

SAMMAMISH

ISSUE 153

CITY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2015

Advisory vote on direct democracy

LOCAL INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM POWER ON APRIL 28 BALLOT

Many cities in the state grant residents the option of directly enacting or repealing laws, bypassing city councils through the power of an initiative or referendum.

Although this option is exercised infrequently in most cities, Sammamish voters will have the chance to weigh in on the issue through an advisory vote on the April 28 ballot.

“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In accordance with state law, there are limits on what ordinances can be enacted or repealed through an initiative or referendum.

Fifty of the 191 code cities in the state (or 28 percent) have the power of initiative and referendum. On April 28, Sammamish residents will share their thoughts at the ballot box.



Sammamish residents join a morning commute along Issaquah-Fall City Road.

If Klahanie annexes, current city residents will benefit

NEW REVENUE WILL PAY FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO ISSAQUAH-FALL CITY COMMUTE CORRIDOR

There is some very good news in the fiscal analysis of a potential Klahanie-area annexation to the city of Sammamish. After the cost of providing new services is subtracted from new revenues, the city will see an annual surplus of approximately \$1.4 million.

“It’s looking very much like a win,”

City Manager Ben Yazici said. “Klahanie-area residents will receive better services and pay lower taxes than they do now, and our current residents will see a financial benefit as well.”

The most likely destination for

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MAYOR’S MESSAGE

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PARKING FINES

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Your Council's vision for Sammamish in 2040!

About this time last year I wrote about the "State of the City." My conclusion then is the same as it is today: We're in great shape!

Sure, we have continuing challenges. But even as we work those out, we are favored with excellent finances, a creative and hard-working city staff,



*Tom Vance
Mayor*

many wonderful volunteers, service groups, non-profits and faith communities who work to make our city a great place to live.

This year, I'd rather look to the future – the distant future – with the help of my fellow Councilmembers. As luck would have it, they were all asked at our recent retreat to present their vision for Sammamish in the year 2040.

Tim Larson, our communications manager, was asked to take notes and then present a summary vision later in the day. To his surprise, the job was easy – because our visions were remarkably similar!

In the spirit of the visioning exercise, which was often humorous and tongue in cheek, Tim drew on the city's history of frequently being included in Money Magazine's rankings of the "best places to live," and presented his summary in the form of a fanciful memo from the magazine's editor to his writing staff. In slightly edited form, the memo went like this:

"For the year 2040, our selection for the "Best City in America" is Sammamish, WA. As you write your stories for this special edition – the

Sammamish golden collector's edition – keep these facts in mind:

The City has a bigger, healthier tree canopy than it did in 2015, and has pro-actively reforested and preserved at every turn. Once almost extinct, Kokanee now easily outnumber the people.

The streams, lakes, wetlands and open spaces that drew people to Sammamish are intact.

The traffic congestion that helped trigger incorporation 41 years ago, has steadily declined to manageable levels thanks to increased mass transit, regional cooperation on bottlenecks, driverless vehicles, intra-city shuttles, shared battery-powered bikes, more local and in-home work, and a higher percentage of seniors in the population.

The Town Center, guided by thoughtful standards, contains a performing arts center, senior center and a vibrant mixture of shops, restaurants, offices, townhomes, apartments, pathways and green space. It has become exactly what the community envisioned at the beginning of this century.

Sammamish is a cutting edge, digital community. Everything from distant learning opportunities to technology incubator projects have blossomed here.

Residents get a lot of bang for their buck. The city remains "Yazicified," relying on City Manager Ben Yazici's contract approach and only

adding staff when absolutely necessary. A 40-year tradition of large ending fund balances continues. And the city has little or no debt.

The city's investments in a community center, senior center and other public spaces, along with a steady growth in parks and recreational programming, have created tremendous connective tissue within the city. Volunteerism and other forms of community engagement are off the charts.

The city has ball fields, field houses, parks, pools and recreational facilities to meet current and future demand.

A greater variety of living units has expanded the population of young adults and seniors. Affordable housing options have given Sammamish a rich, multi-generational mix.

Sammamish has it all – a beautiful, sustainable environment, and a family-friendly, kid-safe culture. Whether you want to work, shop, relax, learn or socialize – it's at your fingertips."

That's a pretty good memo! And although we understand that future City Councils and our very engaged residents will improve – or significantly change – our vision over the next 25 years, it was very encouraging to know that all of us have such similar hopes and dreams for the community we are honored to serve.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, likely belonging to Tom Vance, the Mayor.

BENEFIT, cont. from pg. 1

many of those new dollars is Issaquah-Fall City Road, a congested commuter route used by current city residents in Trossachs and other east Sammamish neighborhoods.

“Improving that corridor has been on our radar for a long time,” Yazici said, “but the road hasn’t been in our jurisdiction. Fortunately, if the annexation vote is favorable, we’ll be in a position to take positive action.”

And the city will be in a position to pay for it, too, thanks to the \$1.4 million annual surplus from the Klahanie area.

“The estimated cost for the initial improvements is \$23 million,” Yazici said. “If the annexation goes through, we have committed to using \$3 million of our current reserves for preliminary engineering and permitting costs. But the remaining \$20 million could be paid for with the new revenue we’d re-

ceive from the annexation.”

The city projects that the annual surplus would be more than enough to pay off the debt service on a construction bond for the Issaquah-Fall City Road improvements.

“In effect, our current residents would be getting a \$23 million benefit with an investment of just \$3 million,” Yazici said. “And, over time, that original investment of \$3 million would also be offset by the ongoing surplus from the Klahanie area.”

The timing and specific design of the Issaquah-Fall City road improvements are still to come, but the estimates above are for the following sections of roadway:

- S.E. Issaquah-Fall City Road, from the 4800 block to Klahanie Drive S.E.
- S.E. Issaquah-Fall City Road, from Klahanie Drive S.E. to S.E. Issaquah-Beaver Lake Road.

Another constricted commuter

route next to Klahanie, Issaquah-Pine Lake Road, is already part of the city’s 6-year capital improvement plan and will be funded regardless of how the annexation vote turns out.

If the vote is in favor, however, an additional short section of Issaquah-Pine Lake Road (between S.E. 48th Street and Issaquah-Fall City Road) would fall under the city’s jurisdiction.

The cost of improving that additional short section of the corridor is estimated at \$3 million, an amount that, again, could also be offset by the new revenues from the Klahanie area.

“As we’ve always said, this choice is up to Klahanie-area residents,” Yazici said. “But I think it’s important for existing city residents to know that this annexation would be a plus for them.

“We’d have more revenue, improved commuter routes, and better regional control of our own fate.”

It’s official: The annexation election date is April 28

WILL KLAHANIE-AREA RESIDENTS CHOOSE TO JOIN SAMMAMISH?

It will all depend on the will of the voters, but it’s possible the long and drawn-out regional conversation about the fate of Klahanie will come to an end next month. On April 28, to be precise.

That’s when Klahanie-area voters will cast a yes or no vote on annexation to Sammamish. The opportunity to choose became official last month when King County, after meeting a long list of procedural requirements, placed the question on the ballot.

“The county, the boundary review board

and the city had a lot of hoops to jump through, but we made it,” City Manager Ben Yazici said. “Now we’ll get a chance to find out how the voters feel. We’re excited about the possibilities.”



The annexation area, comprised of Klahanie proper and several adjacent neighborhoods, is about 2 square miles in size and has a population of almost 11,000.

Should the vote be in favor of joining Sammamish – it requires only a simple majority – the city’s population would rise to approximately 60,000.

City continues to ask county for flexibility on trail width

Kevin Brown and Laura Philpot took a walk along the East Lake Sammamish trail last month. One of the slowest walks ever.

Brown, the King County parks director, and Philpot, the city's public works director, kept stopping to look at trees, measure distances and take notes.

Their goal: To find spots where a slightly narrower design or a minor realignment of the county's new paved trail might preserve greenery and ease the concerns of trailside residents.

"I'm optimistic the county will make some adjustments," Philpot said. "I think Kevin could clearly see the benefits of flexibility."

The new trail design expands the existing path to a width of 18 feet, with 12 feet of pavement in the middle and a 2-foot gravel shoulder and 1-foot clear zone on both sides.

"The city suggested that the trail would have substantially less impact in some locations if the 2-foot gravel shoulder was

dropped here and there," Philpot said. "We'll be following this closely and look forward to seeing the final design."

At a City Council meeting last month, complaints were voiced that the county had not responded to all the concerns and inquiries submitted by trailside residents. Philpot said she has been assured by Brown that the county is steadily working through a very long list of comments and will get back to everyone as quickly as possible.

The gravel-surface version of the trail opened in 2006, but the county has always planned to make improvements.

So far, the paving covers just the northern third of the trail inside Sammamish. But most of the narrower portions of the trail corridor are in the middle section.

"That's where most of the challenges are," Philpot said. "As a city, we're doing everything we can to listen to our residents, walk the trail with the county, and try to find solutions."



A paved portion of the trail at the northern end of the city.

Planning Commission hands off comp plan to Council

The city's Planning Commission has been hard at work on the comprehensive plan rewrite since late 2013, but their part of the job will come to a conclusion on March 10 when they hand off their recommended changes to the City Council. The City Council will then conduct its own review, hold two public hearings, and then meet the state-mandated June 30 deadline for adoption.

The comprehensive plan, which by law must periodically be updated, is essentially a blueprint for the future character of the city. Among other elements, the plan provides guidance on transportation, housing, land use, parks, utilities, conservation and the environment. It also sets the framework for zoning and the development of infrastructure.

For more information go to www.sammamish.us and click on the [2035 Comprehensive Plan](#) tab.

Most of the ditches you see serve an important purpose

Although cities often receive requests from residents who want to fill in roadside ditches, most of those requests don't receive an affirmative answer. And the reason is pretty simple.

A well-maintained ditch plays a vital role in keeping pollutants, sediment and debris out of catch basins, streams, and lakes. Ditches also provide extra capacity for storm water runoff and have a huge advantage over pipes: They allow water to infiltrate into the soil!

City staffers review requests on a case-by-case basis, and will consider a change if:

- The ditch is a potential hazard
- It's creating a soil erosion problem
- And altering the ditch won't have a significant impact on water quality or the capacity of the city's storm water conveyance system.

Underage drinking could cost adults \$500

If people under legal age drink alcohol inside a residence, the owner or renter of the residence can now be fined \$500, even if they didn't know the illegal drinking was taking place.

On Feb 3, the City Council passed the new ordinance with hopes that it would help curb problematical levels of underage drinking in Sammamish.

In recent years, police report that about 40 percent of the city's citations for driving under the influence were linked to people under the age of 21.

"It's an unfortunate fact that a significant amount of underage drinking takes place in people's homes," City Manager Ben Yazici said. "The Council hopes

this ordinance will motivate adults to do a better job of supervising activities inside their homes."

The energy for this initiative came from the IDEA Project, a group of local parents, students, City Council members, school district officials, police officers and representatives of health and human services agencies. IDEA stands for Impaired, Driving, Education and Action.

"The IDEA Project was prompted by the DUI stats in our city," Yazici said. "We think their efforts, along with the attention this new ordinance is likely to generate, will promote positive conversations between parents and teenagers."



Sign season is approaching!

PLEASE KNOW AND FOLLOW THE RULES

With spring on its way and summer not far behind, the city's code compliance troops are bracing for the usual array of signs advertising sports team signups, summer camps, real estate open houses, garage sales and so on. Unfortunately, if past years are any indication, many of these signs will violate the city's sign code.

So, please help out by knowing the rules. The following signs are prohibited in the public right of way:

- Garage sale signs
- Yard sale signs
- A-board signs promoting businesses
- Signs attached to posts, light poles, etc.
 - Real estate signs
- Signs that are stuck into the ground (with the exception of political signs)

NOTE: Open house signs in the right of way are allowed if a person is on duty at the open house site.

If you have questions, send an email to codecompliance@sammamish.us

City boosts fines for some parking violations

In 2013, nearly 50 percent of the parking tickets issued by the Sammamish Police Department were for violations that created a hazard for pedestrians or motorists.

Some examples – parking on a sidewalk, on the wrong side of the street, within five feet of a driveway, or in places where signs indicate that parking is prohibited.

In the past, the standard fine for these violations was just \$20, a sum that police concluded was not providing sufficient deterrence. So, on Feb. 3, the City Council passed an ordinance to raise those fines.

Today, a parking violation that creates a safety hazard for either pedestrians or motorists will now produce a fine of \$71.

The new ordinance also adds a penalty for those who do not pay their parking fines, or appeal their tickets, within the required 15 days. The additional fine for tardiness will be \$25.

Come celebrate the SAMMI Award honorees

The SAMMI Awards are now a long-standing tradition in the city of Sammamish, perhaps long enough for people to have forgotten what SAMMI stands for: “Sammamish Acknowledging Magnificent Moments of Inspiration.”

With that sentiment in mind, the SAMMI Awards Foundation has selected and identified several honorees in five categories, all of whom will be celebrated at the SAMMI Awards event on Saturday, March 21, from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Sammamish EX3 Teen & Recreation Center, 825 228th Ave. N.E. The honorees are:



Courage Award
The Moscaret Family

Youth Spirit Awards
Niyathi Chakrapani
Maddy Fletcher
Erika Kumar

Circle of Service Award
Clint Scott
Jon Bromberg

Environmental Stewardship Award
Echo Chernik
Ken Abraham

Community Spirit
Lisa Di Lauro
Sue Stevens
Frances Garcia Hoffman

Don't toss damaged clothes!

Did you know that you can donate your holey, stained and worn clothes for recycling? Donation locations all around King County want all of your clothes, shoes and linens – in any condition except wet.

Even clothes that are ripped and torn are acceptable – and easily recycled into carpet padding, insulation, industrial wiping cloths and more. Unfortunately, nearly 95 percent of the clothes, shoes and linens that Americans toss into the garbage could have been recycled or reused. Dropping these items off at a donation location will help keep them out of the landfill!

Single shoes, socks, gloves and other items that normally come in pairs are also useful. They're simply matched up with similar mates, and find a longer life in the possession of a person in need. The only clothes, shoes and linens you should NOT bring in are items that are mildewed, contaminated or wet.

For more information about where you can donate your clothes, shoes, linens and other items for reuse or recycling, go to King County's Threadcycle website at kingcounty.gov/threadcycle.

Volunteer Event Dates

**Help restore the
Lower Commons wetland!**

Volunteers will enhance wetland habitat by removing invasive weeds and then planting and mulching native trees and shrubs.

**March 7, 14 and 28
10 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

Help restore Ebright Creek!

**Volunteers will remove invasive weeds and plant native trees and shrubs.
Join the Washington Native Plant Society as they enhance the habitat along this salmon-bearing stream.**

March 21 - 9 a.m. to Noon

For more information, visit our volunteer page at www.sammamish.us/volunteer

CITY CALENDAR

MARCH

Tuesday, March 3

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

Wednesday, March 4

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

Saturday, March 7

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

Tuesday, March 10

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

Saturday, March 14

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

Monday, March 16

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

Tuesday, March 17

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

Saturday, March 21

- Volunteer at Ebright Creek Park, 9 a.m.- noon

Monday, March 23

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

Saturday, March 28

- Restoration at Lower Commons Park, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
- “Make it a Clay Day” Special Arts Sammamish, Noon -3 p.m.
- EX3 Boys and Girls Club

APRIL

Wednesday, April 1

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

Tuesday, April 7

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

Tuesday, April 14

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

Saturday, April 18

- Volunteer at Ebright Creek Park in celebration of Earth Day! 9 a.m.- noon

Monday, April 20

- Committee of the Whole, 6 p.m.

Tuesday, April 21

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

Monday, April 27

- 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.

Solicitors: You must have a license before you knock!

Along with blue skies and the prospect of a tan, the sunny season can also bring a headache or two. Solicitors, for example. Like the sun itself, they make more frequent appearances as the weather gets better.

So, you should know the rules. When a solicitor knocks on your door, they're obligated to show you a license upon request. And, if you have a "No Solicitors" sign in a visible spot, they're supposed to move along to the next door without knocking on yours.

If you think some-

one in your neighborhood is breaking the rules, call King County police dispatch at 206-296-3311 and make your report to the authorities.

NOTE: Certain charitable, religious or non-profit organizations or corporations that have received tax-exempt

status under 26 U.S.C. 501(c)(3) or other similar civic, charitable, educational, political or non-profit organizations may be exempt from these requirements, but the city does request that they obtain the license.





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*Kathy Huckabay
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*Don Gerend
Councilmember*



*Bob Keller
Councilmember*



*Tom Odell
Councilmember*



*Ramiro Valderrama
Councilmember*



*Nancy Whitten
Councilmember*



SAMMAMISH
Arts
COMMISSION

For the latest Arts Commission event announcements, sign up for email alerts on the city website (www.sammamish.us) or go to the Sammamish Arts Commission Facebook page.

CITY OF SAMMAMISH OFFICES

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| | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| Ben Yazici | City Manager |
| 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?
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