

# SAMMAMISH

ISSUE 154

CITY NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2015



## Klahanie-area annexation facts

VOTERS WEIGH INFORMATION BEFORE CHOOSING ON APRIL 28

After many years as part of unincorporated King County, the residents of Klahanie and several adjacent neighborhoods will soon decide whether annexation to Sammamish is a good idea.

If the April 28 election produces an affirmative vote, the roughly 11,000 residents in the annexation area will raise Sammamish's population to almost 60,000.

By law, the city is not allowed to advocate for a positive or negative vote, but it is charged with the responsibility of providing accurate and up-to-date information as voters prepare to fill out their ballots.

Here are the answers to some of

the most frequently asked questions:

Q: Will the total property tax bill in the annexation area go up or down if voters choose to join Sammamish?

A: The total bill will go down. Right now, the owners of a \$500,000 home in Sammamish pay between \$700 and \$800 less than the owners of a \$500,000 home in the annexation area. Following annexation, Klahanie-area residents will see similar savings.

Q: When will the savings begin?

A: Either in 2016 or 2017. It depends on how quickly the annexation can be made official.

Q: Where will those tax savings

come from?

A: About \$600 of it will be a simple reduction in property taxes, the revenue that pays for schools, emergency services, roads, libraries, etc. Those taxes will drop because the city's property tax levy rate is lower than the county's.

Q: What about the rest of the savings?

A: Everybody's property tax bill also includes some items listed as "other charges." These are things like stormwater and conservation fees. Right now, though, those "other charges" in the Klahanie area include a "fire benefit charge" that Sammamish residents don't pay. So, when that charge goes away after annexation, Klahanie-area

*See ANNEXATION, pg. 3*

**MAYOR'S MESSAGE**

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**SAFEST CITY?**

*Story on page 4*

**MARS HILL CHURCH**

*Story on page 5*

## Sammamish: A great place to live, work, learn and play

I'm always being asked about the city. What's going on? What am I working on? Anything interesting happening?

Although I can't vouch for others, I think most of my answers to these frequently asked questions are really interesting!

For example, I spend a fair amount of time attending various committee and board meetings that touch on important topics such as transportation, transit, homelessness, energy-saving strategies at Microsoft, the future of the tech economy in our region, and environmental sustainability.

Those topics may not make the front page of our local papers very often, but they are very rewarding issues to explore, and they, along with our regular City Council meetings, keep me very busy and very engaged.

It's also an honor and privilege to participate in public events – giving a “mayor's speech” and handing out an award to some of our most deserving volunteers at the SAMMI Awards, for example, or throwing out first pitches on opening day for the Eastlake and Sammamish Little Leagues (maybe the most fun you can have as a mayor).

Recently, I also helped cut a ribbon at the opening of the new parking lot at Duthie Hill Park, the mountain-bike amenity just south of our city on Beaver Lake Drive. It is a beautiful and much-needed parking space (just ask

the neighbors!)

That event gave me the opportunity to talk about our efforts, along with our regional partners, to create an “emerald necklace” around our eastern border from the north to the south.

Duthie Hill Park is part of a string of parks, trails, and open spaces that includes Beaver Lake Preserve, Hazel Wolf Wetlands, Soaring Eagle Park and Evans Creek Preserve.

There are gaps in the necklace, of course, but local non-profits, such as our local Sammamish Friends organization, are working with the city, the county, and local land conservancy groups to finish the job.

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*“This was an opportunity, right in the heart of Sammamish, not to be missed.”*

-Mayor Tom Vance

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Exciting stuff, and one of our priorities, but again, not exactly breaking news.

Fortunately, I did get one chance recently to make like Wolf Blitzer and announce a bulletin! It happened during a short update I provided at the Sammamish Chamber luncheon in March.

After talking about progress at the new Community and Aquatic Center and other recent events, I announced, only 36 hours or so after the Council vote, and before the news had hit the local newspapers or television, that the City Council had unanimously decided to purchase the Mars Hill Church property, and that our vision was to bring higher education to Sammamish. That got their attention!

Along with “running start” courses for high school juniors and seniors wanting to begin their college careers early, our vision includes courses of study for residents of all ages.

A few examples: traditional programs leading to four-year degrees; degree and certificate programs in areas such as business, technology and health sciences for new high school graduates or those planning a career change; continuing education for teachers and others needing to stay current.

What is clear is that the catalogs of the three schools exploring this opportunity – Cascadia College, Bellevue College, and Lake Washington Institute of Technology – offer many potential educational pathways.

In the weeks since the decision to buy the property, it has been gratifying to hear so many Sammamish residents express their approval of both the purchase and the vision.

Plans to bring higher education to our part of east King County have been discussed for years, without much success, usually because of the cost and location of available land. This was an opportunity, right in the heart of Sammamish, not to be missed.

I have to acknowledge the special contributions, over many months, of Councilmembers Tom Odell and Don Gerend, and City Manager Ben Yazici. This was truly a team effort.

And I appreciate the encouragement and vision of our entire City Council in making a unanimous decision.



Tom Vance  
Mayor

## Do residents want local initiative, referendum power?

### NON-BINDING APRIL 28 ADVISORY VOTE WILL HELP ANSWER THAT QUESTION

A good number of cities in the state give citizens the right to directly enact or repeal laws, effectively bypassing city councils through the power of a local initiative or referendum.

On the April 28 ballot, Sammamish residents will have the opportunity to say whether they would like to have that power.

“A number of people have come to our City Council and asked for this,” City Manager Ben Yazici said, “so the Council decided to find out how our voters feel through a non-binding advisory vote.”

In accordance with state law, only

ordinances – not motions and resolutions – are subject to the power of a local initiative or referendum. And there are a number of ordinance categories that are also exempt.

The local initiative and referendum power, for example, does not apply to ordinances providing for local improvement districts, the modification of zoning codes, collective bargaining, compensation of city employees, appropriation of money, or the levying of taxes.

“I would urge our residents to read up on local initiative and referendum powers,” Yazici said.

To learn more about the ballot issue, go to the city website at [www.sammamish.us](http://www.sammamish.us) and click on the “Advisory Vote” item.

Among other things, you will find links to:

- An “Initiative and Referendum Guide” from the Municipal Research and Service Center of Washington state.
- The voters pamphlet explanatory statement, along with statements in support and in opposition to the measure.
- And a Q & A on the topic prepared by a city attorney.

#### *ANNEXATION, cont. from pg. 1*

residents will see additional savings.

Q: Does the city of Sammamish have control over when the annexation becomes official.

A: Not really. If the April 28 vote favors annexation, there’s actually a substantial to-do list the city and King County must work through before an official annexation date can be set. We anticipate the official annexation date will be set for the latter part of this year.

Q: What effect would annexation have on police coverage?

A: The city has committed to hiring six new police officers – one sergeant and five patrol officers – if the vote is positive. This will boost police coverage significantly in the Klahanie area.

Q: Will response times improve?

A: In northeast King County, where the annexation area is, the Sheriff’s Office has an average response time of 9.5 minutes for “priority X” calls – stabblings, shootings, in-progress robberies and other very serious crimes. The

city’s response time will be four minutes or less.

Q: So that should be a big improvement in response times, right?

A: Well, Klahanie proper has hired off-duty officers to supplement their coverage from King County, and we’re told those extra security people have been able to respond quickly. But the response times from Sammamish Police will certainly be a lot faster than the historical performance of King County Sheriff’s Officers in Klahanie.

Q: Does Sammamish have a utility tax like most cities do?

A: No

Q: What impact will the annexation have on the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) Tax?

A: Nothing will change. Residents in the annexation area already pay the RTA tax and will continue to do so after annexation.

Q: Will homeowners’ association fees go down because annexation might eliminate the need for the HOA to pay

for extra police coverage?

A: That would be up to the HOA.

Q: We understand the operating revenue from the Klahanie area will exceed the new operating expenditures required to serve the Klahanie area. How much of an annual operating surplus will the annexation create?

A: The city’s fiscal analysis projects a \$1.4 million annual operating surplus.

Q: What road improvements will the city make?

A: The city has already committed to spending \$3 million designing improvements on Issaquah-Fall City Road. The additional \$20 million required for construction would be paid through a bond, or a combination of a bond and government grants. The debt service on the bond would be more than covered by the \$1.4 million in surplus revenue produced by the annexation. The city will also make improvements to Issaquah-Pine Lake Road.

Q: Would these improvements to Is-

*See ANNEXATION, pg. 4*

## *ANNEXATION, cont from pg. 3*

saquah-Fall City Road require the removal of trees that currently separate homes from this major arterial?

A: Preliminary evaluations indicate that the majority of the trees will remain in place. Although the design process has not yet begun, the part of Issaquah-Fall City Road where this is a concern will likely require only a three-lane corridor – one lane in each direction plus a turn lane or median strip. The required width for these improvements should have very limited impact on the existing trees.

Q: How soon will these major road improvements be made?

A: There is no exact timeline at this point due to a number of variables, but the city recognizes that these are high-priority items.

Q: What about improvements to neighborhood streets?

A: Over time, the city will bring Klahanie-area streets up to the same standards that exist in Sammamish. That means resurfacing, and more preventative maintenance and patching.

Q: How quickly will the improvements to neighborhood streets happen?

A: Some will happen shortly after

annexation, but Klahanie-area roads will become part of the city's pavement management rating system. All roads in the city are evaluated, ranked and then given an appropriate spot on the schedule.

Q: How much does Sammamish spend annually on resurfacing roads?

A: In recent years, the city has invested \$3 million annually. By way of contrast, King County has spent only \$2 million annually – and that's for the entire county.

Q: What parks and recreation facilities will be taken over by the city?

A: The city will take over the maintenance and care of Klahanie Park. No other facilities will transfer to the city.

Q: Will Klahanie still be known as Klahanie, or will there be a name change?

A: Klahanie will be a neighborhood name, just like all the other neighborhood names in Sammamish. But the people who live there will be residents of the city of Sammamish.

Q: Will annexation have any impact on where kids have to go to school?

A: No. That, as always, will depend on the school district boundaries. Annexation won't be a factor.

Q: Will mailing addresses change for residents of the annexation area?

A: The current mailing addresses will work indefinitely because it's the street address and zip code that dictate delivery. So, even if someone puts down Issaquah instead of Sammamish, the mail will still get there.

Q: So, if people have an address stamp or a bunch of address labels that say "Issaquah," they can keep using those?

A: Yes.

Q: When will Klahanie-area residents be eligible to run for Sammamish City Council?

A: As soon as the annexation becomes official, if they meet these two conditions:  
1 – They must be registered to vote before the candidate filing deadline.

2 – They must have lived in the annexation area for a full year before the election date.

Q: Will annexation bring any changes to fire and emergency services?

A: No. Residents will be served in the same way by Eastside Fire & Rescue.

Q: What else will be unaffected?

A: Animal control, garbage, schools, water and sewer – annexation won't change those at all.

## Sammamish is the safest city in Washington state?

Assuming a computer in New York can swallow crime data from across the country and come to meaningful conclusions, Sammamish is the safest city in Washington state.

This latest compliment to our city comes from ValuePenguin, a personal finance website that helps consumers make wise insurance, credit card and mortgage choices, among other things. It also has a knack for producing lists that get its name – Value Penguin – into local publications. Mission accomplished!



But the compliment is based on some very pleasant facts. According to FBI statistics in 2013, Sammamish has the second lowest property crime rate and fourth lowest violent crime rate

in the state. Put those together and Sammamish comes out on top according to the website.

As you may recall, Forbes Magazine recently did some similar, long-distance data crunching of its own and produced another compliment. In 2012, they selected Sammamish as the "Friendliest Town" in America.

## City buying Mars Hill Church property

**\$6.1 MILLION PURCHASE CONTINGENT ON FEASIBILITY AND APPRAISAL PROCESS**

With a declared wish that it be used for higher education, the City Council voted unanimously (7-0) last month to authorize City Manager Ben Yazici to execute a purchase agreement for the Mars Hill Church property, a 22-acre parcel and church building located at 120 - 228th Ave. N.E.

The city, with a joint letter of interest in hand from Cascadia College, Bellevue College and the Lake Washington Institute of Technology, has offered \$6.1 million to acquire the property.

“This is a very substantial property in the heart of our city,” Yazici said. “After much due diligence, the City Council decided it would be a very good investment on behalf of the community. I think they should really be commended for a bold and forward-thinking decision.”

The letter of interest from the colleges is not binding, and it asks for time – until Sept. 15, 2015 – to complete research on the viability of a potential lease. It also asks for city con-

tributions to tenant improvements and startup costs.

Those requests and conditions notwithstanding, Yazici says there’s reason to believe the Council’s decision will soon add higher education to the long list of positive attributes Sammamish is known for.

“We have three high schools within a short walk of this property,”



*Mars Hill Church property along 228th Avenue Northeast.*

Yazici said. “We think the popularity of ‘running start’ college courses for high school students will help fuel a thriving educational enterprise in our community.”

And if these three colleges choose not to lease space in Sammamish?

“That would still leave us with

some very good options,” Yazici said. “Based on some wide-ranging conversations we’ve had, we believe there are many educational entities, both public and private, that would take a strong interest in this well-positioned space.”

The City Council authorized Yazici to begin negotiating a purchase agreement with Mars Hill Church in February. If no obstacles arise during a 45-day feasibility period and an appraisal process, the purchase will move forward with funds coming from existing city reserves. No new taxes will be required. As part of the agreement, the city provided the seller with \$150,000 in earnest money.

Mars Hill Church, a disbanded religious organization that once had churches in several western states, came to Sammamish in 2012, moving into a building originally constructed by the Evergreen Christian Fellowship in 2009. The two-story facility, just south of Eastlake High School, features 30,807 square feet of floor space and 330 parking stalls.

## Celebrate Earth Day!

Help restore Ebricht Creek by joining with the Sammamish Community Wildlife Habitat Project, Sammamish Friends, the Sammamish Plant Stewards and the Washington Native Plant Society.

**Saturday, April 18, 9 a.m. to noon.**

Register by going to [www.sammamish.us](http://www.sammamish.us) and clicking on the “volunteer” tab on the left side of the home page.

## Restore a wetland!

Pitch in and help with the ongoing efforts to restore the vital Lower Commons wetland, the headwaters of Ebricht Creek. Volunteers will plant, mulch native trees and shrubs, and remove invasive plants.

**Saturday, April 25, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

Register by going to [www.sammamish.us](http://www.sammamish.us) and clicking on the “volunteer” tab on the left side of the home page.

## Cost of garbage, recycling services a primary concern

### CITY SURVEYS RESIDENTS IN PREPARATION FOR NEW CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

At the end of 2016, the city's contracts with Waste Management and Republic Services expire. To prepare for negotiations with the two companies, the city hired Elway Research to find out how residents feel about existing services, and to gauge their enthusiasm for additional service options. Here are some of the survey highlights:

- According to respondents, the “cost” of services should be given the greatest weight in the next contract. Cost was named as the top priority by 46 percent of the residents surveyed.
- Reliability of service was named as the second most important priority.
- When asked if they would be willing to pay more so they could recycle a broader range of materials, 52 percent said no.



- One third of the respondents said they've had animals get into their garbage once or more.
- But only 10 percent were willing to pay more for bear-resistant garbage containers.
- Residents are generally satisfied with the overall reliability,

customer service and cost of their current services.

Waste Management serves residents north of Inglewood Hill Road and North-east Eighth Street. Republic Services handles residents to the south.

The statistically valid survey was “multi-mode,” with Elway Research contacting 228 residents by phone (including cell phones) and engaging 230 residents online. Twenty responses were also obtained from commercial businesses, giving the survey a total reach of 479 respondents.

## Get ready for “Puget Sound Starts Here” month!

### STEP UP TO THE PLATE FOR CLEAN WATER BY GOING TO A MARINERS GAME

May is “Puget Sound Starts Here” month, a period of time when residents are challenged to protect local health, economy and quality of life by adopting “Sound-healthy” behaviors.

Some suggestions will follow, but first, how about showing your support by going to a Mariners game on “Puget Sound Starts Here Night” at Safeco Field on May 16. Discount tickets for this 6:10 p.m. game against the Boston Red Sox are available by going to [www.mariners.com/pugetsound](http://www.mariners.com/pugetsound).

As you wait for that first pitch, here are some simple Sound-healthy actions you can take to help out:

- Volunteer to help with local habitat restoration projects.
- Take your car to a commercial car wash instead of washing it in your driveway.



- Never dump anything – liquid or solid – into a storm drain or drainage ditch.

- Fix auto leaks right away and take any used fluids you collect to a recycling center.

- Pick up pet waste and place it in the trash.
- Maintain your septic system.
- Use natural yard products like compost and mulch. If you use chemical pesticides and fertilizers, follow directions carefully.
- Landscape your yard with native plants and trees that soak up rain and slow runoff.
- Store and dispose of household chemicals according to the instructions.
- Boaters can protect habitat by using pump-out stations for their sewage.

For other event opportunities, go to the [www.pugetsoundstartshere.org/events-list/](http://www.pugetsoundstartshere.org/events-list/).

See you at the ball game!

# CITY CALENDAR

## APRIL

### *Wednesday, April 1*

-Volunteer Trail Work Party,  
8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.  
Evans Creek Preserve  
(This event will repeat on April 3, 4,  
5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 10, 11, 12, 14,  
15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26.)  
-Parks and Recreation Commission  
Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

### *Thursday, April 2*

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

### *Tuesday, April 7*

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

### *Wednesday, April 8*

-Beaver Lake Management  
District Meeting, 7 p.m.

### *Friday, April 10*

-Art Exhibit - Amanda Devine,  
8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.  
City Hall

### *Tuesday, April 14*

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

### *Wednesday, April 15*

-Sammamish Youth Board Mtg, 6 p.m.

### *Thursday, April 16*

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

### *Saturday, April 18*

-Volunteer at Ebright Creek Park,  
9 a.m.-12 p.m.

### *Monday, April 20*

-Committee of the Whole, 6 p.m.

### *Tuesday, April 21*

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

### *Thursday, April 23*

-Exhibiting Artist Reception, 6-8 p.m.  
City Hall

### *Saturday, April 25*

-Volunteer at Lower Commons Park,  
10 a.m.-1 p.m.

### *Monday, April 27*

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

### *Tuesday, April 28*

-Finance Committee Meeting, 2 p.m.

## MAY

### *Sunday, May 3*

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

### *Thursday, May 7*

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

### *Saturday, May 9*

-Special Arts Sammamish, 1-3 p.m.  
Boys and Girls Club

### *Tuesday, May 12*

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

### *Saturday, May 16*

-Rig-A-Palooza, 12-3 p.m.  
City Hall

### *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.  
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.

## 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



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Mayor



*Kathy Huckabay*  
Deputy Mayor



*Don Gerend*  
Councilmember



*Bob Keller*  
Councilmember



*Tom Odell*  
Councilmember



*Ramiro Valderrama*  
Councilmember



*Nancy Whitten*  
Councilmember

### The Sammamish Arts Commission

Presents:

*“Moments – Art in Response to Time and Place”*

By Amanda Devine

A new art exhibit at the  
Commons Gallery at City Hall  
801 228th Ave. S.E.  
April 10 to July 10  
Weekdays during business hours

An artist’s reception, free and open to the public,  
will be held in the Commons Gallery on  
Thursday, April 23, 6-8 p.m.

### CITY OF SAMMAMISH OFFICES

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Lyman Howard	Deputy City Manager
Laura Philpot	Ass't City Mgr/Public Works Dir
Jessi Bon	Parks & Rec Director
Beth Goldberg	Admin Services Director
Joe Guinasso	Finance Director
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?**  
Contact Communications Mgr **Tim Larson**  
425-295-0555, [tlarson@sammamish.us](mailto:tlarson@sammamish.us)