

City Views @ Sammamish

ISSUE 15

CITY OF SAMMAMISH NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2003

Trail appeal set for November

City encouraging informal talks

King County will appeal a hearing examiner's decision in favor of trailside residents later this year in Snohomish County Superior Court.

The county is appealing Hearing Examiner John Galt's ruling that an alternative East Lake Sammamish Trail path proposed by homeowners is both practical and more environmentally friendly than the county's preferred route.

The county wants the early, temporary version of the trail to follow an old Burlington Northern rail bed without deviation. The homeowners' path detours off the rail bed in some sections.

The appeal, moved to Snohomish County at the homeowners' request, is tentatively scheduled for November 21. The county agreed to argue its case in Snohomish County after initially asking for the case to be heard in King County Superior Court.

City Manager Ben Yazici hopes the disagreement between homeowners



Mayor Ken Kilroy and City Manager Ben Yazici walk along the proposed trail.

and the county can be settled before November.

"We have more than three months to get this worked out before the attorneys start arguing again," Yazici said. "I think a professional mediator, a neutral third party, could get this settled before then."

"Formal mediation would save the county and the homeowners a lot of legal fees, and get this trail built sooner rather than later."

In May, the city hosted two informal meetings between homeowners and county officials. Although no agreement was reached to pursue more substantial discussions, at least one more session is anticipated.

Recent surveys indicate that most Sammamish residents favor construction of the 11-mile county trail. More than a year ago, in April 2002, the city approved

a permit allowing the county to build the trail on the county's preferred rail bed path.

That permit was appealed by the homeowners, who said their path should have received more consideration. The permit was also appealed by the county, which said the environmental requirements attached to the permit were excessive.

The hearing examiner ruled largely in favor of the homeowners, effectively revoking the city's permit to the county.

"These are complex issues that could be litigated for years," Yazici said. "I firmly believe the quickest way to get a trail built is for the parties to sit around a table with a mediator."

"I hope the county and the homeowners will take this three-month window of opportunity before the court appeal and find a win-win solution."

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Mayor Ken Kilroy

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Three months from now, King County and trailside residents are once again scheduled to do battle over the East Lake Sammamish Trail.

This time, their respective lawyers will meet in Snohomish County Superior Court, a venue favored by the homeowners.

But the arguments will be the same ones Hearing Examiner John Galt heard in April. The county will push for the trail to be built, without deviation, along an old Burlington Northern rail bed. The homeowners will argue for a few detours.

Given past history, it's likely the judge's decision, whichever way it leans, will be appealed to the next level, and the next and the next....

No offense to the fine attorneys on both sides of this complex case, but I don't believe the solution to this problem will emerge from another collision of competing witnesses, exhibits and legal documents.

The solution – and the open trail most Sammamish residents want – is much more likely to result from simple conversation and a spirit of compromise.

That's why I think the county and the homeowners along the trail need to sit down with a professional mediator – a neutral third party who can nudge both sides into reasonable discussions.

Our City Manager Ben Yazici began pushing for such settlement talks almost

two years ago, hoping homeowners and county officials could resolve their differences. Like all of us on the City Council, he knows the East Lake Sammamish Trail is a very popular concept with our residents.

The city, unfortunately, isn't in a position to push this county project forward. In April 2002, the city issued a permit allowing the trail to be built exactly where the county wanted it. Earlier this year, however, the hearing examiner threw out that permit, saying the homeowners' alternative path deserved more consideration. That's the decision currently under appeal in Snohomish County Superior Court.

In recent weeks, the city hosted two informal meetings between trailside homeowners and county officials. Although it's unclear what these discussions will yield, if anything, another meeting is in the planning stages.

For the sake of trail fans everywhere, and our pocketbooks, let's hope all sides begin to move toward formal mediation. The county, after all, is in a budget crunch. And the rest of us are affected by a lukewarm economy.

Aren't there better things for government and private citizens to spend money on than the legal equivalent of trench warfare?

Moratorium extended

With a bit more work remaining on the city's first comprehensive plan, the City Council voted July 1 to extend the moratorium on new development for an additional six months.

The moratorium, in place since shortly after incorporation in 1999, will now run through Feb. 14, 2004.

Exceptions to the development ban include two-lot short plats for single-family residences in the R-1 and R-4 zones. Government, health care, church and park facilities are also exempt.





State Representative Cheryl Pflug

Legislator reports progress

The 2003 legislative session was “one of the most productive in recent years,” according to 5th District State Representative Cheryl Pflug.

One bill, SB 5659, opens the door for additional funding for local governments. If a majority of county voters approve, the county can now increase the local sales or use tax by 0.3 percent. If implemented, the county must pass on 40 per cent of the new revenue to cities on a per capita basis.

New legislation aimed at watershed planning, water pollution and the state building code were also significant achievements, Pflug said.

City budget wins major award

The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) has announced that the City of Sammamish has received the GFOA's Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for its budget.

In order to receive the award, the city had to satisfy nationally recognized guidelines for effective budget presentation. The Sammamish budget presentation received high marks for its effectiveness as a policy document, financial plan, operations guide and communication device.

A certificate of Recognition will go to Lyman E. Howard, Director of Finance for Sammamish.

“Lyman has done an exceptional job with our budgets,” Sammamish City Manager Ben Yazici said. “This award shows that budgets can be prudent, precise and, in Lyman's case, easy to understand.”

Yazici also gave credit to the City Council Finance Committee, which he says has steered a responsible course through turbulent economic times.

“Our council has invested in the community's roads, parks and other infrastructure needs while remaining fiscally responsible,” Yazici said. “Our budgets reflect that.”

According to the GFOA, award recipients have pioneered efforts to improve the quality of budgeting and provide an excellent example for other governments throughout North America. The GFOA is a nonprofit professional association serving 14,000 government finance professionals throughout North America.

“This is a very significant achievement for our young city,” Yazici said. “Lyman Howard and Executive Assistant Lola Nelson-Mills put a lot of work into this document. I'm very proud of their accomplishment.”



Finance Director Lyman Howard

“Our council has invested in the community's roads, parks and other infrastructure needs while remaining fiscally responsible; our budgets reflect that.” - Ben Yazici

Restoring Ebright Creek's riparian habitat

After decades of neglect and deterioration, the battered stream habitat along a section of Ebright Creek is about to be restored.

As part of its new Ebright Creek Park project, the city plans to clear non-native blackberry bushes that are currently choking the tiny streambed.

A stewardship program drawing on the energies of community volunteers will also help by planting native, creek-friendly plants along the creek bank and creek buffer.

Many of those plants will come from a community garden in the park to be



A rubber football and other debris lie at the center of Ebright Creek's dry stream bed.

tended by the volunteers. After getting the plants started in the garden, the vol-

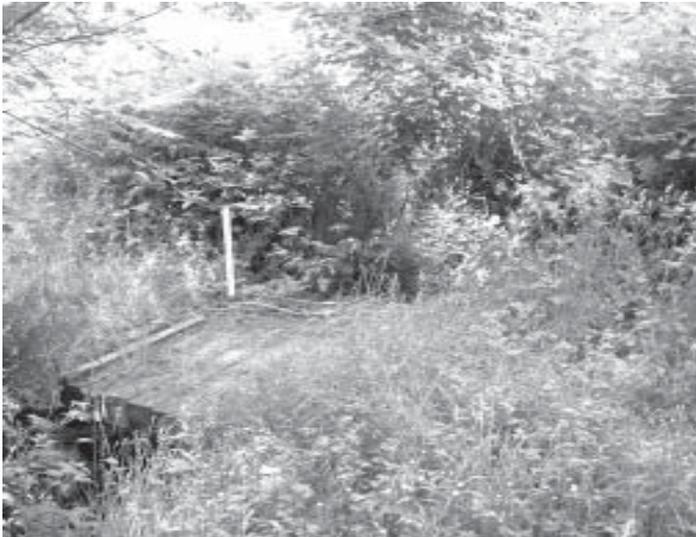
unteers will replant them along the stream.

A small, very old, pedestrian bridge that impedes the seasonal water flow will also be replaced. A new, fish-friendly bridge will take its place.

Parks and Recreation Manager Jeff Watling is excited about the riparian habitat restoration project.

"It's nice to be able to build a 12-acre neighborhood park for the community, while at the same time repairing some of the historical damage to Ebright Creek,"

Watling said. "I look forward to seeing our resident volunteers hard at work."



Blackberry bushes and other non-native plants choke Ebright Creek near an old pedestrian bridge.



A mound of debris blocks the stream bed at the northern border of Ebright Creek Park.

"It's nice to be able to build a 12-acre neighborhood park for the community, while at the same time repairing some of the historical damage to Ebright Creek." - Jeff Watling

There's still time to catch a concert!



Drawing large crowds, the Thursdays at Pine Lake Park events have included a wide variety of music concerts as well as several Shakespeare plays, and outdoor movies. Local vendors and service clubs have set up on-site booths to offer a variety of food and beverages to attendees. With three concerts remaining, we encourage you to join your family, friends and neighbors and participate in all (or at least one) of these entertaining and community-oriented programs.

UPCOMING CONCERTS:

- Aug. 14 Timeless Soul (Motown classics)
- Aug. 21 Dr. Funk (funk & groove)
- Aug. 28 Sammamish Symphony

All remaining events are Thursdays, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. at Pine Lake Park, 228th Avenue at SE 24th Street. Carpooling is encouraged; overflow parking is available at Discovery Elementary School.



Another way south!

North Sammamish Plateau Access Road opens Aug. 29

A long-awaited connection between the Sammamish Plateau and Interstate 90 will open up later this month when King County unveils a new, \$33 million road just south of the city limits.

When the North Sammamish Plateau Access Road (North SPAR) opens, drivers on Issaquah-Pine Lake Road and Issaquah-Fall City Road will have a direct link to Interstate 90.

Although the 4,200-foot-long North SPAR will only go as far as the Issaquah Highlands development, it will link up there with the South SPAR, which runs down to the brand-new Sunset Interchange on Interstate 90. All links in this brand new transportation chain will open to traffic on Friday Aug. 29.

King County Councilman David Irons, Jr., a Sammamish resident, will be on hand for the ribbon cutting.

"I am proud to be able to unveil these transportation improvements, which will go a long way toward catching up our infrastructure to our population growth," Irons said.

Irons, who worked on the coordination and funding of the massive multi-project effort, thinks the payoff will be clear to drivers.



KC Councilmember
David Irons



This new road will provide another route on and off the Sammamish Plateau

"Commuters and residents all over the Eastside will benefit from these major investments," Irons said.

Sammamish City Councilman Don Gerend is cautiously optimistic about the link to Interstate 90.

"I see it as a step in the right direction to relieve congestion on and off the plateau," Gerend said.

But Gerend expresses some concern that the stoplights in the soon-to-be-built business section of Issaquah Highlands will slow the flow of traffic.

"I hope the new link will benefit Sammamish, Klahanie and other

neighborhoods as much as it benefits Issaquah Highlands," Gerend said.

The new road will give Sammamish residents who face Interstate 90 bottlenecks at Front Street and State Route 90 a third option. Portions of the new path down to Interstate 90 are eventually expected to handle between 50,000 and 60,000 vehicles per day.



Councilmember
Don Gerend

"I am proud to unveil these transportation improvements, which will go a long way toward catching up our infrastructure to our population growth." - David Irons

CITY HALL CALENDAR

AUGUST

There are no City Council meetings scheduled for the month of August; City Council is in recess.

Thursday, August 14

- Concert at Pine Lake Park, 6:30-8:30 pm
TIMELESS SOUL - Motown Classics
228th Avenue at SE 24th Street

Monday, August 18

- Parks & Rec Commission, 6:30 pm
Lodge at Beaver Lake, 25201 SE 24th Street

Thursday, August 21

- Concert at Pine Lake Park, 6:30-8:30 pm
DR. FUNK - funk & groove
228th Avenue at SE 24th Street

Thursday, August 28

- Concert at Pine Lake Park, 6:30-8:30 pm
SAMMAMISH SYMPHONY
228th Avenue at SE 24th Street

SEPTEMBER

Tuesday, September 2

- Public Works Committee, 5:30 pm
Sammamish City Hall
- Community Dvmnt. Committee, 6:00 pm
Sammamish Plateau Water & Sewer Dist.
- City Council Regular Meeting, 7:30 pm
Sammamish Plateau Water & Sewer Dist.

Tuesday, September 9

- City Council Study Session, 7:30 pm
Sammamish Plateau Water & Sewer Dist.

Monday, September 15

- Parks & Rec Commission, 6:00 pm
Sammamish Plateau Water & Sewer Dist.

Tuesday, September 16

- Finance Committee, 6:00 pm
Sammamish City Hall
- City Council Regular Meeting, 7:30 pm
Sammamish Plateau Water & Sewer Dist.

Tuesday, September 23

- Sammamish Youth Board, 6:00 pm
Sammamish Library
- City Council Study Session, 7:30 pm
Sammamish Plateau Water & Sewer Dist.

PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS UPDATE

- **228th Avenue**
Thomco Construction is finishing the final phase of construction. The current work, which will extend improvements north to NE 12th Place, is expected to wrap up in November.
- **Roundabout/ Issaquah-Pine Lake Road**
Construction, originally slated for this summer, is now scheduled to begin in the spring of 2004 with completion expected in September 2004. The project was delayed by the discovery of previously unknown underground utilities. Construction will begin after private utility companies relocate their lines.
- **SE 24th Street Sidewalk, Phase 1**
Final design work is near completion. Construction is scheduled to begin in mid-October, with completion expected by the end of November 2003. The sidewalk will stretch from 238th Avenue SE to 244th Avenue SE.
- **Park and Ride**
Sound Transit is in final design for the new Park and Ride at 228th Avenue SE and Issaquah-Pine Lake Road. Construction will begin in the second quarter of 2004.
- **244th Avenue NE between NE 8th Street and SE 8th Street**
The city is moving forward into the preliminary design and environmental documentation phase of this project.
- **Sanitary Sewer**
Installation on N.E. 4th Street between 208th Avenue S.E. and 212th Avenue S.E. Work is scheduled to continue through December.

Residents focus on infrastructure in city survey

A telephone survey conducted in May showed Sammamish residents are both pleased with and concerned about improvements to city roads, parks and other infrastructure.

Although 68.7 percent of those who volunteered an opinion said the city is making good progress on roads, congestion relief remains a top priority for many residents. "Traffic" was the top answer when residents were asked what one thing they would most like to see changed in Sammamish.

The roundabout at Inglewood Hill Road and 216th Avenue NE is a hit. Almost 80 percent of those stating an opinion said the landscaped intersection has been a positive addition to the city.

The city's acquisition of parkland and open space also received positive reviews in the random survey. Just over 75 percent of those stating an opinion agreed that Sammamish was making "good progress" in this arena. But over 80 percent of those with an opinion said the city needs to build more athletic fields for its youth.

In other sections of the survey, respondents also volunteered that the city needs to make trails, parks and other recreational venues a continuing priority.

The city's 2003-2004 biennial budget designates \$40 million for continuing capital improvements in roads, parks and other infrastructure needs.

Since incorporation, the city has widened 2 miles of 228th Avenue, with the final phase scheduled for completion this year. Among many other things, the city has also built 6,630 linear feet of sidewalk, purchased 217 acres of future park land and open space and started the design of Sammamish Commons, a 30-acre civic and community complex along 228th Avenue.

"We've made terrific progress in a community that was suffering from a serious infrastructure deficit," City Manager Ben Yazici said.

"But it's clear from our survey that our residents don't want us to let up. Obviously, our budget priorities are in line with community expectations."



Ken Kilroy
Mayor



Ron Haworth
Deputy Mayor



Jack Barry
Councilmember



Don Gerend
Councilmember



Kathleen Huckabay
Councilmember



Michele Petitti
Councilmember



Troy Romero
Councilmember

Comprehensive plan nears completion

Following a final public hearing on July 30, the city's first comprehensive plan is being prepared for adoption in September.

In that final hearing, the City Council listened to public comment on the council's recent revisions to the plan.

Residents may view proposed changes (in strike out form) on the city's website at www.ci.sammamish.wa.us under the "Documents" heading.

Copies of the comprehensive plan are also available for viewing at City Hall, 486 228th Avenue NE, and the Sammamish Library, 825 228th Avenue NE. Anyone wishing to submit written comments on the Proposed Comprehensive Land Use Plan may do so by sending them to the attention of the City Clerk before Sept. 16, 2003. Send all correspondence to City of Sammamish, 486 228th Avenue NE, Sammamish, WA 98074 or email your submission to:

manderson@ci.sammamish.wa.us

Questions regarding the proposed comprehensive plan should be directed to the Department of Community Development staff at 425-898-0660 or by visiting City Hall during regular office hours, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Councilmembers Kathy Huckabay, Troy Romero and Don Gerend take notes at a July 30 public hearing on the city's first comprehensive plan.



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