

City Views @ Sammamish

ISSUE 30

CITY OF SAMMAMISH NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2004

City receives \$150,000 sidewalk grant

Design and construction of a sidewalk along Northeast Eighth Street will be funded, in part, by a grant from the state's Transportation Improvement Board (TIB).

In a Nov. 19 letter, the TIB informed the city it would grant \$18,145 for design work and \$131,855 for construction.

Public Works Director Delora Kerber, whose department applied for the state grant, says the project will fill sidewalk gaps on the north side of Northeast Eighth Street between 244th Avenue and 228th Avenue.

When finished, the continuous sidewalk will stretch from just east of Inglewood Junior High School to the city library - a distance of about 4,700 feet.

See \$150,000 - pg. 5

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Operations and Maintenance Manager Glenn Akramoff (far left) stands next to Ben Cooper, Jeff Dickinson, Kyle Endelman, Mike Kellar, Dalton Luizzo, Ho Le, Tom Tubbs and Kobi Kershaw.

Snow busters ready

With the holidays approaching, Glenn Akramoff has more than ribbons, wrapping paper and eggnog on his mind. His vision of the holiday season also includes ice, broken tree limbs and hurried trips to the hospital for expectant moms.

"The snow and ice storms we had last year around Christmas and New Year's Day were quite a challenge," Akramoff said. "We had road crews working around the clock for nine straight days."

Akramoff, the city's operations and maintenance manager, says his crews are well prepared for any similar challenges this year.

"Last year we had two snowplow/sander units and one snowplow/liquid de-icer unit," Akramoff said. "This year, we've added two more snowplow/sander units, including one staffed by the Sammamish Plateau Water and Sewer District."

See SNOW BUSTERS - pg. 2



Mayor Kathleen Huckabay

November was a busy month – continued progress on the budget, plus two public hearings on proposed changes to our critical areas code.

By the time you receive this newsletter, the council will have adopted the 2005-2006 budget. The highlight: Your city property tax levy rate will remain the same. This, despite rising costs, including health care costs all employers face. Our staff's ability to find every available grant and sales tax dollar deserves a lot of the credit.

For example, in the last two-year period, our sales tax auditor recovered \$121,485 in sales tax that was incorrectly paid to other

jurisdictions. And just this week, the Transportation Improvement Board awarded us \$150,000 for our sidewalk project on Northeast Eighth Street between 228th Avenue and 244th Avenue.

Revising the city's critical areas ordinance as it relates to trails is a big challenge. Working with the Planning Commission, the council's goal is to create connectivity so we can walk or bike to our destination, or just enjoy our natural surroundings. The difficulty is that much of the land available for trails contains wetlands or wetland buffers. The many thoughtful comments we received during two public hearings on this issue will help us reach our objective – a clear, concise code that strikes a balance between the public's desire for trails and mitigation of the environmental impacts of those trails.

This month, among other things, we'll elect next year's council leadership, and meet with our legislators prior to the legislative session.

Along with our sister cities, we'll be telling legislators about the importance of returning sales tax to our residents. Ever since the elimination of the vehicle excise tax, the \$2 million of sales tax equalization funding we used to receive on a yearly basis has gone away. We'll also be asking for a portion of the state gas tax to build and maintain local roads.

We'll keep you up to date on these and other critical issues as the legislative session progresses.

SNOW BUSTERS - cont. from pg. 1

"If you count the King County snowplow that helps out on the north end of Sammamish, we'll have six units clearing roads this year."

That should help ease the stress of impending motherhood.

"During our storm last year, two residents had to rush off to the hospital to have babies," Akramoff said. "One of them was down in a cul-de-sac that was totally iced up. We had to clear the way for her."

Based on public feedback, the performance of the city crews last year appeared to compare very favorably with service before incorporation.

"We got a huge volume of positive responses during last year's storm," Akramoff said. "People said it was the

best service they had ever seen in Sammamish.

"We felt really good about it. We were able to be there for residents when they needed it most."

When and if the snow hits this year, city crews will clear the main arterials first, then go to work on neighborhood streets.

"During working hours, people who need help should call the main City Hall number — 898-0660," Akramoff said. "After hours, we'll be dispatched by King County, at 1-800-296-8100.

"Last year, we got a lot of calls regarding downed trees, accidents, debris and drainage problems," he said.

If a storm hits this year, the arterials due to be cleared first can be found on the city's website. These "snow routes" can be seen at

www.ci.sammamish.wa.us/snowroute.aspx.

Although he doesn't relish putting his crews on 12-hour shifts again, Akramoff says he has enough people to clear roads 24 hours a day.

"We don't know if any big storms will come our way this winter," Akramoff said, "but we'll be ready."

Call for help

During business hours:
City Hall - 425-898-0660

After business hours:
1-800-296-8100
(King County Dispatch)

For snow routes:
www.ci.sammamish.wa.us/snowroute.aspx

Residents weigh in on City Hall, special study area

On Nov. 4, residents offered their opinions on the design of Sammamish Commons, the 30-acre park and civic complex that will be home to the new City Hall building.

On Dec. 1, residents focused more broadly on the special study area, 546 acres in the geographical center of the city that will surround Sammamish Commons. The Dec. 1 meeting was the third and final community forum on proposed land use options in the special study area.



Residents trade ideas at the third and final community forum on the special study area



Councilmember Michele Petitti (standing, right) discusses proposed City Hall features with residents

New Community Development Director starts



*Robert Horne
Community Development Director*

Robert Horne, the city's new Community Development Director, started work Dec. 1. Horne, most recently the Development Services Director in Walla Walla, takes the place of Ray Gilmore, who left the city in June.

With a master's degree in planning from Florida State University, Horne has worked in several communities with growth and development issues similar to those faced by Sammamish.

Prior to Walla Walla, Horne served as City-County Planning Director in Great Falls, Montana, Planning Director in Jackson, Wyoming, and Principal Planner in Colorado Springs.

He also worked several years for consulting firms offering land planning, landscape architecture and urban design services.

"Robert has both the credentials and the specific experience history we were looking for," City Manager Ben Yazici said. "I'm delighted to add such a really top-notch individual to the staff."

In the Community Development Director role, Horne will work closely with city staff, the Planning Commission, neighborhood groups, and business and community leaders. His primary responsibility: managing growth and development in Sammamish.



City Manager Ben Yazici

Q
&
A

Q: What other road improvements are on the way?

A: We're just wrapping up the current phase of improvements to Issaquah-Pine Lake Road, which includes the new roundabout at SE 32nd Way.

We're working with Issaquah to identify the best way to dramatically improve the intersection at S.E. 43rd Way and East Lake Sammamish Parkway.

And, over the next two years, we'll also complete the environmental evaluation and preliminary design work for the northern portions of East Lake Sammamish Parkway and 244th Avenue.

Construction of those two projects will have to be coordinated with the massive improvements the state is going to make to State Route 202 and State Route 520, so it's going to take a few years. But it should make a huge difference for our northbound drivers.

Q: These investments in roads, parks, and other capital projects are expensive. How is the budget holding up?

A: At the end of 2006, we expect an ending balance of over \$11 million. Considering how much we're investing in the community, and how tight the money crunch is for most established cities, that's an enviable position to be in.

But there will be tough choices ahead. If residents want to continue the current rate of investment, new revenue sources will have to be approved.

Our community survey indicates that about two-thirds of our residents are willing to consider voter-approved bonds to finance roads, parks and other infrastructure. That's an option the community may want to consider.

Q: How does our bond rating look?

A: Thanks to our rock-solid financial posture, we have a AA- rating from Standard and Poors. That's the highest rating any new city in Washington has received, and it's better than many established cities.

I'm very proud of our financial performance. State Auditor Brian Sonntag came to a recent City Council meeting to congratulate us for having five straight audits without a "finding." An audit finding is a financial shortcoming in reporting or controls.

Q: Parks and ballfields have been in the news a lot. How is that going?

A: We've been gathering a tremendous amount of public input on Sammamish Commons and Ebright Creek Park. Those two projects should break ground this coming year.

We've also signed interlocal agreements with the Lake Washington and Issaquah school districts for joint use and development of ball fields. The highlight there, so far, is our plan to develop a multi-use, synthetic turf field on 3 acres of open space at Eastlake High School. That should help ease the shortage of sports fields in Sammamish.

Q: Stepping back and looking at the big picture, how do you think Sammamish is taking shape?

A: It takes many years for a city to develop its character, but I think the council's emphasis on community input is going to deliver a city the residents will be happy with. This community wants good roads and parks, a small-town feel, and a proper emphasis on our environment and history.

I'm delighted our community survey turned up such good results. The trust of our residents is the working capital we need to make progress. Earning that trust has taken a lot of hard work. We intend to keep, maintain and enhance that trust in the years ahead.

City gives thanks to volunteers

Residents, members of the City Council, and city staffers gathered on the evening of Dec. 2 to recognize the contributions of city volunteers.

Members of the city's boards, commissions and other entities were honored for their service at a Beaver Lake Lodge buffet dinner - as seen in the accompanying pictures.



\$150,000 - cont. from pg. 1

With design and construction planned for 2005, Kerber estimates the total cost of the project will be just over \$300,000.

Mark Cross, a member of the City Council's Public Works Committee, said the extra funding is most welcome.

"Grant writing is very impor-

tant," Cross said. "It allows us to accomplish more than we could on our own. This money will allow both students and residents to move safely from east to west."

Michele Petitti, also on the Public Works Committee, agreed.

"I know there's a lot of competition for TIB money, so I'm pleased we were able to get some of it," Petitti

said. "It stretches our dollar and frees up money for other projects. That's what's cool about it."

According to fellow committee member Jack Barry, the grant also helps fulfill one of the city's top priorities.

"Becoming a 'family friendly, kid safe' community has always been very important to us," Barry said. "I'm delighted this grant will help us fulfill that mission."

City's second roundabout opens

With Sunny Hills Elementary on one side, Fire Station #83 on the other, and three legs of traffic feeding into it, the city's new roundabout has its hands full.

But, so far, based on early reports, the roundabout is a big improvement on the awkward, three-way intersection it replaced.

Located at the intersection of Issaquah-Pine Lake Road and Southeast 32nd Way, the new roundabout had a construction budget of \$1.5 million.

In addition to the intersection improvements, the project also widened and improved three-tenths of a mile along Issaquah-Pine Lake Road.

Among those improvements: medians, turn pockets, sidewalks, new lighting and widening of the road to four lanes in some sections.



The new roundabout next to Sunny Hills Elementary easily handles school buses and trucks on a recent morning. At press time, landscaping and other finishing touches remained to be done.

The city's first roundabout opened in 2002 at the intersection of Inglewood Hill Road and 216th Avenue Northeast. The result there: much shorter waits and far fewer accidents. That follows a national pat-

tern for modern roundabouts.

At appropriate locations, roundabouts move more traffic and produce fewer and much less serious accidents. They also reduce noise levels because vehicles typically don't have to stop and start as much.

Call 911 in Sammamish Even if its not an emergency

Sammamish residents who need a police officer, or want to file a report, can call 9-1-1. Residents can call 9-1-1 even if it's not an emergency.

If a resident is sure the call is not urgent, they can call 206-296-3311. This number, and 9-1-1, will reach King County Communications, which will dispatch a police officer or take a report.

The Sammamish Police Station number, 425-836-5674, should be called during business hours (8 a.m. - 5 p.m.) for general information and followup on reports.

For emergencies: Call 9-1-1

For non-emergencies: 9-1-1- or 206-296-3311

For general information: 425-836-5674

Budget approved

The city's 2005/2006 biennial budget was approved by the City Council at its regular meeting on Dec. 7.

Although the new capital budget will continue to invest in new roads, there will be a greater emphasis on parks and trails, with \$19 million slated for Ebright Creek Park, Sammamish Commons, and numerous other park and trail initiatives. Transportation projects will receive \$12 million.

Including surface water management and other projects, the city will invest \$47 million in capital projects over the next two years. The city's operating budget: \$21 million in 2005, \$21 million in 2006.

Sammamish, which is heavily dependent on property tax revenue, won't raise its levy rate. It will remain at last year's level - \$2.61 per thousand of assessed valuation.

Top 10 reasons to use the city website

1. Get information on all public and many private construction projects. Current examples include Issaquah-Pine Lake Roundabout, Issaquah-Pine Lake Transit Access Road, Eastside Catholic High School, and the Sammamish Commons project.

2. Know when Sammamish City Council is about to consider an issue important to you by downloading agendas the weekend before each upcoming council meeting. Agendas are posted on Friday before the next meeting.

3. View programming schedule for Sammamish 21 TV. Recent programs on our city cable TV channel included a public hearing about rules for building trails, a presentation about improvements to State Routes 202 and 520, and a Sammamish Symphony concert from

last summer's Pine Lake Park series.

4. View every CityViews newsletter ever published, from June 2000 to the one you now hold in your hand.

5. Get city news releases before they appear in the newspapers. Impress family and friends with your broad knowledge of happenings in Sammamish!

6. Find out what's required to



build a house, cut a tree, or start a business in Sammamish.

7. Learn more about the municipal code. Any time code changes are in the works, the city website is an excellent source for detailed information about them.

8. Discover the broad array of services available at City Hall, including passports, building permits, and marriage licenses. Avoid trips off the plateau!

9. Having a problem? Contact city staff or council members. Let your views be heard!

10. Use our robust search feature to explore a huge library of online content.

Have ideas for making the city website even more useful? Great! Please email those ideas to webmaster@ci.sammamish.wa.us!

CITY HALL CALENDAR

DECEMBER

Wednesday, December 1

- Public Works Open House, 6 pm
Trinity Lutheran College

- Special Study Area Community Forum, 7 pm
Skyline High School

Thursday, December 2

- Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, 6 pm
Beaver Lake Lodge

Monday, December 6

- Parks, Open Space & Natural Resources Committee, 10 am
Sammamish City Hall

Tuesday, December 7

- City Council Meeting, 6:30 pm
Sammamish Plateau Water & Sewer Dist.

Wednesday, December 8

- Community Development Committee, 6 pm
Sammamish City Hall

Thursday, December 9

- Planning Commission, 7 pm
Sammamish City Hall

Tuesday, December 14

- Public Works Committee, 5 pm
Sammamish City Hall
- City Council Special Meeting, 6:30 pm
Sammamish Plateau Water & Sewer Dist.

Wednesday, December 15

- Special Study Area Task Force, 6 pm
Sammamish Plateau Water & Sewer Dist.

Thursday, December 16

- Sammamish Youth Board, 6 pm
Sammamish Library
- Planning Commission, 7 pm
Sammamish Plateau Water & Sewer Dist.

Friday, December 24

- Christmas Holiday
City Hall Closed

Monday, December 27

- Parks and Recreation Commission, 6:30 pm
Sammamish City Hall

Friday, December 31

- New Year Holiday
City Hall Closed

JANUARY

Tuesday, January 4

- City Council Meeting, 6:30 pm
Sammamish Plateau Water & Sewer Dist.

Wednesday, January 5

- Special Study Area Task Force, 6 pm
Sammamish Plateau Water & Sewer Dist.

Thursday, January 6

- Planning Commission, 7 pm
Sammamish Plateau Water & Sewer Dist.

Wednesday, January 12

- Community Development Committee, 6 pm
Sammamish City Hall

Tuesday, January 18

- City Council and Special Study Area Task Force Joint Meeting, 6:30 pm
Sammamish Plateau Water & Sewer Dist.

Thursday, January 20

- Planning Commission, 7 pm
Sammamish Plateau Water & Sewer Dist.

Thursday, January 27

- Sammamish Youth Board Meeting, 6 pm
Sammamish Library

NOTE: Times, dates and locations are subject to change. Please consult the city website for the most current information.

The Sammamish Plateau Water & Sewer District is located at 1510 228th Avenue NE.

SAMMAMISH CITY COUNCIL



*Kathleen Huckabay
Mayor*



*Don Gerend
Deputy Mayor*



*Jack Barry
Councilmember*



*Mark Cross
Councilmember*



*Lee Felling
Councilmember*



*Michele Petitti
Councilmember*



*Nancy Whitten
Councilmember*

Council Committees

Parks, Trails, and Natural Resources:

Meets: 1st Monday, 10 a.m.

Nancy Whitten, Chair
Michele Petitti
Lee Felling



Community Development:

Meets: 2nd Wednesday, 6 p.m.

Mark Cross, Chair
Jack Barry
Nancy Whitten



Public Works:

Meets: 3rd Tuesday, 5 p.m.

Michele Petitti, Chair
Mark Cross
Jack Barry



Finance:

Meets: 4th Tuesday, 11:30 a.m.

Don Gerend, Chair
Nancy Whitten
Lee Felling



Public Safety:

Meets: 4th Wednesday, 6 p.m.

Lee Felling, Chair
Kathleen Huckabay
Mark Cross



Legislative:

Meets: as needed

Kathleen Huckabay, Chair
Don Gerend
Michele Petitti



City of Sammamish Offices

486 228th Ave. NE, Sammamish, WA 98074
Phone: 425-898-0660 • Fax: 425-898-0669

www.ci.sammamish.wa.us

Kathleen Huckabay, Mayor

khuckabay@ci.sammamish.wa.us

Don Gerend, Deputy Mayor

dgerend@ci.sammamish.wa.us

Jack Barry, Councilmember

jbarry@ci.sammamish.wa.us

Mark Cross, Councilmember

mcross@ci.sammamish.wa.us

Lee Felling, Councilmember

lfelling@ci.sammamish.wa.us

Michele Petitti, Councilmember

mpetitti@ci.sammamish.wa.us

Nancy Whitten, Councilmember

nwhitten@ci.sammamish.wa.us

Ben Yazici City Manager
Pete Butkus Assistant City Manager
Delora Kerber Public Works Director
Robert Horne Community Dev Director
Lyman Howard ... Financial Svcs Director
Jeff Watling Parks & Rec. Director
Mike Sauerwein Admin Svcs Director
Tim Larson Communications Manager
Bruce Disend City Attorney
Melonie Anderson City Clerk
Richard Baranzini Police Chief
John Murphy Fire Chief



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