

SAMMAMISH

ISSUE 155

CITY NEWSLETTER

MAY 2015

Advisory vote says yes to initiative and referendum power

On April 28, Sammamish voters were asked if they would like to have local initiative and referendum power.

Based on the results of an advisory vote, the answer appears to be “yes.” Those in favor of the idea accounted for 55 percent of the vote.

Many cities in the state grant residents the power to directly enact or repeal laws, bypassing city councils. The right, however, applies only to ordinances – not motions or resolutions – and a number of ordinance categories are exempt.

To learn more about the power of initiative and referendum, go to the city website (www.sammamish.us) and click on the “Initiative and Referendum” news item. It contains a link to the “Initiative and Referendum Guide” from the Municipal Research and Service Center of Washington state.

The ordinance categories not subject to initiative and referendum power include: zoning, compensation of city employees, collective bargaining, appropriation of money, and the levying of taxes.



Welcome to Sammamish! KLAHANIE-AREA VOTERS CHOOSE TO JOIN CITY

No need for a recount!

When Klahanie-area residents were asked if they'd like to join Sammamish, 86 percent of participating voters in the April 28 election said yes to annexation.

“To be honest, we were expecting a positive outcome,” Sammamish City Manager Ben Yazici said. “But I wasn't anticipating 86 percent. This feels really, really good.”

Assuming all procedural steps go smoothly, the area's transition from unincorporated King County to Sammamish will become official by the end of this year.

The affirmative vote will bring approximately 11,000 new residents into the city, boosting its population to almost 60,000 and making Sammamish

See ANNEXATION, pg. 3

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

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COMMUNITY CENTER

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AN IMPORTANT GOODBYE

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The annexation vote feels like a compliment

SAMMAMISH SUGGESTED A GET-TOGETHER, AND THE VOTERS SAID YES!

As I write this message, the election hasn't been certified, but the message from Klahanie-area voters is clear. They've responded to the city's invitation by voting resoundingly in favor of annexation to Sammamish!



Tom Vance
Mayor

Although the decision to annex may be mostly a function of common sense – lower taxes and better services should appeal to anyone, right? – it still makes many of us feel really good

that the great neighborhoods in the Klahanie-area chose to join us by such an overwhelming margin.

So, welcome Klahanie-area residents to Sammamish! And congratulations on achieving what so many of you have wanted for a long time – to be part of a city.

The beauty of this union is that it should provide terrific benefits to our current residents, as well. That's because, in the years ahead, with jurisdiction over a larger area, the city will be better positioned to invest in infrastructure that was previously beyond our reach.

The best example is Issaquah-Fall City Road, a long-neglected arterial in unincorporated King County that for too many years has frustrated commuters from both Sammamish and Klahanie.

A few years from now, when much of that corridor has been widened to three or five lanes, and additional improvements have been made to Is-

saquah-Pine Lake Road, I imagine this annexation vote will seem like an even better idea.

And here's another example of how annexation will help existing residents. We're planning to add six new police officers to accommodate our expanded public safety responsibilities. But those officers aren't going to be anchored in one spot. They'll be available for duty throughout the city if circumstances call for it.

That means Sammamish, already recognized as one of the safest cities in the USA, will become even better protected.

The decision to annex should be based on many factors, not just dollars and cents, but even on that score, our existing residents should know that the addition of two additional square miles of territory isn't going to drain our city coffers.

In fact, our fiscal analysis indicates that the added revenue from the Klahanie area will exceed our additional service expenditures there by about \$1.4 million per year. That's a surplus that will help pay for the new road improvements.

Speaking of other factors, how about the pertinent truth that Klahanie-area residents and Sammamish residents share the same plateau? And the same schools? And many of the same stores, social patterns and outdoor activities?

Taking all that into account, I think we belong together. And after a few years inside the same city limits, I trust that we'll do a good enough job on behalf of our new residents to make them

feel exactly the same way!

As we consider all this, we should make note of the fact that we wouldn't be here without exemplary regional cooperation. We worked closely with both King County and Issaquah to get this done. There were a lot of process hoops to jump through, and anything short of full good faith could have produced time-consuming stumbles.

Issaquah Mayor Fred Butler and Issaquah City Council President Paul Winterstein were particularly instrumental. Their good will, and their commitment to cooperation between our two cities, did more than produce a terrific regional success. It also set a "win-win" standard that bodes well for the future.

Just as Issaquah helped us, we plan to do everything we can to help them, and our region, by supporting the improvements they need along the I-90 corridor. Working together, we believe our regional influence will grow, and help bring state and federal funding to vital projects that benefit us all.

But that's looking ahead. For the moment, let's savor this successful annexation.

It's nice to know that the 11,000 residents in the Klahanie-area took a close look at us – at our roads, parks, budgets, approach to governance, etc. – and decided to say "Yes!"

It's a sense of affirmation we'll work hard to deserve – and preserve – in the years ahead.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Tom Vance". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

ANNEXATION, cont. from pg. 1

the 7th largest city in King County.

“I think this is a very positive step for both our new residents and our existing residents,” City Manager Ben Yazici said. “The Klahanie-area will see better services and lower taxes than they have now, and the city as a whole will benefit from added revenue and the new opportunity we’ll have to make regional road improvements.”

By state law, the city wasn’t allowed to advocate in favor of annexation, but it was allowed to share accurate information with Klahanie-area residents. Apparently, that information spoke for itself.

For example:

- Right now, the owner of a \$500,000 home in Sammamish pays between \$700 and \$800 less in annual taxes than the owner of a \$500,000 home in the Klahanie area.
- The city committed to hiring six new police officers if the annexation went through. City police will be in a position to provide faster response times than those current-



Klahanie-area residents meet with service providers, city staff and Councilmembers at a Sept. 10, 2014, annexation open house at Faith United Church.

ly provided by King County Sheriff’s deputies.

- The annexation will put the city in a position to make much-needed improvements to Issaquah-Fall City Road, a congested commuter corridor used by both Klahanie and Sammamish residents.
- In recent years, Sammamish has

spent about \$3 million annually for the resurfacing of city roads. By way of contrast, King County has spent only \$2 million – and that’s for the entire county.

“It’s been a pleasure to get to know a lot of Klahanie-area residents over the past year, or so,” Yazici said. “They’ve come to City Hall, to our open houses, and have been in touch personally.”

Given the vote totals, it would appear the decision to annex was not difficult. The same could not be said, however, for the multi-jurisdictional process required to stage the election.

Among other things, Issaquah had to transfer Klahanie and the adjoining neighborhoods into Sammamish’s “potential annexation area,” both cities and the county had to amend their planning documents, and the annexation proposal needed to be put through a “boundary review board” process.

“It wasn’t easy, but the cross-jurisdictional cooperation was great to see” Yazici said. “Everybody was result-oriented, working hard, and pulling in the same direction.”



One of the city’s early efforts to share accurate information about the annexation took place on May 7, 2014, at this City Hall dinner for Klahanie-area residents.

Residents concerned about Issaquah-Pine Lake Road NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS SPARK A FLURRY OF EMAILS TO CITY HALL

Although Sammamish has made great progress in improving its road system since incorporation, there are still many items vying for space on the city's transportation "to-do" list.

One of the most prominent projects on the community's long-term transportation plan is Issaquah-Pine Lake Road, a busy arterial that serves as a major exit and entry point for city residents.

Although no date has been set, the city will eventually expand and improve the roadway so it will maintain the level of service called for in city policies. The improvements will include additional traffic lanes, bike lanes, and a sidewalk.

In recent weeks, though, a number of very concerned emails, many of them based on a form letter containing inaccurate information, have come into City Hall.

The erroneous information? That more than 500 new homes have been

approved or proposed along Issaquah-Pine Lake Road and the city isn't requiring developers to pay for road improvements.

"I can understand why this form letter prompted so many emails," City Manager Ben Yazici said. "But I hope the facts that we provided in our response will serve to reassure people."

Here they are:

- The city requires every development to complete a traffic impact analysis.
- Developers will either construct the road improvements themselves or pay a "traffic-impact fee," which the city can then draw upon to fund the improvements.
- The city charges a traffic-impact fee of almost \$15,000 for every single-family home a developer builds. Sammamish has the highest traffic-impact fees in the state.
- By way of comparison, Issaquah

charges a traffic-impact fee of \$7,900 per single-family home.

- Inside the city, only 172 lots along Issaquah-Pine Lake Road are slated for development.
- Approximately 100 lots along the roadway are slated for development in unincorporated King County.

As development proceeds along Issaquah-Pine Lake Road, some of the near-term improvements will include a new traffic signal at the S.E. 42nd Street intersection, and road improvements where the developments are adjacent to the roadway.

"The form letter that was circulated gave the impression that the city didn't have a plan," Yazici said. "But that's not the case. Our plan is well thought out, it follows the best practices called for by state law, and its a plan that asks developers to do their fair share as we build a healthy, high-functioning community."

Latest update on Community and Aquatic Center

The walls are up, the roof is on, and the city's new Community and Aquatic Center, slated to open in early 2016, is on schedule and on budget.

Just past the midpoint of its construction timeline, the 69,000-square-foot, two-level building has risen from its foundation and is now a visible presence just west of the library and City Hall.

"The contractor still has a lot of work to do, but the project is going well," City Manager Ben Yazici said. "We can't wait to swing the doors open early next year."

The new facility, which

will be equipped, furnished and operated by the YMCA, will feature two gyms, two pools, fitness areas, locker rooms, an elevated jogging track, a weight room, multi-purpose spaces, meeting areas, child care and other amenities.



Community and Aquatic Center under construction

With demolition, sales tax, construction contingencies and other expenses, the total project budget is \$33,885,000. In addition to its other contributions, the YMCA has provided \$5 million in construction funding. The city's expenditures are being drawn from existing financial reserves. No new taxes were imposed to pay for the facility.

City Manager Ben Yazici to leave early next year

HIS 14-YEAR TENURE WILL BE NOTED FOR BIG INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS, ENVIABLE BALANCE SHEETS, AND A STEADY GROWTH IN COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Before he became city manager in January of 2001, Ben Yazici served as the city's public works and finance director, so perhaps it shouldn't be a surprise that the city's infrastructure and budget are in great shape as he prepares to leave in February.

Mayor Tom Vance says Yazici's blend of talents, along with his natural ingenuity, have served the community well.

"We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Ben," Vance said. "In addition to really understanding how to build infrastructure and handle budgets, he's very creative. His ability to solve problems, often in a unique way, has been a godsend. We'll really miss him."

In his letter to the City Council, Yazici indicated he's just going to hit the "pause" button for now.

"I have no immediate plans – other than to spend time with my extended family, relax, and very proudly reflect on our city's breathtaking ascent," he wrote. "Given how much this community has achieved, with this and earlier Council's leading the way, those reflections could take a while!"

In a slide show Yazici presented to the Sammamish Chamber of Commerce on April 16, the city's transformation since incorporation in 1999 was made clear with a series of before and after pictures.

The city's main arterial, 228th Avenue, was once a two-lane county road with no sidewalks. Now it's a five-lane boulevard. Watching the slide show, attendees saw pastures turn into parks, ragged fields turn into all-weather athletic surfaces, and dangerous shoulders expand into broad, safe walkways.

Deputy Mayor Kathy Huckabay says Yazici has always shared the Council's vision for the city, and always been more than just a skillful technocrat.

"His drive and passion for the city have helped us create the wonderful, family-friendly community that we dreamed of so many years ago," Huckabay said. "I know I'm not alone in saying that we will miss him greatly."

Based on the current budget, at the end of 2016 the city will have invested



Sammamish City Manager Ben Yazici

\$240 million in roads, parks, ball fields, stormwater facilities, park property acquisition and other capital projects since incorporation. And yet the ending fund balance at the end of next year is projected to be \$42 million.

How does a new city dramatically ramp up infrastructure investment and still produce such a healthy surplus? Yazici credits the City Council's fiscally conservative approach.

"Our City Councils have always made sure the numbers added up," Yazici said. "They've built the city thoughtfully, prudently, and at a very steady pace. We've also contracted for a lot of services so we could keep city staff very lean."

Some examples: The city contracts with the King County Sheriff's Office for police services, with Eastside Fire and Rescue for fire services, and as part of a partnership with the YMCA will have that organization run and operate the city's new Community and Aquatic Center when it opens early next year.

The opening of the new facility will roughly coincide with Yazici's departure and will likely serve as a fitting capstone to an unusually long and eventful tenure.

Other highlights during his last year include the annexation of Klahanie, growing private sector investments in the Town Center, and the purchase of Mars Hill Church for conversion to higher education.

"I'm looking forward to working on all of these items over the next few months," Yazici said. "It wasn't by design, but the timing feels pretty good. It'll be nice to wrap things up with a bit of a flourish."

Prior to joining Sammamish, Yazici worked at University Place, Gig Harbor, Bothell and with the Washington State Department of Transportation. He has a B.S. in Civil Engineering from the University of Cukurova in Turkey and an M.S. in Civil Engineering from the University of Washington.

Public invited to May 28 comp plan Open House

With the City Council scheduled to adopt the comprehensive plan rewrite early next month, residents are being invited to an Open House to ask questions, share perspectives, and view the latest displays and documents. The Open House is scheduled for Thursday, May 28, from 5 to 7:30 p.m., at City Hall, 801 228th Ave. S.E.

City staff will be present to answer questions regarding the eight elements of the comp plan – housing, land use, transportation, shorelines, parks, capital facilities, utilities and environment/conservation.

For in-depth information about the plan, go to www.sammamish.us and click on the “2035 Comprehensive Plan” tab on the left side of the home page.



Councilmember Bob Keller (left) converses with residents at a comp plan Open House in January.

Please go to a car wash!!!

It may be a tough habit to break, but if you don't want to see soap suds in our streams, wetlands and lakes, please don't wash your car in the driveway.

Unlike the soapy water inside your residence, which goes into sewers and undergoes treatment, whatever you hose off your car in the driveway goes into a storm drain and then directly into our waterways.

The best alternative? Go to a commercial car wash. Their soap suds go to a treatment facility!

New passport days at City Hall

The city is now accepting passport applications on Wednesday and Thursday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The city is no longer accepting applications on Friday.

For full information on costs, personal identification requirements and other process details, go to www.sammamish.us and select the “Services” tab on the left side of the home page.

But here are some of the basics:

- Applications can be picked up at City Hall any day, or downloaded at the U. S. Department of State website (www.state.gov). Just click on the “Travel” tab.
- For people 16 and older, the cost is \$110.
- For people 15 and younger, it's \$80.
- The city does not take passport photos.
- Normal delivery is four to six weeks.
- Expedited delivery (for \$60 more) is usually three weeks.

Rig-A-Palooza on May 16 !!!

Climb inside the big rigs that make the city work!



Fire trucks, garbage trucks, school buses, public works vehicles and many more.

Saturday, May 16, noon to 3 p.m.
City Hall Plaza

Help restore wetland on May 16

Volunteers are invited to help out with the ongoing restoration efforts at the Lower Commons wetland, the headwaters of Ebright Creek.

On May 16, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., volunteers will enhance the wetland habitat by planting and mulching native trees and shrubs, and by removing invasive plants.

The project is perfect for students looking to complete community service hours, and great for groups of all ages. Water, snacks, gloves and tools will be provided. Volunteers should wear long sleeves, pants and closed-toe shoes.

To register, just go to www.sammamish.us, click on the “events” tab on the left side of the home page, and select “events calendar.”

CITY CALENDAR

MAY

Saturday, May 2

-Sammamish Walks - Haiku in the Woods,
10 a.m.- noon
Beaver Lake Lodge

Sunday, May 3

-EX3 Boys & Girls Club 10K/5K
Fun Run, 7:30-10 a.m.

Tuesday, May 5

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

Wednesday, May 6

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

Thursday, May 7

-“Block Printing” Senior Art Workshop,
10 a.m.-1 p.m.
EX3 Boys and Girls Club
-Planning Commission Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 9

-“Au-some Artists”
Special Arts Sammamish, 1-3 p.m.
EX3 Boys and Girls Club

Tuesday, May 12

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

Friday, May 15

-“Opera Ole”, 7-8:30 p.m.
Sahalee Country Club

Saturday, May 16

-Sammamish Walks - Pine Lake Park
10 a.m.- noon
-Rig-A-Palooza, 12-3 p.m.
City Hall Plaza

Monday, May 18

-Committee of the Whole, 6:30 p.m.
-Arts Commission Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, May 19

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

Wednesday, May 20

-Farmer’s Market, 4-8 p.m.
City Hall Plaza
-Sammamish Youth Board Mtg, 6 p.m.

Thursday, May 21

-“Pushing the Puddle”
Watercolor Workshop, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
EX3 Boys and Girls Club
-Planning Commission Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Monday, May 25

-Memorial Day, City offices closed

Wednesday, May 27

-Farmer’s Market, 4-8 p.m.
City Hall Plaza

Saturday, May 30

-Flying Wheels Bike Ride, 6:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

JUNE

Tuesday, Jun. 2

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

Wednesday, Jun. 3

-Farmer’s Market, 4-8 p.m.
City Hall Plaza
-Parks and Rec Commission Mtg, 6:30 p.m.
City Hall Plaza

Thursday, Jun. 4

-Planning Commission Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Friday, Jun. 5

-Teen Fest Skate Competition, 4-7 p.m.

Tuesday, Jun. 9

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

Wednesday, Jun. 10

-Farmer’s Market, 4-8 p.m.
City Hall Plaza

Thursday, Jun. 11

-Family Volunteering:
Native Plant Garden, 10 a.m.- noon
Lower Commons

Monday, Jun. 15

-Committee of the Whole , 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Jun. 16

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

Wednesday, Jun. 17

-Farmer’s Market, 4-8 p.m.
City Hall Plaza

Thursday, Jun. 18

-Planning Commission Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, Jun. 20

-Sammamish Walks - Hazel Wolf and
Beaver Lake Preserves, 10 a.m.- noon

Monday, Jun. 22

-Arts Commission Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Jun. 24

-Farmer’s Market, 4-8 p.m.
City Hall Plaza

Thursday, Jun. 25

-Family Volunteering: Native Plant
Garden, 10 a.m.- noon
Lower Commons

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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SAMMAMISH CITY COUNCIL



Tom Vance
Mayor



Kathy Huckabay
Deputy Mayor



Don Gerend
Councilmember



Bob Keller
Councilmember



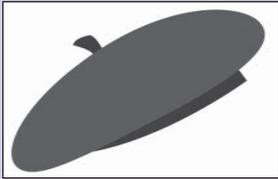
Tom Odell
Councilmember



Ramiro Valderrama
Councilmember



Nancy Whitten
Councilmember



9th Annual
Sammamish ARTS Fair
fine arts - performance arts - arts activities - admission FREE

CALL FOR ARTISTS

Application deadline May 17th 2015

Fair dates: October 10th & 11th, 2015

Sponsored by the Sammamish Arts Commission

For more information: www.sammamishartsfair.wordpress.com

CITY OF SAMMAMISH OFFICES

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Beth Goldberg	Admin Services Director
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Jeff Thomas	Community Dev Director
Melonie Anderson	City Clerk
Nathan Elledge	Police Chief
Bud Backer	Fire Chief
Michael Kenyon	City Attorney

Newsletter suggestions or concerns?
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