

SAMMAMISH

ISSUE 131

CITY NEWSLETTER

MAY 2013

YMCA partnership consistent with contract approach

CITY STAFF TO REMAIN SMALL EVEN WITH ADDITION OF NEW COMMUNITY & AQUATIC CENTER

Although it's going to be a big capital investment and a high-profile addition to the city's menu of recreational options, the new Community and Aquatic Center will have little impact on the size of city staff.

Even though a brisk design and construction schedule is expected to produce a grand opening sometime in 20XX, the project won't lead to administrative bloat.

"We contract with the King County Sheriff's Office for police services, and partner with Eastside Fire & Rescue for fire services, so this is going to follow that same pattern," City Manager Ben Yazici said. "Thanks to our agreement with the YMCA, they're going to handle all the operational and maintenance responsibilities for the Community and Aquatic Center."

Yazici is glad the core city staff will remain lean, and very happy to have a

See COMMUNITY, pg. 3



Big Rock Park is named after this huge, half-buried boulder. These volunteers take a break from their park cleanup duties and investigate the view from its craggy summit.

Big Rock Park finds its identity

TEMPORARY NAME — S.E. EIGHTH STREET PARK — GOES AWAY

There will be number of things to work out over the next few years as the city methodically absorbs a generous donation of 51 acres of park land.

But one thing is now settled. The acreage, which will enter city hands in three phases, has divested itself of a bland placeholder name – Southeast Eight Street Park – and is now known, proudly, as Big Rock Park.

After considering a number of other names, the City Council made a wise choice, according to Jessi Bon, the city's parks director.

"It's short, snappy, and highly descriptive," Bon said. "There is, after all, an impressively 'big rock' in the middle of this beautiful property."

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Parks and dogs

Sammamish has perhaps almost as many dogs as people. I know – I met many of them while doorbelling during my campaign for the Council. Fortunately, as a former dog owner, I loved meeting them and, with one



*Tom Odell
Mayor*

notable exception, they generally seemed to like me as well!

However, off-leash pooches can be a problem for some of our residents when they're allowed to run free

in city neighborhoods and parks.

I recently received an e-mail from a mother who was walking with her young daughter in our new Big Rock Park (formerly called the Southeast 8th Street Park) when they were approached by an off-leash German Shepherd that ran up to them and knocked the young girl to the ground, terrifying the child and panicking her mother.

To avoid this kind of encounter, and others that can be similarly unpleasant, I would like to ask that we all please keep our dogs on a leash unless we're in a designated off-leash area. Small children – and even adults – are no match for a medium sized or large dog or, worse, multiple dogs. Our elderly are equally vulnerable.

The only public park in Sammamish where off-leash dogs are legally allowed is the special area at Beaver Lake Park, just east of the ball fields. In any other park the pet owner is subject to a citation by law

enforcement if the dog is off-leash.

In addition to our concern for park visitors, we should also keep in mind that a dog on the loose can be a threat to wildlife, and multiple dogs romping repeatedly through the underbrush can damage important vegetation.

There is also the issue of pet waste. Although many residents are diligent about picking up after their pets, too many are not. Animal poop is the single largest source of fecal coliform bacteria pollution in our lakes and streams. This bug is dangerous for both animals and people.

Although we can't control the calling cards left by our local wildlife, we can certainly take care of pet waste. And that's important, because pets are the biggest source of this form of aquatic pollution.

Please remember to clean up after your pet any time they are outside, even if they're just wandering around your backyard. The runoff from lawns, sidewalks, streets and parks carries this waste into streams and lakes. It's better for the environment if you pick up – and better for our shoes, as well!

This issue points out a “problem,” or perhaps it might be better called an “opportunity.” The current off-leash area at Beaver Lake Park is well used and often crowded. This does indicate a likely need for another place within the city limits where our residents can legally exercise their pets.

Given that, I will ask staff and my fellow Councilmembers to try to identify other places in the city where a second off-leash area might be established so dogs can be safely –

and legally – run off-leash.

Bears Again

A gentle reminder that springtime means that it's bear time here in Sammamish once again. Reports indicate that warm weather has brought many of them out of their winter slumber a bit ahead of time this year.

The first rule of safety around bears, of course, is to avoid contact if at all possible. This is doubly true if there are cubs present because a Momma bear will often decide that offense is the best defense when it comes to protecting her young. Fortunately, if you give them space, they will generally avoid a confrontation.

Our bears are waking up very hungry, and food is still scarce. A hungry 300 lb. bear will make short work of a fence if it thinks there is a meal on the other side, so you should definitely take some precautions.

Please keep pet food – and your garbage – inside, unless it's pickup day. You should also know that bird feeders with seed and suet are an especially favorite delicacy. Composting food waste, while ordinarily a good thing, will only serve to attract bruins and other predators. Sealed composting containers are available for the gardeners among us.

And don't forget the pets themselves. They can be in jeopardy, especially if they're tied up or penned. Please bring them in at night to protect them from coyotes, bobcats, bears, and even our occasional mountain lion.

Please keep yourself, and your pets, safe!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Odell".

BIG ROCK, cont. from pg. 1

The first 15.9 acres of the park are already open to the public. It's undergoing a master planning process, along the 20.4 acres that will come to the city in the second phase. A third-phase donation is expected to bring an additional 15 acres to the city in about a decade or so.

The land, located in the geographical center of the city, is being given to the community by longtime resident Mary Pigott. Among the conditions of the gift: The park would not be named after the donor.

"This is such a beautiful piece of land, it almost doesn't matter what the name is," Bon said. "But Big Rock Park is going to be a very popular place. That's a name we'll be hearing around here for many generations to come."



This is the scene that greets visitors as they enter Big Rock Park from Southeast Eighth Street. The new park is a welcoming blend of meadows, ponds and trees.

COMMUNITY, cont. from pg. 1

partner like the YMCA in this ambitious new enterprise.

"It's not just that they're experts at running facilities like this all over the country," Yazici said, "it's that they're good people. I think the community should feel very comfortable with this partnership."

In addition to running the operation, the YMCA, among other things, will be contributing \$5 million toward the \$30 million construction cost. The city will contribute the remaining \$25 million from a portion of its existing reserves. For more information, go to the city website (www.ci.sammamish.wa.us) and click on the "projects" tab on the left side of the home page.



The lap pool in a community and aquatic center in Salem, Oregon.

May 16 hearing will consider concurrency

The Planning Commission is scheduled to hold a public hearing this month that will focus on concurrency issues and the level of service on a few selected city roadways.

The hearing, to be held on May 16, 6:30 p.m., at City Hall, 801 228th Ave. S.E., will gather public input on changes being considered by the city.

Like all communities, state law requires Sammamish to maintain a transportation plan that will provide "concurrency" – or adequate capacity for existing and expected demand.

As part of that process, cities set "levels of service," the standards of traffic flow they hold themselves to on roads and intersections.

The level of service on the East Lake Sammamish Parkway will be an important focal point at the hearing. At the moment, concurrency requirements point toward additional, very expensive improvements to the Parkway. Issues related to the Town Center, Southeast Fourth Street and Duthie Hill Road will also be part of the public hearing.

New community garden an Earth Day highlight

CITY VOLUNTEERS GET A LOOK AT NEW PLOTS IN SAMMAMISH COMMONS

The commemoration of Earth Day on April 20 made Sammamish Commons quite the place to be – there was live music to enjoy, weeds to pick, and a really good view of the city’s almost completed community garden.

Located in the northwest corner of the Lower Commons, the 58 new plots are expected to be ready sometime this month. The application deadline for the plots was April 26. The city will charge \$50 per year for the use of each plot.

“This has been on our to-do list for quite a while,” City Manager Ben Yazici said. “It’s going to be fun to scratch this off the list and watch people grow flowers and vegetables near City Hall.”

Most of the plots are four feet by eight feet. A half-dozen plots intended for people with disabilities will be a bit smaller at three feet by eight feet.



Planting boxes for new community garden take shape.

ECA public hearing wraps up on May 20

At press time, the City Council was scheduled on May 7 to open a public hearing on the city’s “Environmentally Critical Areas” update. That hearing is expected to conclude at the City Council’s regular meeting on May 20.

Cities are required by state law to periodically update their regulations related to environmentally sensitive areas. The City Council has already reviewed the issues at a number of study sessions.

Among other things, the City Council is expected to adjust regulations on the treatment of small wetlands and make a number of technical changes to the code that reflect the “best available science.” The Council will also look at a possible pilot program affecting erosion hazard areas.

The public and all stakeholders are encouraged to attend.

The world’s kids need your computer

“Kids without Borders,” a Sammamish non-profit, is hoping to collect a generous supply of desktop and laptop computers so they can distribute them to youngsters around the world.

- **When:** Saturday, May 11, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
- **Where:** Sammamish City Hall, 801 228th Ave. S.E.
- **What:** In addition to desktop and laptop computers, donors are also welcome to drop off LCD and CRT monitors, keyboards, mice, cables, speakers, printers, scanners, copiers and TVs. Cell phones and Ipods are also welcome.
- **Not acceptable:** Sorry, but DVD players, VCRs, microwaves, stereo equipment, appliances and styrofoam, cardboard and other packing materials won’t be accepted.
- **Contact:** Dawn Sanders (dsanders@sammamish.us, 425-295-0556).

Meet your neighbor, and their business!

Did you know that Sammamish has over 3,000 home-based businesses?

We may not know about them because our industrious residents are working inside their homes, but they’re supplying us with some wonderful products and services!

Come meet some of them and enjoy a nice lunch at Sammamish Commons this month.

- **When:** Saturday, May 18,
- **Time:** 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
- **Where:** Sammamish City Hall

This event, sponsored by the Sammamish Chamber of Commerce and the city, is free and open to the public. A variety of food trucks will be parked at City Hall, so bring your appetite.

If you would like to register as a home business owner, go to www.sammamishchamber.org.

Sammamish prepares to harness economic surge

CITY MANAGER DISCUSSES STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Q: The City Council formed a Community and Economic Development Committee in 2012. Given that Sammamish is essentially a bedroom community, what was the thinking there?

A: We're always going to be a primarily residential community, but there are lots of benefits to having a healthy economy – more business, shopping and recreational opportunities for our residents, and the ability to keep sales tax revenue at home. Right now, Bellevue, Redmond and Issaquah are capturing most of the sales tax our residents pay.

Q: Sammamish residents have made it clear they don't want big-box stores in the community, so how do we capture that sales tax?

A: We know people will continue to shop at Costco and Fred Meyer, but what about a bakery or a wine shop? Or maybe a small-scale movie theater? As a relatively young city, we haven't "become all that we can be" yet. There are still many opportunities to mature, fill out and provide residents with a richer and more complete quality of life.

Q: How does the Town Center plan fit into all this?

A: The Town Center will be a centerpiece of our economic development strategic plan. That 240-acre area in the geographical center of town is an ideal place for the added amenities we're talking about. It's going to be a mixed-use environment with lots of residential, retail, commercial and civic activity.

Q: Do you think market forces are getting strong enough to start developing the Town Center in a way the plan envisions.

A: There are good signs out there. We're getting more inquiries from developers and positive feedback on the

design of the Town Center framework.

Q: Some have criticized the city for not jumpstarting the Town Center with roads and other infrastructure paid for by taxpayers. Why hasn't the city taken that route?

A: Our City Council has always taken the view that the Town Center should grow and thrive primarily as the result of very real economic energy from the private sector. After a very lengthy public input process, they decided the community's job was to create the vi-



City Manager Ben Yazici

sion and the regulatory framework, and then let economic forces fulfill that vision.

We didn't want to be like some cities that spent a lot of taxpayer dollars on infrastructure and then waited, in vain, for economic growth.

Q: So what is the city's role in economic development going forward?

A: At the appropriate time, when private money is part of the picture, we will consider sharing the cost of infrastructure with private developers. That's pretty standard, so we've already set aside \$4.5 million for that purpose in the current budget. We also need to

make sure our regulations are in proper balance so we don't discourage the kind of investment we want.

And, of course, it's important to make sure our entire city is well positioned to harness the economic recovery that appears to be on the horizon. With that in mind, we hired a consulting firm (Community Attributes, Inc.) and have been devising a strategic plan.

Q: What are some of the steps the Council committee and the consultant are taking?

A: There's been some pretty sophisticated number crunching on things like retail trade areas, peer city analyses, jobs to housing ratios, and so forth. Our consultant is also meeting with community leaders, city staffers and the City Council. In addition to honest self-assessment, we also have to make sure our goals and action steps fit the community. We're not going to chase sales tax revenue, for example, if it hurts our quality of life.

Q: That sounds like quite a challenge. How do you get the benefits of a vibrant economy without increasing noise, congestion, traffic, etc.?

A: You proceed thoughtfully and place limits on what you'll do. We're already a healthy, thriving city. We don't need to become something radically different.

Q: What's the timeline for the plan?

A: We'll have some early recommendations this summer and may start some implementation then, but it's going to be an evolving draft for quite a while as we continue our analysis. The Council will probably approve the final plan around the end of this year.

Police will ramp up enforcement of fireworks ban

AFTER TAKING AN EDUCATIONAL APPROACH FOR SEVERAL YEARS, THE CITY WILL BEGIN HANDING OUT FINES OF \$500 FOR POSSESSION AND \$1,000 FOR DISCHARGE IN 2013

The sale, possession and discharge of fireworks has been illegal in Sammamish since 2005. Although many residents have given up their personal pyrotechnics in favor of the city-sponsored "Fourth on the Plateau," there are still lots of private shows visible when the sun goes down on July 4th.

(Waiting for more info)



If you like fireworks, come to the Fourth on the Plateau!

Sammamish Arts Fair "call to artists" deadline: May 15

The Sammamish Arts Commission is inviting local artists to submit applications for the 7th Annual Sammamish Arts Fair. The deadline for this "call to artists" is May 15, so there are only a few days left.

Interested artists should go to <http://sammamishartsfair.wordpress.com> for more information and to download applications forms.

The Sammamish Arts Fair is an annual event that has grown in reputation and become one of the most anticipated arts events on the eastside. It always features some of the best jury-selected

local artists and an exciting program of arts encounters.

It takes place at Sammamish City Hall on Saturday, Oct. 12, and Sun-



day, Oct. 13, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on both days. The festivities will also spill out over City Hall Plaza and into the adjacent Sammamish library.

The Sammamish Arts Fair is a community-wide cultural art experience, the product of a creative partnership between the participating artists and the Sammamish Arts Commission.

Accepted artists will also have the option of taking part in Sammamish Nights, a sophisticated evening event featuring jazz, food and wine on Saturday, Aug. 10, from 5 to 10 p.m., also at Sammamish City Hall.

CITY CALENDAR

MAY

Wednesday, May 1

Finance Committee Meeting, 4 p.m.
Parks and Rec Comm Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 2

Planning Commission Mtg, 6:30 p.m.
ACT Theatre-"Assisted Living", 7-9 p.m. Sammamish Library

Saturday, May 4

ARAS Bike Drive, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Tuesday, May 7

City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 9

Art for Seniors (55+) Workshop Series, 10 a.m.-noon
EX3 Boys and Girls Club

Saturday, May 11

Free Computer Recycling Drive, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Monday, May 13

City Council Office Hour, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, May 14

Community and Economic Development Committee Meeting, 5 p.m.
City Council Study Session, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 15

Farmers Market OPENING DAY, 3-8 p.m.
Sammamish Youth Board Mtg, 6 p.m.

Thursday, May 16

Planning Commission Mtg, 6:30 p.m.
Community Garden Steering Committee, 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 18

Parks and Rec Volunteer Opportunity, 9 a.m.-noon
Location TBA
Sammamish Walks - Pine Lake Park History Walk, 10 a.m.-noon
Pine Lake Park
Home Business Expo, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Monday, May 20

Arts Commission Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 22

Farmers Market, 3-8 p.m.

Thursday, May 23

"Assisted Living" ACT Theater Community Reading, 7-9 p.m.
Sammamish Library

Monday, May 27

Memorial Day
City offices closed

Wednesday, May 29

Farmers Market, 3-8 p.m.

JUNE

Tuesday, Jun. 4

City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Jun. 5

Farmers Market, 3-8 p.m.
Parks and Rec Commission Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, Jun. 6

Planning Commission Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Monday, Jun. 10

City Council Office Hour, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Jun. 11

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

Wednesday, Jun. 12

Sammamish Farmers Market, 3-8 p.m.
Sammamish Youth Board Mtg, 6 p.m.

Friday, Jun. 14

Teen Fest - Skate Competition and Teen Music Festival, 3:30-9 p.m.
City Hall Plaza

Saturday, Jun. 15, Sammamish Walks - "I Spy", 10 a.m.-noon
Beaver Lake Park

Monday, Jun. 17

Arts Commission Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Jun. 19

Farmers Market, 3-8 p.m.

Thursday, Jun. 20

Planning Commission Mtg, 6:30 p.m.
Community Garden Steering Committee, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Jun. 26

Sammamish Farmers Market, 3-8 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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Don Gerend
Councilmember



John James
Councilmember



Tom Vance
Councilmember



Nancy Whitten
Councilmember

May is “Puget Sound Starts Here” month

The goal of “Puget Sound Starts Here” is to raise awareness among all residents that they play a crucial role in keeping our beautiful waterways clean and healthy. Let’s make May a special month by practicing all the habits that make that possible.

You know what that means: Never dump anything into a storm drain, or wash your car on a driveway, or fail to pick up pet waste, or do any of the other things you can find out about at:

www.PugetSoundStartsHere.org.

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