

SAMMAMISH

ISSUE 138

CITY NEWSLETTER

DEC. 2013

City agrees to stay with EF&R

BUT DECISION DEPENDS ON NAILING DOWN DETAILS

In one of the biggest decisions Sammamish has ever made, the City Council voted unanimously on Nov. 12 to remain a partner with Eastside Fire & Rescue (EF&R).

But the decision won't be final until all the partners sign off on a new funding formula and other changes to the partnership agreement.

At press time, it appeared that all members of the firefighting consortium (Sammamish, Issaquah, North Bend, District 38 and District 10) had either agreed, or were close to agreeing, to a new funding formula.

The altered formula, which gives some weight to "calls for service" in its calculation of costs, would save Sammamish about \$412,000 annually, or about \$2.8 million in savings over the course of a new, 7-year agreement.

As part of a revised agreement, the city is also asking for the following:

- A unanimous vote of the partners

See EF&R, pg. 4



Are you ready for this?

PREPARATION NOW IS BETTER THAN PANIC LATER

Given that our last winter was quite moderate – boring, even – it's a bit of a challenge to convince residents that they should take immediate action to prepare for ice, wind and snow. Maybe the picture at the top of this page, taken in Sammamish not too many winters ago, will help.

Public Works Director Laura Philpot, whose intrepid road crews are charged with clearing the snow, says the weather forecasters she's heard from say this winter is likely to

be worse.

"It's a weather forecast, so you never know," Philpot said, "but they seem to think we're going to have a colder, icier and windier winter."

That sounds like a prescription for power outages and large vehicle accumulations at the bottom of hills.

"Our crews will be ready to plow and de-ice the main roads, but in a bad storm, as we all know, there's no

See WINTER, pg. 3

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Page 2

TENT CITY

Story on page 4

COMMUNITY CENTER

Story on page 5

An update on two big issues:

My last two messages have dealt with a pair of issues that are of major interest to our residents – the Klahanie-area annexation question and the future of our fire and emergency services. At this writing, neither has been settled, but there



*Tom Odell
Mayor*

are some significant developments that need to be brought to your attention.

Klahanie

The Boundary Review Board (BRB), the county agency that regulates such issues, has given the city of Issaquah the go-ahead to put the Klahanie-area annexation question on the February 2014 ballot. Through their votes, Klahanie-area residents will choose either to remain unincorporated or to annex to the city of Issaquah. The BRB found that Issaquah's application met the requirements of the current regulatory law and that the Klahanie area was in Issaquah's future annexation area and not ours.

There will be no election – at this time – with regard to giving Klahanie-area residents an option to annex to our city. Our arguments that the Klahanie area and Sammamish were a better fit could not undo the legal arguments in Issaquah's favor.

At this point Sammamish has two options. First, we could file a court appeal and seek a judgment to reverse the BRB decision and force a choice between our city and Issaquah. After careful consideration, we concluded that this would be unlikely to result in a different outcome and would only

serve to delay the vote and perhaps work against our city's interests in the long run. Second, we could accept the ruling and bet on a "no" vote with regard to the Klahanie area's annexation by Issaquah. The requirement by Issaquah that the Klahanie area assume a pro-rata share of Issaquah's existing debt load could be a major factor in the outcome. As many Klahanie-area residents know, Sammamish has virtually no debt, and it wouldn't be an issue if we were the annexing city.

We have chosen the second option. Should the people of the Klahanie area vote "no" on annexation to Issaquah, it would then open up the path for Sammamish to begin the process of moving the Klahanie area into our own annexation area. After applying to King County to do exactly that, we would hope for another relatively quick vote so Klahanie-area residents could decide on annexation to Sammamish.

Fire and emergency services

You have no doubt read in the local newspapers that Sammamish and the other Eastside Fire & Rescue (EF&R) partners have reached an agreement on the funding issues that caused your Council to seriously explore alternatives to EF&R.

This all came together in late October as the result of a special effort by a small ad hoc committee that essentially went back to a funding formula in which "assessed valuation" counted for 75 percent and "calls for service" counted for 25 percent. After discussions, they agreed to look at an 85-15 version instead. The major difference was to phase the revised funding for-

mula in over two years instead of three and to limit the "calls for service" portion to 15 percent instead of 25 percent of the cost formula.

The agreement treats certain stations, including our Pine Lake station, as regional assets, with a portion of the stations' operating costs being spread among the five EF&R partners as a form of operating overhead. This gave Sammamish approximately 80% of the savings we wanted. It was also a significant portion of the savings projected to be achieved from forming our own fire department.

On Nov. 12, the Council passed a resolution agreeing to work with our EF&R partners towards a mutually acceptable new agreement. The new pact was to include the new funding formula, a resolution of several EF&R governance issues, and clarity regarding Sammamish's ownership of its fire stations, fire trucks and other rolling stock.

Under the terms of the Nov. 12 resolution, all details of the financial and governance questions will need to be fully resolved by Jan. 17, 2014, in order for us to remain in the EF&R partnership for another term of seven years. We're optimistic, but we can't go past January.

And why is that? Because if things don't work out, we'll need time to make new arrangements. Our current fire services from EF&R run out at the end of 2014. If we're still negotiating three or four months from now, and things fall through, we won't have time to start our own fire department by the beginning of 2015.

This isn't an artificial deadline. It's very real, and it's what we need if we're going to fulfill our promise to do what's best for the residents of Sammamish.



Kathy Huckabay, Bob Keller join City Council

JOHN JAMES, JOHN CURLEY DEPART AFTER CHOOSING NOT TO SEEK RE-ELECTION

After considering their options, Sammamish voters elected two veterans of city government to a pair of vacant seats on the City Council. Kathy Huckabay, who has already served on the Council for a decade (1999-2009), and Bob Keller, a former chair of the city's Planning Commission, will take their seats on Jan. 7. Huckabay defeated Larry Wright in her race by winning 67.7 percent of the vote. Keller was unopposed.

The incoming Councilmembers will fill seats vacated by John James and John Curley, both of whom decided not to run for re-election after serving one term.

Two other seats were also on the November ballot, but incumbents Tom Odell and Don Gerendrew no challengers. Odell, currently serving as mayor, and Ger-



Kathy Huckabay



Bob Keller

end, a member of the original Council elected in 1999, will also start their new, 4-year terms in January.

"We're fortunate to have two experienced, community-oriented individuals joining the City Council," City Manager Ben Yazici said. "I know they've been following all the important issues, so there's no doubt they'll hit the ground running when they take the oath of office next year."

Huckabay, a CPA and certified financial planner, recently retired from Union Bank but expects to continue her financial planning and tax preparation business.

Keller has worked for over 30 years in business contracting and management. Before his term on the Planning Commission, he also served three years on the city's Planning Advisory Board.

WINTER, cont. from pg. 1
substitute for good, personal preparation," Philpot said. "And now is the time to prepare. Not when your car is in a ditch and you're walking home through the snow in your loafers."

As a first step, you might want to go to www.sammamish.us/winter and familiarize yourself with the basics, some of which are:

- Identify the best snow route home with the fewest hills.
- Take a look at the updated snow route map.
- Keep your tank at least 3/4 full.
- Keep blankets, warm clothes, flares, a bag

of sand (or cat litter), a shovel and an ice scraper in the trunk of your car.

- Make sure your car and tires are in good condition.
- Unless you have a four-wheel

drive, make sure you have the right-size chains in your vehicle and know how to put them on.

- If you must abandon your vehicle, please make every effort to pull as far off the road as possible.



Inglewood Hill Road after a winter storm.

- Don't drive unless necessary.
- Take public transit, if possible.
- And in case the power fails, make sure you have a battery-operated radio, a flash light, and lots of extra batteries at home.

Other useful websites:

- www.wsdot.wa.gov/winter
- www.seattle.gov/transportation/winter-weather.htm
- www.bellevuewa.gov/snow-ice.htm

A 30-day extension requested for tent city

At press time, a 30-day extension of the temporary use permit for Tent City 4 was due to be considered at the Dec. 3 City Council meeting. If approved, the extension would allow the encampment of homeless people to remain in place behind Mary Queen of Peace Church until Jan. 17, effectively giving them a three-month stay in Sammamish.

“We’re happy the code of conduct has been strictly enforced at Tent City 4,” City Manager Ben Yazici said. “When people have broken the rules, they’ve had to leave.

“It’s also been good to see that they’ve lived up to all the conditions we included in the original permit, conditions primarily aimed at minimizing the impact to our residents.”

Despite some heavy rains and winds, Tent City has fared well. Although not everyone in the community was happy with Mary Queen of Peace’s decision to apply for the permit, many residents have taken the opportunity to drop off donations and make Tent City 4 feel welcome.



A resident stops by the food tent at Tent City 4.

EF&R, cont from pg. 1

before any changes are made to EF&R’s membership or governance.

- An understanding that partners will retain ownership and title to their respective fire stations, vehicles and other equipment.
- The formation of an “operations committee,” composed of staff from each of the partners, that would serve in an advisory capacity to the EF&R board.

“The other partners have some changes they would like to incorporate into the agreement, as well, so I hope we can get together and nail down all the details,” Sammamish City Manager Ben Yazici said. “There should be plenty of time to get it done.”

The deadline for a new agreement is Jan. 17, a date the Council included in its conditional approval of the resolution that would keep Sammamish as a partner in EF&R.

“We need to get an agreement we’re comfortable with by then,” Yazici said, “because if for some reason we can’t work things out, we need a few days to give our notice and start the process of starting our own fire department.”

Under the current agreement, Sammamish has until the end of January to give notice that it’s leaving. It would then continue to receive EF&R services through the end of 2014.

The impending renewal of the city’s membership in EF&R follows 18 months of tough negotiations. The city, which pays for 28 percent of EF&R’s costs but receives only 19 percent of its calls for service, has long asserted that it is effectively subsidizing the other partners.

To remedy that, the city asked that the funding model, currently based solely on assessed valuation, give some weight to calls for service. The new funding model gives less

weight to call volume than the city requested – only 15 percent – but other changes to the model will provide the city with an annual savings figure close to what it requested.

“The negotiations were largely fruitless for the first year and a half,” Yazici said, “but then a couple of good things happened.

“One, we started coming up on the end of the agreement and I think everyone realized we were serious about starting our own fire department. And then, two, the partners agreed to start a small ad hoc committee to negotiate a deal. It’s the ad hoc group that finally came up with a solution.”

The ad hoc committee has only five members – one representative from each partner. At press time, the small group, with Councilmember Don Gerend representing Sammamish, was working hard to negotiate alterations to the partnership agreement.

Council receives update on community center APPROVES FURTHER DESIGN AND SETS \$34.5 MILLION BUDGET

After taking a hard look at the numbers and asking some tough questions, the City Council voted 5-2 to proceed with further design of the Community and Aquatic Center. The Council also approved a total project budget of \$34.5 million.

Although the real price won't be set until construction bids come in, the city estimates that the \$34.5 million figure will be enough to include and pay for all the features that are part of the current design. The \$34.5 million figure includes 9.5 percent in sales tax and a 10 percent contingency (\$2.9 million).

If the bids, scheduled for April, come in too high, the city has given

itself the option to bring down costs by deleting features. Possible deletions include a water slide, one of the two gyms, and an indoor jogging track.

In an advisory vote a year ago, a majority of Sammamish residents cast their ballots in favor of building the new facility. But given that the vote was based on an estimated project cost of \$30 million, the current estimates have created some discomfort.

"I think the Council's vote shows that they understand we don't live in a static world," City Manager Ben Yazici said. "My sense is that those who voted in favor recognize that we've made a good-faith effort every step of the way to provide the best available numbers.

"But as you get further into design, and the economy changes a bit, it's always possible that your original estimates will have to be adjusted."

The new facility will be constructed and operated in conjunction with the YMCA. The Y, which is contributing \$5 million toward construction costs, will also furnish and equip the facility and handle day-to-day operations.

Located just west of the library and City Hall, the new community amenity will feature two pools, gym space, fitness rooms, weights, locker rooms, social areas and a child-watch room, among other things. Membership costs and privileges will be similar to those found in nearby YMCA's.



Artist's rendering of the Community and Aquatic Center as it would look from the western edge of City Hall Plaza.

Does your “vision” extend into the future?

IF SO, THE CITY WANTS YOUR HELP UPDATING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

You know a city government is serious about public outreach when it sends someone to “The Nightmare at Beaver Lake” and asks fright-hungry residents to also offer their thoughts on the comprehensive plan.

Thanks to that commitment, and despite a less than optimal environment, the city emerged from the Halloween festivities with 70 completed surveys and some very interesting data. Given a list of ten “ideas” for the future, here’s what respondents said they would like to see in 2035:

- 47 said they wanted to see a green city with lots of trees and natural features.
- 38 envisioned lots of recreational activities.
- 34 asked for plenty of places to shop, eat and watch movies.
- 28 wanted to retain a small town atmosphere.
- 21 imagined better access to the surrounding region.

Although just a snapshot, gathering this kind of information is required as part of the “comprehensive plan update,” a freshening up mandated by the state’s Growth Management Act.

“We know residents aren’t going to just wander into City Hall in great numbers and tell us what they want, so we have to go where people gather and just reach out,” Senior Planner Emily Arteche said. “We’ve spent time at the Farmers Market, the Arts Fair, the library, and we plan to spend a lot of time outside grocery stores and coffee shops.”

The comprehensive plan is a blueprint for the future, with special attention paid to land use, transportation, housing, economic development and the environment. Among other things,



Reaching out to residents at the Farmers Market this summer, Cynthia Krass and Robin Proebsting staff the Comp Plan booth.



Sammamish Youth Board weighs in on comp plan update.



Senior Planner Emily Arteche leads a small-group discussion of the comp plan update with Youth Board members.

it sets “level of service” standards for roads, parks and other amenities, and identifies how these priorities will be funded.

To keep residents engaged and informed, Arteche hopes a growing number of people will sign up for “Comprehensive Plan” email alerts from the city. All it takes is a quick visit to the city website (www.sammamish.us), and a click on the “Email Alerts” icon in the upper, right-hand corner of the home page. As you follow the prompts, make sure you select the “Comprehensive Plan” topic.

There is also a tab on the left side of the home page entitled “Sammamish Comprehensive Plan 2035.” This is a great place for residents who want to take in a lot of information in one sitting.

“We’re going to keep thinking of new and different ways to reach out,” Arteche said. “If our comp plan update is going to be successful, we really need to capture the authentic aspirations and goals of our residents.”

CITY CALENDAR

DECEMBER

Tuesday, Dec. 3

City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 4

Parks and Rec Commission Meeting,
6:30 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 5

Planning Commission Mtg,
6:30 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 6

Holiday Lighting Ceremony,
6-9 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 9

City Council Office Hour,
5:30-6:30 p.m.
Boards and Commission Apprecia-
tion Event, 6-9 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 10

City Council
Special Meeting / Study Session,
6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 18

Sammamish Youth Board Mtg, 6 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 19

Donate Blood at City Hall,
9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Planning Commission Mtg,
6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 25, Christmas

City offices closed

JANUARY

Wednesday, Jan. 1

New Years Day
City offices closed

Tuesday, Jan. 7

City Council Meeting,
6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 8

Parks and Rec Comm Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 9

Eagle Scout Project Meeting, 4-5 p.m.
Planning Commission Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 14

City Council Study Session,
6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 15

Sammamish Youth Board Mtg, 6 p.m.

Monday, Jan. 20

Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday,
City offices closed

Tuesday, Jan. 21

City Council Special Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 23

Planning Commission Mtg,
6:30 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 25

"Life Stories", 1-3 p.m.
EX3 Boys and Girls Club

Monday, Jan. 27

Arts Commission Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE:

All meetings and events at City Hall, unless otherwise noted. Times, dates and locations are subject to change. Please consult the city website for the most current information.

Fall colors are lovely until they clog 5000 storm drains

They can still look pretty, even when they're plugging up storm drains, but those autumn leaves are a real problem for city crews, especially when a rainstorm comes along and drives a deluge of deciduous leaves down city gutters.

Fortunately, you can help!

- Use a broom or rake to keep storm drains clear
- Place fallen leaves and other yard waste in your yard waste container or compost them in your garden
- Make sure your roof gutters and downspouts are clear
- Use landscaping barriers, such as rocks, to prevent bark, dirt and leaves from washing into the street.

City crews have more than 5,000 storm drains to take care of. Your help would be very much appreciated!





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John Curley
Councilmember



Don Gerend
Councilmember



John James
Councilmember



Tom Vance
Councilmember



Nancy Whitten
Councilmember

Sammamish Symphony

Holiday Pops, and much more!



Dec. 8 - Holiday Pops! - Eastlake Performing Arts Theater - 2 p.m.
Feb. 23 - Northern Lights - Eastlake Performing Arts Theater - 2 p.m.
Feb. 27 - Northern Lights - Meydenbauer Theater (Bellevue) - 7:30 p.m.
March 30 - Mozart's Great Mass in C Minor - Benaroya Hall (Seattle) - 7:30 p.m.

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Joe Guinasso	Finance Director
Laura Philpot	Public Works Director
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