

SAMMAMISH

ISSUE 115

CITY NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2012

Making plans for a generous gift

**PUBLIC INPUT BEGINS
JAN. 11 ON DONATED LAND
FROM MARY PIGOTT**

Okay, the time for disbelief and goggle-eyed appreciation is over with. What's required now is public input, planning and careful treatment of the greatest gift in city history.

That would be 51 acres of beautiful open space, smack dab in the center of the city, all courtesy of longtime Sammamish resident Mary Pigott.

"We really couldn't believe it when Mary let us know she wanted to donate this land," City Manager Ben Yazici said. "We're going to make sure it remains green and open, just the way Mary wants it."

A 16-acre parcel is already in the city's possession and open to the public. A 20-acre parcel will transfer to the community within five to seven years, and a final 15-acres will likely be donated in 15 or more years.

Parks Director Jessi Richardson says the master planning effort will be limited to the first two parcels, a total

See GIFT, pg. 3



City officials and guests gather for the charging station ribbon cutting on Dec. 16.

Electric vehicle charging stations are up and running at City Hall

If you own a Nissan Leaf, Chevy Volt or Tesla Roadster, you may be pulling over at City Hall before long. That's because two brand-new electric vehicle charging stations are now located in the parking lot on the east side of city offices. Following a ceremonial ribbon cutting on Friday, Dec. 16, they've both been open for business.

"If this is the wave of the future, we want to make sure Sammamish is swept along," said Sammamish Mayor Don Gerend. "We're really happy to be part of a growing network of public charging stations."

The two stations, modest in size but loaded with power, were manufac-

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EMPLOYEE AWARDS

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Sammamish: past, present and future

Last month at our Dec. 13 council meeting, I had the privilege of giving the “State of the City” speech. I could have summarized this very succinctly by simply saying, “The State of the City of Sammamish is great.”



*Don Gerend
Mayor*

But as you can imagine, I was able to drag it out for some twenty minutes by reviewing our past (starting with the “big bang” some 14 billion years ago), our present (which I

described by contrasting today’s Sammamish with our previous existence as part of unincorporated King County), and, of course, our future.

Here’s the gist of what I said:

Some 10- to 12-thousand years ago, at the end of the last ice age, humans of some origin were apparently living in the Puget Sound area (as confirmed by the recent discovery near Sequim of a man-made spear tip in a mastadon’s rib).

The receding glaciers left pre-Sammamish with some till layers of fine soil that are rather impervious to water. When development accelerated after Sammamish was placed inside the Urban Growth Boundary by the Growth Management Act of 1990, this created some some real storm water challenges. The impervious till, combined with the clearing of trees to make way for development, produced stormwater runoff that damaged the environment.

Fortunately, things got better after the city incorporated in 1999. At that time, with a population of some 34,000,

Sammamish had country roads, virtually no sidewalks, and some 125 acres of parkland. Since 1999, major street improvements and connecting links have been completed, many miles of sidewalks and other non-motorized facilities have been built, and we now have some 422 acres of parkland.

We also have a beautiful City Hall built in 2006, the new award-winning library next door, and a new public works facility.

The list goes on: The old library building was purchased by the city and converted by the Boys and Girls Club into a new Teen/Activity Center. New lighted artificial-turf ball fields have been built in cooperations with the school districts. And an extensive public process produced a Town Center plan of more than 200 acres that will accommodate 2,000 dwelling units and 600,000 square feet of retail and office space as part of a mixed-use vision. When the economy improves, it’s anticipated the approved development regulations will bring smart growth to the Town Center.

Financially, we’re in good shape; Sammamish is one of just a few cities in the state with an AAA bond rating. We have lower taxes than unincorporated King County (such as our next door neighbor Klahanie), we haven’t raised property taxes for the last three years, and we have no utility taxes or city business and occupation taxes. At the end of this year our general fund balance is expected to be approximately \$13 million, with long term debt of only some \$5 million.

As a livable community, we have great schools, a low crime rate, plentiful public spaces and awesome vistas,

many fun community events, and great proximity to the urban amenities of the greater Puget Sound region. The result: CNN and Money Magazine have consistently rated Sammamish as one of the best small towns in America to live in. And, for towns with median home prices between \$400,000 and \$600,000, Forbes this year ranked Sammamish schools fourth best in the nation.

So what about the future? At our tenth birthday in 2009 we envisioned Sammamish at age 50 and even buried a time capsule with messages and predictions about what Sammamish would be like in 2049.

I suggested that we might want to repeat the exercise on our fifteenth birthday in 2014, but maybe only look forward to our 30th birthday. Maybe we could focus our visioning efforts on sustainability, wellness, and an expanded parks and open space plan that might produce an “emerald necklace” of trails and public green spaces that would completely surround our city.

As fine as the “State of the City” is right now, I get really excited when I think about the future. There’s no reason, if we roll up our sleeves, why we can’t make Sammamish an even better city in the years ahead.

As I end my term as Mayor, I look forward to doing just that. For as long as I’m on the Council, I promise to work with the community to solidify our vision for the future and then make it happen.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Don Gerend". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

GIFT, cont. from pg. 1

of 36 acres.

“If people want a glimpse of what the future holds, they should go to the part that’s already open,” Richardson said. “It’s trees, ponds, meadows – a perfect place to walk and enjoy nature.”

The entrance to that part of the park is located at the intersection of 218th Avenue Southeast and Southeast Eighth Street. Since Mary Pigott asked that the park not be named after her, the temporary name is “Southeast Eighth Street Park.” A naming contest for the park will eventually produce a final appellation.

Since the land was donated with the understanding that it would remain undeveloped, the master planning effort will limit itself to a few small improvements.

“Entrances, parking locations, trails, and safety improvements will be looked at,” Richardson said. “But this is going to be a passive park. The details will depend largely on the input we receive from the public.”



A typical scene inside the Southeast Eighth Street Park.

There will be at least one new structure on the property. That’s the Freed/Reard house, an historical farm house that’s been looking for a new home in recent years.

“The folks in the heritage society have worked with the city for a long time trying to find a perfect location,”

Richardson said. “After it’s restored, I think it’s going to fit really well here.”

Mary Pigott’s family founded Pac-car, the truck company now based in Bellevue. Her grandfather, Paul Pigott, was PACCAR’s president from 1934 to 1961. Mary has resided in Sammamish since 1972.

This land donation continues a longstanding pattern of philanthropy for Mary and her extended family. Among other things, Mary serves on the board of a non-profit foundation that focuses on education, social services, the environment and community quality of life.

“This gift will enrich Sammamish for many, many decades to come,” Yazici said. “And not just because of the land. It’s also a gift of community spirit, and a level of generosity that will inspire all future generations.”

For more information on the Southeast Eighth Street Park, go to the city website at www.ci.sammamish.wa.us/departments/parksandrec/projects/SE8thStPark.aspx.



The donated land is full of ponds, trees and natural habitat.

Arts Commission looks forward to exciting year

The Sammamish Arts Commission is in full swing, planning a host of community art events and exhibits to stimulate the senses and inspire the artist in citizens of all ages.

This year, community members can look forward to the sixth annual art fair, a poetry event, a classical music concert, and a community reading by ACT Theater, among other art activities.

“Our Arts Commission relies on a host of dedicated volunteers,” explained Ben Yazici, Sammamish City Manager. “Their hard work, talent, and artistic vision help Sammamish consistently rank as one of the best cities to live in the entire country.”

Leading the Arts Commission this year is Daphne Robinson, chairperson and a 10-year veteran of the Commission.

The Commission also welcomes back Barbara Jirsa, a six-year member, and Bala Subramanian, a three-

year member.

“Our commissioners have been instrumental in planning and executing numerous events and exhibits over the years. The city is extremely thank-



*Daphne Robinson
Arts Commission Chair*

ful to have such a wonderful, dedicated group bringing art to Sammamish,” Yazici said.

The Arts Commission creates pro-

grams with a focus on fine and cultural arts, and is currently seeking up to six new volunteers to join the team for terms that begin in February. Any community member with an enthusiastic appreciation of art, sharp organizational skills, and a penchant for fun is encouraged to apply. Future commissioners can offer their talents for one or more of the following types of activities:

- Exhibit planning
- Event planning
- Graphic design
- Grant writing
- Archiving
- Bookkeeping
- Community liaison
- Artist liaison

Interested applicants can apply quickly and easily on the city website at www.ci.sammamish.wa.us. That's also the place to sign up for email alerts on the latest art activities in town.

ELECTRIC, cont. from pg. 1

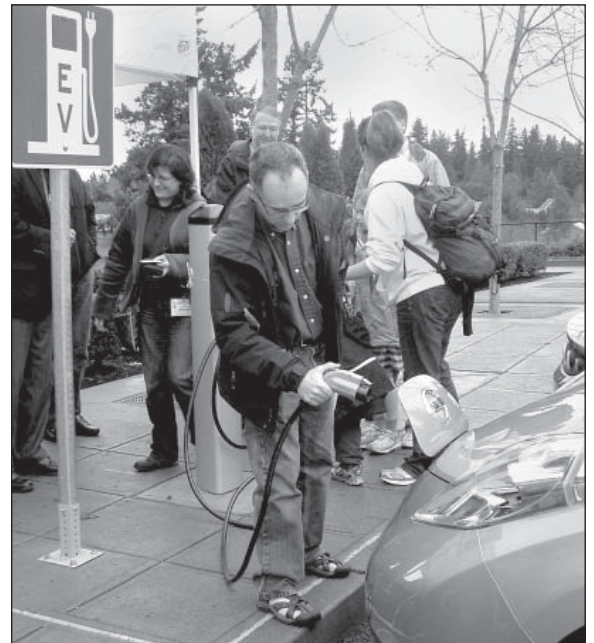
tured by Coulomb Technologies, a company working with the Department of Energy to build a network of “charge points” throughout the country. The city also installed two charging stations in the underground parking garage at City Hall to power future electrical vehicles in the city fleet.

Thanks to federal funding, the city paid for installation costs only, which came to \$23,000. The stations themselves were free to the city.

When the city formulated its “sustainability” strategy, it drew on the input of residents. These new charging stations fit perfectly with the community’s expressed desire to make energy conservation a top priority.

“We’re not going to get there overnight,” Gerend said. “But it’s important to move forward, learn from our experiences and then move forward some more. It’s a great early step in pursuit of sustainability here in Sammamish.”

To fully charge a Nissan Leaf from empty to full uses about \$2.50 of electricity, enough to drive 80 to 100 miles. Most drivers, however, are expected to simply “top off” at the city’s stations. Initially, they will be able to draw power for free. After a few months of observation and testing, however, the city will likely set a price.



After the ribbon cutting on Dec. 16, a driver tops off his all-electric Nissan Leaf.

Sammamish leads the way on Eastside Month of Concern

Last year's effort to replenish the shelves of local food banks produced a generous response from Sammamish residents. All together, the city's efforts brought in 31,913 pounds of food and almost \$5,000 in cash.

The food drive ran from Sept. 24 until Oct. 22. Other contributing cities included Issaquah, Redmond, Bellevue, Mercer Island, Kirkland and North Bend.

"Sammamish residents really contributed to this worthy effort," said City Manager Ben Yazici. "Based on the numbers we've seen, our city brought in the most food and the most cash. That's really something to be proud of."

Sponsor and vendor alert

With another exciting year of special events coming up in Sammamish, potential sponsors and vendors are hereby notified that it's time sign up and be part of the festivities on 2012!



The Fourth on the Plateau and other city events provide major exposure to community-minded sponsors.

Sponsorship packages are available for events like the Fourth on the Plateau, Sammamish Days, and the Concerts in the Park. Potential sponsors are advised to sign up no later than Feb. 1 to get a full year of special events exposure.

The same holds true for vendors. For more information go to www.ci.sammamish.wa.us/events/SpecialEvents.aspx or contact Dawn Sanders at dsanders@ci.sammamish.wa.us or 425-295-0556.

Tree sock era comes to an end

To some, they were a delightful bit of whimsy. To others, a silly waste of time. But whatever your reaction, the tree socks that served as a community Rorschach test are no longer with us.

"We received a lot of different reactions," Deputy City Manager Lyman Howard said. "It all seemed to depend on the individual's personality and perspective."



The stumps, next to Starbucks along 228th Avenue, were temporarily left in place after the city topped the dead trees for safety reasons. Before the stumps could be removed, though, they were saved by the artistic vision of Suzanne Tidwell and Beth Newfield.

"They did a great job of fitting the synthetic yarn to the trees," Howard said. "It's our understanding they will use the yarn again when a new artistic opportunity presents itself."

As for the stumps, they came out as soon as the socks came off. Portions of the wood will be used in park and habitat projects.

City offers Eagle Scout projects

Young men looking for an Eagle Scout project are invited to attend a special meeting at City Hall at 4 p.m. on Jan. 19.

The get-together will allow candidates to review the various projects the city is offering. The meeting will also allow parents and youngsters to get a better fix on just what it takes to complete an Eagle Scout project through the city.

City staff will be present at the Jan. 19 meeting to answer questions and offer guidance. For more information, contact Dawn Sanders at dsanders@ci.sammamish.wa.us or 425-295-0556.

City recognizes top volunteers, staff members

They were awards, not presents, but when the city handed out its “Volunteer of the Year” and “Employee of the Year” plaques last month, it felt very much like the giving season.

“We always enjoy our little awards season,” City Manager Ben Yazici said. “The plaques don’t cost much, but I think they carry a lot of weight with the people who receive them.”

It started on Dec. 5 when the city honored its board and commission members, and other invaluable volunteers. The “Volunteer of the Year” award winner for 2011: Craig Ross, a Sammamish resident who recently passed 1,000 hours of free service to the city. Ross, who has volunteered with the city since 2009, specializes in computer-aided drafting.

Then, on Dec. 15, it was time for the employee awards. The top individual there was Jim Grueber, a Senior Project Engineer who, among other things, handles the city’s street overlay program.

“When you see a brand new surface on one of our roads, that’s Jim’s doing,” City Manager Ben Yazici said. “He does a great job supervising those efforts. and an even better job helping people and collaborating with his colleagues. I know his peers really appreciate him.”

The employee “Team of the Year” went to those who helped build and launch the city’s latest park, Evans Creek Preserve. Project Manager Kellye Hilde accepted that plaque on behalf of the entire team.

Other awards went to Deputy Stan Chapin, the 2011 “Police Officer of the Year, and Lt. Kevin Jones, the 2011 “Fire-fighter of the year.” After the employee awards luncheon, Councilmember Nancy Whitten expressed the sentiments of many.

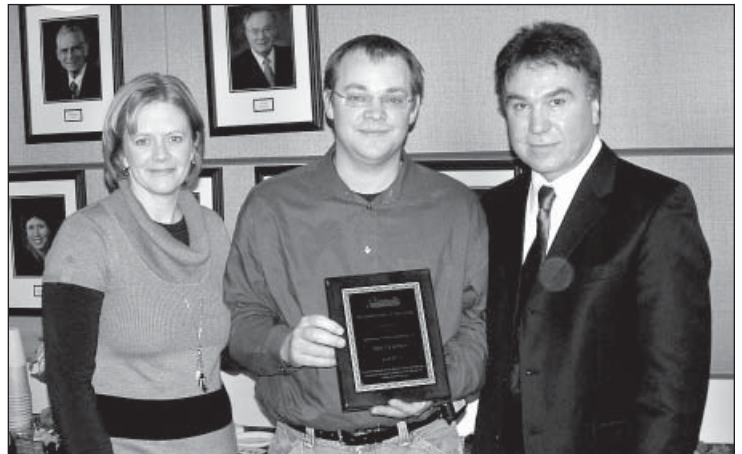
“There are many things that make our city great,” Whitten said. “But one of our most important resources is this staff. They are the face of city government, they work hard for our residents, and they do a great job of representing not only City Hall but the community as a whole.”



*Nancy Whitten
Councilmember*



Craig Ross (holding plaque) is honored as the city’s “Volunteer of the Year” by Councilmembers Tom Odell, Don Gerend and Public Works Director Laura Philpot.



“Employee of the Year” Jim Grueber (center) with Public Works Director Laura Philpot and City Manager Ben Yazici.



Kellye Hilde (left), Evans Creek Preserve project manager, receives “Team of the Year” award from Parks Director Jessi Richardson.

CITY CALENDAR

JANUARY

Monday, Jan. 2

New Year Holiday, City Hall closed

Tuesday, Jan. 3

City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 4

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

Tuesday, Jan. 10

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

Wednesday, Jan. 11

SE 8th Street Park Master Plan,
Public Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 12

Community Garden Steering
Committee Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Monday, Jan. 16

Martin Luther King Holiday
City offices closed.

Tuesday, Jan. 17

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

City Council office hour, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 18

Youth Board Meeting, 6 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 19

Planning Commission Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Eagle Scout Project Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Monday, Jan. 23

Arts Commission Meeting, 7 p.m.

FEBRUARY

Wednesday, Feb. 1

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

Thursday, Feb. 2

Planning Commission Meeting,
6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 7

City Council Meeting,
6:30 p.m.

Thursday, Feb. 9

Community Garden Steering
Committee Meeting,
6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 14

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

Wednesday, Feb. 15

Youth Board Meeting, 6 p.m.

Thursday, Feb. 16

Planning Commission Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Monday, Feb. 20

Washington's Birthday
City offices closed

Tuesday, Feb. 21

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

Monday, Feb. 27

Arts Commission Mtg, 7 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.

Holiday event draws big crowd to City Hall

Although Sammamish is still a young city, some community events are already starting to feel like valued traditions. The city's annual "Holiday Lighting Event," for example.

This time around, on Wednesday, Nov. 30, the young, the old, and everyone in between crowded into City Hall for a celebration of the holiday season.

One of the highlights was the singing performance of the Rachel Carson Elementary School Choir. Directed by Ms. Kimberly McElreath, the young vocalists entertained a standing

room only crowd in the City Council chamber.

In addition to music and refreshments, the event featured a generous menu of holiday activities. Kids were

given the opportunity to both decorate and then partake of holiday cookies.

Eastside Fire & Rescue had a specially decorated fire vehicle known as the Reindeer Truck.

And the spirit of giving found its place at the Toys for Tots bin, where donations for needy children were collected.



The Rachel Carson Elementary School Choir, directed by Kimberly McElreath.



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Councilmember



Tom Vance
Councilmember

What's the problem with motor oil?

That 10W-40 you pour into your vehicle sure makes that engine hum. But when it pours out again, it's bad, bad news. Unless it's handled properly, it goes into our lakes and rivers, and proceeds to contaminate our drinking water and kill fish, wildlife and plants. Not good. Used motor oil is the largest single source of all oil pollution in our waterways. The national estimate: Americans spill 180 million gallons per year. But you can help! Please follow these tips:

- Keep you car well maintained.
- Regularly check your car for leaks. Make any necessary repairs.
 - Have your oil changed at a service center.
- If you do change your own oil, do it in a garage, not the street.
 - Recycle the oil at a service center.
- NEVER discard oil, gas or antifreeze into a storm drain.
- If you spill hazardous fluids, contain it immediately with rags and cat litter. Then properly dispose of the waste.

CITY OF SAMMAMISH OFFICES

801 228th Ave. SE, Sammamish, WA 98075
Phone: 425-295-0500 • Fax: 425-295-0600

www.ci.sammamish.wa.us

Don Gerend, Councilmember
dgerend@ci.sammamish.wa.us

Tom Odell, Councilmember
todell@ci.sammamish.wa.us

Nancy Whitten, Councilmember
nwhitten@ci.sammamish.wa.us

John Curley, Councilmember
jcurley@ci.sammamish.wa.us

John James, Councilmember
jjames@ci.sammamish.wa.us

Ramiro Valderrama, Councilmember
rvalderrama@ci.sammamish.wa.us

Tom Vance, Councilmember
tvance@ci.sammamish.wa.us

Ben Yazici	City Manager
Lyman Howard	Deputy City Manager
Kamuron Gurol	ComDevDir/AsstCityMgr
Joseph Guinasso	Finance Director
Laura Philpot	Public Works Director
Jessi Richardson	Parks & Rec Director
Mike Sauerwein	Admin Services Director
Melonie Anderson	City Clerk
Nathan Elledge	Police Chief
Lee Soptich	Fire Chief
Bruce Disend	City Attorney

Newsletter suggestions or concerns?
Contact Communications Mgr Tim Larson
425-295-0555
tlarson@ci.sammamish.wa.us