliated with the Spare the Air organization but I thought this was an important enough issue to bring to the good residents and visitors of Fairfax. I'm hoping the board feels the same and would be willing to fund the creation of such a sign. I would be willing to volunteer my time to put it up whenever necessary.

**Response:** I like the idea, however, there are some issues that would need to be worked out. For instance, typically our Public Works crew puts up and takes down the signs and this would be one extra task in their already very busy workdays. I hate to bring up the reasons why it's difficult to do something like this, but there is also the liability of a volunteer putting up and taking down signs on public property. What if someone gets hurt. What if you put it up but are busy and can't take it down then the town staff would have to do it. I know that we get faxed announcements sometimes from Spare the Air in the afternoons that say "Spare the Air tonight" and then we'd need to relay that right away to someone to get the sign up. Please know that I do like the idea in concept. The devil's always in the details. I'd be more likely to say yes if we had the ideal level of staff that this town really needs to fill all the service requests we get. I want you to know that I am very sensitive to the wood burning emissions issue and I have brought up discontinuing the use of the wood burning fireplaces in two town-owned buildings (partially due to safety as well).

(Since this message was received and responded to, the Council responded to Council Member Brandborg's request that we consider a wood burning appliance ordinance, and this is on the 4/4/07 agenda for first reading. The ordinance would require conversion of non-EPA compliant wood burning stoves upon remodel or new construction. The ordinance also states that the Town may post a flag on Spare the Air Nights to alert residents to limit wood burning.)

**Suggestion:** We really need to address J walkers before there's a death.... Its getting ridiculous when they wont walk 15 feet to crosswalks. At night in rain is worst - and only a matter of time till someone gets killed.  
Thanks for shoveling mud last year at 65 Spring Ln.

**Response:** Forwarded to our Police Chief.

**Suggestion:** Another suggestion in the blog, asked for no parking on the 2300 block of SFDB because of bicycle safety - why can't bicyclists bypass SFDB all together by riding on Olema Rd, which would be the safest option (and would allow parking for the homes)?

**Response:** The grant to install the sidewalk and bike lanes was a Safe Routes to School grant and we are committed to being a bicycle and pedestrian friendly town. We are creating more and better routes to commute by non-motorized transit.

**Suggestion:** Please inform those caretakers and parents of toddlers that enjoy Peri Park playground of the status of the new combo lock on the bathroom as soon as possible. I suggest doing so by posting this information outside of the bathroom on the corkboard where most information is shared.

I am at the park approximately three days a week and since this lock was installed we at the park during the day have been locked out most of the time. Perhaps this was set up for night time security/cleanliness to protect the bathrooms for day usage?

What hours is the bathroom to remain unlocked and what is the proper procedure is if the bathroom is locked shut? Could a child lock himself in?

Each day I have seen near catastrophes happen. Most of the morning to mid afternoon attendees of the park are toddlers and their parents or caretakers. It is a very enjoyable and clean spot.

This lock is not doing its job or perhaps the keypad is being played with or locked by a child who can easily play with the buttons. Our toddlers and park attendees have been cut off access to an important function.

**Response:** The lock was not working properly at the time this email was written to us. The lock was “supposed to” have a timer that locked the restroom at night to ward off vandalism. The lock is now working properly – open during the daytime! Sorry – we apologize for this inconvenience. I have a toddler so I understand!

**Suggestion:** I'd really like to see some information on Town finances on your website. I see there is a page for finances, but it contains no information, such as the town budget. Can you post some information there?

**Response:** You are absolutely right, and we are working to get some more financial information posted. Before I started here, the 05-06 budget was posted on the Town Council page of the website so last year I posted the 06-07 budget there too. It does need to be on the Finance page which is more logical. We will keep this in mind as we make improvements to the web site.

**Suggestion:** The Town Council needs to reach compromise with the county on joining the flood protection zone. To base policy on something that almost happened 30+ years ago is ridiculous. The town cannot go it alone in seeking dearly needed funding for the hugely expensive flood control issues faced by the town. I offer as proof the town's poor track record so far at getting any outside dollars to help with this effort after more than a year since the last flood. The town council has a fiduciary responsibility to all of the citizens to reduce the potential for future huge tax increases or potential significant liability that will result from negating joining the flood protection zone. If every town in the flood zone had refusal rights then nothing would get done. The town would have representation and an effort could and should be made to foster good relations with the county supervisors now and in the future. Should the town council fail in settling its differences adequately there are many people that will see this as a major failure in their responsibility to the town. There are a different group of residents that live in this town then did so 30 years ago. Many old time residents are cashing in and selling their homes for fortunes (with new residents paying \$10,000 plus in real estate taxes) to people who in addition to earning top incomes are equally environmentally concerned as they are concerned with financial issues that impact them. They weigh the impacts of each and make pragmatic decisions accordingly. Many people are watching how the town council responds to this critically important issue. Just for the record, I am no right wing wacko, just a liberal democrat who pays a lot of taxes and pays attention to these kind of issues that have potential impact on more taxes. There are a lot more people just like me.

**Response:** (Since this message was written and responded to, the Town has voted to join Flood Zone 9). My response to this writer was along the lines of my letter to the IJ on this topic, which follows (which the IJ did not print):

I appreciate the front-page article "Fairfax objections snag Ross Valley flood control project" (January 23, 2007) and I would like to provide some clarification to make this article more complete and accurate. To clarify, the Board of Supervisors on January 22, 2007, adopted a resolution to amend the boundaries of Flood Control Zone No. 9 to incorporate the Town of San Anselmo and the Town of Fairfax, conditioned upon the Town of Fairfax's deletion of condition 2 which was requesting final approval authority to Fairfax for any flood control projects within our jurisdiction. When the Town adopted its resolution requesting annexation into the flood control district at a meeting held on November 15, 2006, we did so in the presence of County officials, who understood our concerns with the district governance, local input and decision-making, and we all pledged to work together on solutions. It was not until January 12, 2007 that we learned that one of three conditions was not acceptable to County Counsel. We then called a special Town meeting on January 22, 2007 to discuss our approach to this new information. It was made clear at the Board of Supervisor's hearing by our Mayor and Town Attorney that we are willing to work with the County counsel and flood control staff to amend our condition to be acceptable under the Flood Control and Water Conservation Code while maintaining the spirit of collaboration and consultation in the process of project planning. This was reiterated by Mayor Larry Bragman's quote in your article, "We want to work with you. Put your hand out, and we'll do what it takes to make that happen." Instead, the article asserted that the Town would only join the flood district if we have the right of final project approval. This is no longer our position and this was explained at the Board meeting. Readers also may be misled by the citation of a proposed \$22 annual parcel tax that is being proposed to make the district eligible for federal grants. The actual amount has not been decided upon but it will most likely be within a range of \$125 for an average house based on the size of the parcel and land type, and these funds would be used to secure bonds and grant funding for the many projects which would be required over a time period of several years. Town Council and staff in Fairfax have been working actively and collaboratively for over a year as a part of Supervisor Hal Brown's regional Ross Valley Watershed effort. We fully understand that on our own, we do not have the staffing necessary to research, design, manage and fund flood control projects of the magnitude required. We look forward to continuing to work on regional flood control, disaster relief, and emergency preparedness efforts to help all of our residents and the Ross Valley community move forward together on sensible and long-overdue solutions. The Town Council will soon be revisiting the flood control district annexation issue at its February 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Suggestion:** We believe it is the duty of a property owner to keep the front of their premises free of litter. Please enforce this with a letter to remove rubbish (8.12.150). This garbage has been in front of the home @ \_\_\_\_\_ for more than 1 year. Thank you for looking into this.

**Response:** Forwarded to our Building Official who is handling.

**Suggestion:** A sidewalk is needed on Elsie by the park, and it should go towards the police parking lot, so people don't get run over by cars going up to the Pavilion.

**Response:** Forwarded to our Public Works Department for consideration. The sidewalk needs in this town are great and our limited financial resources for sidewalk installation and repair do not come anywhere close to matching our tremendous needs.

**Suggestion:** Has there been any interest in the leasing of the old Albertson's? How about turning it into a bowling alley? It may be one thing that could help get the kids off the streets. If not a bowling alley, then some sort of entertainment facility for kids and families.

**Response:** Recently, I was informed that the owner of the property is out of the lease with Albertson's, which is a positive development. There is more than one business negotiating for the site with the property owner and the owner is in the process of cleaning up the building. The negotiations are confidential and I am not privy to the specifics. The Town is not in control of the property but we monitor the situation as closely as possible, and are doing our best to encourage some project/retail store(s) that will meet our community's needs and desires.

**Suggestion:** There should be a sidewalk in front of the Central Ballfield stairs and all the way down to the park. Too many people walk in the street right now. Also it would be nice to have a sidewalk along the driveway below the Pavilion, so people don't get hit by police cars or other Town trucks.

**Response:** (Similar to sidewalk request above) Forwarded to our Public Works Department for consideration. The sidewalk needs in this town are great and our limited financial resources for sidewalk installation and repair do not come anywhere close to matching our tremendous needs.

**Suggestion:** Please consider sanding the benches in Peri Park. My husband got a huge splinter through a thick pair of sweats. I'd hate for any kids to get any owies.

**Response:** Forwarded to Public Works for repair.

**Suggestion:** Post Pavilion 1-5 yr old playgroup dates/times on the website. My next door neighbor has a young baby and I am unable to find the dates/times so she can connect with other moms.

**Response:** We will do this. We really need a Park and Recreation page under the Departments listing section on the website. We do have a Parks and Recreation Commission page under Boards and Commissions and there is a link to the Recreational Guide that lists the playgroup.

The Toddler Playgroup at the Pavilion meets on Wed., Thurs. & Fri. from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. normally from Nov. 1-May 31st. Sometimes when the weather is nice, they end up outside at Peri Park.

**Suggestion:** I recommend another one way sign at the end of the Mono alley at Pacheco. I walk down the alley a lot and often have to tell cars that they are driving the wrong direction and it is one way. I think the problem is that cars that turn down Pacheco and then want to turn left onto the Alley don't easily see the ONE WAY (DO NOT ENTER?) sign, which is facing down Mono, instead of facing the traffic coming from Center down Pacheco.

**Response:** Forwarded to Public Works and Police Departments for their consideration.

**Suggestion:** I have been reading about a redevelopment of Center Blvd for what seems like 2 years. Every time it is supposed to start, it doesn't. It would be great if you could give an update on the project. Do you have an exact date that it will begin?

**Response:** Here is an update from our Public Works Director on the project to repave and add improvements to Center Boulevard. Plans and specifications have been submitted to Caltrans and the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) for review and approval. We have received a list of questions from TAM and the Marin County Bicycle Coalition (MCBC) and are in the process of preparing the responses. We will be meeting with these agencies as soon as we are prepared. The delay on this project has been due to the archeological and environmental clearance process for the Indian burial ground issue. We only just received the clearance from Caltrans last month. Caltrans delayed the process due to short staffing issues on their end. If all goes well we intend to be able to bid the project in May 2007.

**Suggestion:** Is there a way you could regularly post the status of projects in Fairfax. It was good to read the update of Center blvd in your blog. I'd love to know the status of the Pavilion renovation, progress on the Albertson's site, what's next with the Town and Country, and anything else like that.

**Response:** I try my best to provide project updates on my blog and I will keep this in mind and work toward providing more updates as I receive new information. Some projects have had no new developments to report as of late. As far as the ones you mentioned:

- Pavilion – nothing new to mention. There is a Pavilion Restoration Committee which continues to work on fundraising.
- Albertson's (see above question regarding Albertson's)
- Marin Town and Country Club – this has been discussed repeatedly at our public Strategic Planning and Economic Development Committee meetings, and we have yet to receive a written proposal from the property owner. You can see this document for the Economic Committee's recommendations on this property <http://www.town-of-fairfax.org/StrategicPlanning/ECONOMIC%20COMM%20FINAL%20Rec.pdf>

**Suggestion:** After voting for Measure K, and receiving promises from Town Hall that our decrepit Summer Avenue would be repaired, I am still awaiting a day when work might commence. My neighbors suffered lots of water damage during last year's rains when the understreet culvert failed and sent the runoff into their downstairs area. Any hope of at least a drive-by assessment of the street condition and some possible timeline?

**Response:** From our Public Works Director: the Summer Avenue drainage improvements and overlay are in this year's budget. She is hoping to bid the project in June and have it constructed by the end of the fiscal year. We apologize for the delay in getting this project completed, but due to the nightmare of dealing with FEMA and federal/state grant funding deadlines for projects it was a bit low on the priority list... but always on the list!

**Suggestion:** I have three suggestions.  
1. Please post town hall hours on your website.

2. It would be helpful to have business license forms available via .pdf. Since you already have business license rates for download, why not do the same for the actual license form?

3. I tried to call town hall today and there was not way to leave a message or to connect to anyone. An automated message just kept saying the the auto attendant message must be set up and then it asked me to go into set up mode.

**Response:** 1. Thank you for the suggestion on the office hours. I went ahead and made that posting just now on the home page.

2. I am asking our Finance Director to post the business license form on-line.

3. Since we are technically "closed to the public" on Friday, but we are in here busily working to get all of our other work done, we do not answer the main telephone line. I am aware that we have terrible issues with the phones since we have been in the modular, temporary town hall, and I apologize for that. Apparently, all of the features of our regular phone system are not working right now, and it is an ongoing frustration.

I apologize that our technological difficulties have been barriers to us providing you with effective service.

You can always feel free to call me on my direct line at 458-2345 and I always answer it when I am in the office.