

SAMMAMISH

ISSUE 95

CITY NEWSLETTER

MAY 2010

City's duty to annex creates ripple effect

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR FIRE DISTRICT 27

Although state law requires cities to absorb neighborhoods located in their "potential annexation areas," that obligation can sometimes trigger some indigestion in nearby jurisdictions.

Such appears to be the case in Fire District 27, the Fall City based operation that provides service to Aldarra and Montaine, a pair of neighborhoods Sammamish is scheduled to annex on July 10.

The problem is money. The fire service levy that currently goes to Fire District 27 from those two neighborhoods will divert to Sammamish when the annexation becomes official, meaning that the district's tax revenue will decrease.

"We completely understand their concern," City Manager Ben Yazici said. "We've been discussing this and related issues with them for more than a year."

State law establishes the rules for annexation, including how tax revenue

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Skyline High School students work with molecular model kits.

City schools soar to the top

SAMMAMISH RANKS #2 ON FORBES MAGAZINE "BEST SCHOOLS FOR YOUR HOUSING BUCK" LIST

Unsolicited, the compliments just keep on coming.

Money Magazine recently named Sammamish the "12th best place to live." And now, Forbes Magazine says the city ranks #2 on its "best schools for your housing buck" chart.

This most recent accolade is based on the quality of public schools available to residents with median home prices in the \$400,000 to \$599,000

range. So far in 2010, the median home sale price in Sammamish is \$554,583.

"This is such a compliment to our two school systems – the Lake Washington and Issaquah School Districts," City Manager Ben Yazici said. "The teachers and students, the administrators, and, of course, the families who provide so much support – they should

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MAYOR'S MESSAGE

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LAND DONATION

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SUSTAINABILITY

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The economic benefits of parks and rec facilities

The Sammamish Parks Commission is helping our Parks and Recreation Department plan for the future. In my February Mayor's Message, I described the initial outreach program, a series of neighborhood dialogues between city officials and residents, with the motto of "Have a Say in How We Play!"



*Don Gerend
Mayor*

Although this is just the beginning of the conversation regarding current and future recreational needs, desires and plans, the number one item mentioned during these 10 public meetings was an aquatic center, followed closely by a multi-use community center. Also near the top of the list was trail connectivity.

Meanwhile, our Parks and Recreation Director, Jessi Richardson, was one of the organizers of the Washington Recreation & Park Association Annual Conference in Tacoma last month. The last day of the conference was an Economic Development Summit and Jessi convinced me that it was a "must-attend" function, so I joined many of our Parks Commissioners at that day of presentations and workshops.

Of particular interest was the keynote speech by Dr. John Crompton, a professor at Texas A&M and a member of the College Station City Council. As an expert in the economic benefit of parks and open space, he presented a compelling argument for looking at our parks and recreation facilities from a different perspective.

When people are asked what are the most important services provided by municipal government during these tough economic times, you generally find education, health and public safety on the top rungs of the community-wide benefits ladder. Public perception finds parks and recreation down near the bottom, perhaps above only arts and libraries.

Dr. Crompton maintains that the benefits accrue not just to the frequent users, like the baseball, soccer and lacrosse players, or the swimmers and hikers, but to the community as a whole. He says these "off-site" benefits should be taken into account.

The economic and social rationale for urban parks and recreation facilities has several facets. The most obvious is the upward pressure brought to bear on property values. We all recognize that lots are more valuable if they border a golf course or have great parks in close proximity. Sammamish has a plethora of parks, open spaces and recreational opportunities – all of the natural ones shared by everybody in the Puget Sound region, plus those unique to our community.

The total value of property in Sammamish, mostly residential, is about \$9 billion; it is a great place to live and much credit has to go to the ambience of trees, lakes, open space and recreational facilities.

In this era of increasing environmental awareness, parks and open space are also germane to public health; they are the lungs of the city. In addition, they provide social coherence and alleviate crime by strengthening local

pride in the community, and boosting the affection inhabitants feel for each other.

Public recreation facilities, like our 24/7 skateboard park, alleviate juvenile crime by providing acceptable outlets for youthful energy and creativity. The old library, soon to be a city recreation center with a focus on teens, will be another center for local involvement and socializing.

And then there is the possibility of a signature community/aquatic center here in Sammamish. There is no question that we have a demand for such a facility, but they don't come cheap. Applying the economic arguments of Dr. Crompton to this situation, one might ask whether or not such a facility in our community would raise the value of Sammamish properties by, say, one percent.

For example, would the value of a \$600,000 home in Sammamish be increased to \$606,000 or more by the existence of a state-of-the-art aquatics/community center in Sammamish? Without doing a scientific survey, I would maintain (as Dr. Crompton argues) that the answer is most assuredly yes.

And if that's the case, let's look at the big picture. What would a one percent boost to our city's total assessed valuation of \$9 billion amount to? The answer: \$90 million. So, yes, assuming Dr. Crompton is correct, there is an economic advantage to having great parks and recreation facilities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Don Gerend". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

City receives 51-acre gift of parkland

STUNNING GENEROSITY OF MARY PIGOTT WILL TRANSFER OWNERSHIP OF THREE BEAUTIFUL PARCELS NORTH OF PINE LAKE

It's classic Sammamish – a rolling green landscape of trees, ponds and meadows, hospitable to humans and wildlife alike. And, slowly, over the course of the next 15 years or so, it will all transfer into the hands of city residents – a gift without parallel.



Mary Pigott

“Sammamish is so fortunate to have a community-minded resident who wants to share in this way,” City Manager Ben Yazici said. “These 51 acres in the center of our city will remain green and open to the public forever.”

The city's benefactor is Mary Pigott, a resident who settled on 15 acres just north of Pine Lake back in 1972. In 1998, she and her late husband, Roger Giesecke, added another 16 acres, and in 1999, yet another 20 acres.

The land will come to the city in three installments – with the first parcel transferring within 12 months, the second in 5 to 7 years, and the third perhaps in 12 to 15 years.

Pigott has attached some very light conditions to her donation. She wants the land to be a passive park with limited development – in other words, no formal sports fields and no structures larger than 2,500 square feet. And she doesn't want the future park to be named after her.

Much of the land already looks like a park, with a network of trails passing through open space and past man-made ponds.

Although the city has no firm plans in place for the parcels, it's possible some of the land could eventually resemble the city's recently created Ebright Creek Park. That park features trails, open space, a play meadow and picnic structure, play equipment, a boardwalk across a wetland, a restroom facility, and a sports court.

Hopefully, future users will continue to enjoy the continued presence of wildlife. In addition to her domestic animals, Pigott says she sees owls, frogs, beavers, bobcats and coyotes on her land.

The Pigott family founded PACCAR, the truck company now based in Bellevue. Paul Pigott, her grandfather, was PACCAR president from 1934 to 1961.

This latest land donation continues a longstanding pattern of philanthropy for the Pigott family. Among other things, Mary Pigott is a board member of a non-profit foundation that emphasizes support for education, social services, community quality of life and the environment.

“Mary is a very generous person,” Yazici said. “She won't let us name the new park after her, but this donation, and all the other great work she's done, is going to make her a very memorable figure in the history of Sammamish.”



Mary and her dog Annie walk the property.

SCHOOLS, cont. from pg. 1

all be very proud.”

Forbes created the rankings in cooperation with GreatSchools, a non-profit organization that ranks schools nationwide. Together, they looked at 17,377 cities and towns from 49 states and the District of Columbia. Evaluations were based on GreatSchools ratings and National Assessment of Educational Progress data.

GreatSchools had very positive things to say about both school districts, looking beyond the excellent test scores and noting that “Sammamish-area schools are bursting with innovative programs.”

The rankings, which appeared in the April 6 edition of Forbes Magazine, are broken down into several median-home-price categories: under \$100,000, \$100-199,000, \$200-399,000, \$400-599,000, \$600-799,000, and \$800,000 or more. For more information on the rankings, go to www.Forbes.com or www.greatschools.org.

“We’re really fortunate that the two school districts serving Sammamish have received this national recognition” Yazici said. “And I imagine it will motivate everyone at the Lake Washington and Issaquah school districts to keep up their great work.”



Christa McAuliffe Elementary



Young volunteers pose with a pile of collected debris at Pine Lake Park.

Volunteers spruce up Pine Lake Park

To celebrate both Arbor Day and Earth Day, a group of adults, teens and children joined together on Saturday, April 24, to clean up Pine Lake Park.

In addition to picking up fallen limbs and other debris, the volunteers planted and weeded during their four-hour stint at one of the city’s most picturesque spots. It wasn’t all work. The city provided free hot dogs and other refreshments for the volunteers.

“We had a nice mixture of adults and younger people,” Volunteer Coordinator Dawn Sanders said. “And they did a great job of cleaning things up.”

For more information on the city’s volunteer opportunities, go to www.ci.sammamish.wa.us/Volunteers.aspx.

Envisioning a “sustainable” Sammamish

CITY ASKS RESIDENTS TO DEFINE WHAT THE WORD SHOULD MEAN HERE

According to some people, “sustainability” means “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

That’s an elegant definition, but given that many cities, including Sammamish, are vigorously pursuing “sustainability,” it would probably be a good idea to figure out what it means in practice.

Kathy Curry, who is heading up the city’s sustainability effort, says it means slightly different things to different cities. In Kirkland, it’s led them to attack invasive vegetation in public places. In Bellevue, they are trying to sustain their tree canopy. And in Issaquah, the emphasis is on sustaining jobs.

“In Sammamish, we’re going to reach out to our residents and find out what they think sustainability should mean in this community,” Curry said.

To that end, the city will be gathering input at “Sustainable Sammamish” booths at the Farmers Market, summer concerts and Fourth on the Plateau celebration. An opinion survey will also be available on the city website and a “Sustainable September”

event will be held on Sept. 15.

“Then, on Sept. 30, we’ll have a public meeting with information tables at City Hall,” Curry said. “That meeting, and public discussions at City Council and Planning Commission meetings should really fill in the picture for us.”

The city is already pursuing many practices that fit under the “sustainability” umbrella. In addition to following all pertinent environmental regulations, the city has incorporated energy-saving techniques in City Hall, purchased five hybrid vehicles, and created a Town Center plan that will create jobs and at the same time reduce the impact of growth on existing neighborhoods.

“There are many additional steps the community could decide to take,” Curry said. “We’re working with a consultant to ensure that we gather everyone’s best ideas, create a list of priorities, and devise good ways to measure our progress”

The City Council is expected to approve a sustainability strategy for the community late this year.

For more information on the sustainability project, go to www.ci.sammamish.wa.us/sustainability/.



Ford Escape hybrid vehicle used by city.

ANNEXATION, cont. from pg. 1

flows to each jurisdiction.

The residents living in the Aldarra and Montaine subdivisions initiated the annexation process and asked to become part of Sammamish. The two neighborhoods contain 272 homes, an estimated population of 832, and an assessed valuation of \$209 million.

Beginning in 2011, Fire District 27 will be able to bring revenues back to

where they were before, but that could require an increase in their levy rate.

“Understandably, the district is concerned about a loss of revenue. While we need to protect the interests of Sammamish taxpayers, we’re exploring solutions now,” Yazici said.

Currently, Aldarra and Montaine receive service from both Fire District 27 and the city’s Fire Station 83. Thanks to a long-established mutual aid agreement, that arrangement would continue after annexation.

Sammamish fire services are provided by Eastside Fire and Rescue, a consortium made up of Issaquah, Sammamish, North Bend, Fire District 10 and Fire District 38.

“We’ve told our peers in Fall City that we would like to do what we can to mitigate the impacts of this annexation,” Yazici said. “We’ll continue communicating with them, and report our progress and answer questions when we go before the Boundary Review Board.”

Farmers Market opens third year on May 19



Relaxing at the Farmers Market in 2009.

During the sunny season, it's part of what makes Wednesdays so special in Sammamish. Fresh produce, baked goods, crafts, culture and entertainment – all on display at City Hall Plaza with the Seattle skyline gleaming in the distance.

It's the Farmers Market, beginning May 19 and stretching through a summer's worth of Wednesdays until Sept. 29. And this year it's going to start with a "walk to the market," a short jaunt up 228th Avenue from the Safeway shopping center with Eastlake High School musicians welcoming participants upon their arrival at City Hall Plaza.

"It'll be fun," said the city's Dawn Sanders. "And when everyone gets here, they'll see that we have more produce vendors than in the past, two new cheese vendors, a wine vendor, and some great entertainment."

The market, which is staged by the Sammamish Chamber of Commerce, will be open 4 to 8 p.m., and then 4 p.m. to dusk as the days get shorter. For updates on the market, go to the city website at www.ci.sammamish.wa.us and click on the Farmers Market icon, or sign up for market notices by clicking on the Email Alert icon.

More information is also available by contacting Dawn Sanders at dsanders@ci.sammamish.wa.us or 425-295-0556.

116 gallons to wash your car?

Soaping up your car and then hosing it down may be a summer tradition, but a study indicates it sends an average of 116 gallons of sudsy water into our streams and lakes.

"It also puts chemicals, metals and hydrocarbons into our water," says Eric LeFrance, the city's stormwater engineer. "Taking your vehicle to a car wash is actually a lot better for the environment because they use a lot less water and send that water to a wastewater treatment plant."

If that doesn't provide the same satisfaction, LeFrance suggests washing your car on a gravel or grass surface so the water will be filtered through the ground before it gets to a stream. Other tips:

- Use waterless car washing products.
- Use a hose nozzle with a shut-off valve.
- Divert your wash water to a permeable surface.
- Conserve water by using a bucket and sponge.
- Get the word out to your friends.

For more information on smart car washing, contact the city's Lisa Werre at lwerre@ci.sammamish.wa.us or 425-295-0532.

April 24 recycling event takes in a big haul



A container fills up quickly with old computer equipment during the April 24 recycling event held in the parking lot of Eastlake High School. A long string of cars lined up to drop off televisions, computers, monitors, batteries, motor oil, toilets, tires, appliances, propane tanks, cardboard, wood and a variety of other items.

Sammamish Art Fair issues a “Call to artists”

With the 4th Annual Sammamish Arts Fair coming up on Oct. 9 and 10, the city’s Arts Commission has issued a “call to artists.” Area artists are invited to submit 3 to 5 JPEG images of their work so a jury panel can select high quality pieces in a variety of mediums. The deadline for submissions is May 27. Full details are available at www.sammamishartfair.wordpress.com.

Last year, the fair, which is held at City Hall, drew

1,500 visitors. In addition to viewing and purchasing the art, visitors will once again have the opportunity to interact with the artists and discuss their work.

The Sammamish Arts Commission is also interested in organizations that may want to participate in the arts fair, especially those that may be able to provide food, entertainment, and art opportunities for youth. Arts fair organizers can be contacted at sammamishartfair@gmail.com.



CALL TO ARTISTS

ARTWORK SUBMISSION DEADLINE
MAY 27, 2010

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
www.sammamishartfair.wordpress.com



CITY CALENDAR

MAY

Monday, May 3

Council office hours, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, May 4

City Council Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 6

Planning Comm. Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, May 11, 2010

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

Wednesday, May 12

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

Monday, May 17

Arts Commission Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

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

Tuesday, May 18

City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 19

Council office hours, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Sammamish Youth Board Mtg, 6 p.m.

Thursday, May 20

Planning Commission Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

JUNE

Tuesday, June 1

Finance Committee Mtg, 5-6:15 p.m.

City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, June 2

Council office hours, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Thursday, June 3

Planning Commission Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, June 8

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

Wednesday, June 9

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

Monday, June 14

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

Tuesday, June 15

City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, June 16

Council office hours, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Sammamish Youth Board Mtg, 6 p.m.

Thursday, June 17

Planning Commission Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Monday, June 21

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.



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Councilmember



John Curley
Councilmember



John James
Councilmember



Tom Odell
Councilmember



Michele Petitti
Councilmember

*City looking for food vendors, craft specialists
and entertainers for summer events*



Fourth on the Plateau
July 4th, 6-10 p.m. at Sammamish Commons

Sammamish Days
Aug. 21, 9-4 p.m., City Hall Plaza

Contact Dawn Sanders:
425-295-0556 or dsanders@ci.sammamish.wa.us.

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Lyman Howard	FinanceDir/AsstCityMgr
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Jessi Richardson	Parks & Rec Director
Mike Sauerwein	AdminServices Director
Melonie Anderson	City Clerk
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