

SAMMAMISH

ISSUE 128

CITY NEWSLETTER

FEB. 2013

City free of all bond debt

PAYING OFF SAMMAMISH COMMONS DEBT EARLY SAVES CITY \$223,000

Back in 2002 the city issued a 15-year bond worth \$4 million to purchase and develop the 20 acres now known as the “lower commons.” This property, where most people recline to watch the Fourth of July fireworks, is now fully paid off.

And more good news: In December, when the debt was paid off early, the city saved \$222,966 in interest payments.

“We’re very fortunate that we’re in such good financial shape that we were able to pay the bond off ahead of schedule,” City Manager Ben Yazici said. “With the exception of the state’s Public Works Trust Fund loan, we’re now essentially a debt-free city.”

The \$10 million Trust Fund loan from the state was used to pay for the improvements to 228th Avenue, turning a two-lane county road into a four-lane boulevard that now serves as the

See DEBT, pg. 4



One portion of a leisure pool at a community center in Salem, Oregon.

Community and aquatic center operating agreement takes shape

YMCA AND CITY WORKING ON THE FINE PRINT

Although the final details aren’t expected to be worked out until sometime this month, the rough outline of an operating agreement between the city and the YMCA came up for City Council review on Jan. 15.

Presented by Parks Director Jessi Bon, the outline preserved the basic

elements that were thoroughly discussed during the runoff to the community-wide advisory vote, and added some attractive perks for Sammamish residents.

“We’re still working on it to make

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MAYOR’S MESSAGE

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NEW DEPUTY MAYOR

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SMART 9-1-1

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The Council's decision on KinderAce

All of us on the City Council wish that our recent decision to deny the KinderAce docket application request could have been otherwise. City staff and the Council's Economic Development Committee have been working to help find a new home for Ace Hardware since late 2011.



*Tom Odell
Mayor*

Unfortunately, the site in question, next to 228th Avenue and George Davis Creek, is encumbered by overlapping stream and wetland buffers that preclude any significant development. Approval of any of the proposed variations of the project would have required the city to throw out a good portion of its environmental code. Frankly, the KinderAce ap-

plicants could not have tried to get approval for a worse location.

There was also another major concern. If we had proceeded with KinderAce, we would have exposed our taxpayers to the potential of very expensive litigation, a set of legal challenges our city attorney and the attorney for our insurance company repeatedly said would put us in legally uncharted waters.

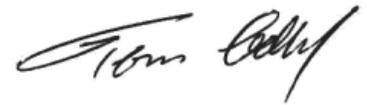
In the end, the threat of litigation and the negative effects on our regulations were way too much of a risk.

Our city staffers have worked continually with Tim Koch over the past 14 months. Not widely known is the fact that we worked successfully with Regency (Tim Koch's landlord) to get Ace a one-year lease extension, from this past August to this coming August, and all of us have made a big ef-

fort to keep this business in town.

Although the Council had to reject the KinderAce application for the reasons enumerated above, we directed staff to continue working with Ace on a search for other potential locations. We also met again very recently with Regency in yet another effort to come up with an alternative site, but we know the clock is now working against Ace, and the lease at their current location will not be extended any further.

Ace Hardware has been an important part of this community for many years. We truly hope they'll find a way to stay, and prosper, for the benefit of all Sammamish residents.



LEGO event draws big crowd to City Hall

City Hall was overflowing with young builders and architects – all of them employing LEGOs – on Saturday, Jan. 26.

It was all part of “Build it Sammamish,” a weekend event that invited youngsters to express their vision of Sammamish through the assembly of small chunks of plastic. And express themselves they did.

The City Council chamber and the lobby of City Hall were filled with edifices of all shapes and sizes, some of them evoking images of Sammamish and some of them, uh, not so much.

Overseeing it all was Dan Parker, a LEGO artist who handed out tips and encouragement throughout the four-hour event.



An adult helps out as kids try their hand at “Building Sammamish” with LEGOs.

Council selects Valderrama as Deputy Mayor

DEPUTY MAYORS SERVE ONE-YEAR TERMS

In a unanimous vote, the City Council elected Ramiro Valderrama to serve a one-year term as deputy mayor. He takes the place of the outgoing deputy mayor, John James. In Sammamish, although mayors serve two-year terms, deputy mayors are limited to just one year.

Valderrama was elected to the City Council in November 2011. A graduate of West Point, he now works as a technology and management consultant.

“We’re fortunate to have talented public servants like Ramiro and John,” City Manager Ben Yazici said. “They bring a lot of perspective and creativity to the task.”

Among other things, Valderrama is a member of the Sammamish Rotary, and a founder of Citizens for Sammamish and the East Lake Sammamish Parkway Coalition. Among his personal interests: history, economics, geopolitics, technology, travel, international development and sports.



*Ramiro Valderrama
Deputy Mayor*

COMMUNITY, cont. from pg. 1

sure we get everything nailed down, but we’re confident this agreement will work well for our community,” City Manager Ben Yazici said. “I’m very pleased with the working relationship we’ve developed with the YMCA.”

Although subject to refinement, the essentials of the agreement look like this:

- The city-owned building, to be named the “Sammamish Community and Aquatic Center,” will be leased to the Y at \$1 per year for 25 years.
- The Y will manage the facility, provide recreational programs, and cover all operating expenses.
- If both parties agree, the lease may be extended to 50 years.
- The city will serve as the lead on both design and construction. The

Y will have representatives on the design team.

- The recreational programs will be branded as “YMCA programs.”

Benefits for Sammamish Residents:

- For the first 18 months of operation, residents may join without paying the joining fee (currently \$125).
- After 18 months, residents will receive a 75 percent discount on the joining fee.
- Meeting space will be available at no charge for Sammamish-based community groups.
- Non-member residents will be eligible for free programs such as open houses and monthly senior socials.
- Exhibition space will be made available to the Sammamish Arts Commission and Sammamish

Heritage Society.

Other facts:

- The city will contribute \$25 million and the Y \$5 million to construction.
- The city’s contribution will be drawn from a portion of its existing reserves.
- The Community and Aquatic Center will be 60,000 square feet in size.
- If there is an operating revenue surplus, the funds will be used for repairs, equipment replacement costs, and/or jointly approved enhancements of the facility.
- Maintenance and repair costs for the parking facility, which will also be used by City Hall employees and visitors, will be borne by the city.

George Davis Creek site not possible for Ace Hardware CREEK BUFFER AND WETLANDS WON'T ACCOMMODATE LARGE FOOTPRINT STORE

Following another briefing from staff, the City Council last night voted 7-0 to end any further efforts to place an Ace Hardware store next to George Davis Creek and 228th Avenue Southeast. The reason, according to staff: The city code, unless revised in ways that violate its most basic principles, does not allow this kind of use on the proposed site.

“It was worth a long look because everyone wants Ace Hardware to find a new home, but this use just doesn’t fit there in the midst of wetlands and a creek buffer,” City Manager Ben Yazici said. “Plus, it wouldn’t be fair to past applicants who’ve lived within the code if we suddenly changed all the rules for a favored project.”

The city has been working closely with Tim Koch, the store owner, since reports surfaced 14 months ago that Koch was having difficulty negotiating a new lease at his current location in the Sammamish Highlands shopping center.

“It’s unusual for a city to get involved in a dispute between two private businesses, but we talked to Regency Centers, Tim’s landlord, and helped facilitate a lease extension for him,” Yazici said. “We’ve also spent hundreds of hours of



Proposed site next to George Davis Creek and 228th Avenue Southeast.

staff time helping Tim and his team find and evaluate other locations. And that’s something we will continue to do. Unfortunately, Tim still hasn’t found a spot that makes business sense to him.”

DEBT, cont. from pg. 1

city’s main north-south arterial. The interest rate on the state loan: one half of one percent.

“The remaining \$4.8 million we owe on that loan is also something we could pay off early if we wanted to,” Yazici said. “But at half-a-percent interest, it makes more sense to keep our money in the city’s investment portfolio and earn a higher rate of return for our taxpayers.”

For several years now, the city has had a Triple-A bond rating from Standard and Poors, making it one of only six cities in the state with the highest rating.

“We owe that good fortune to City Council policy,” Yazici said. “They have been very prudent and disciplined since we incorporated back in 1999.”

Wouldn’t it be wise to use Smart911?

Would you like emergency responders to know about your medical conditions, disabilities, allergies, etc., before they get to your residence on a 9-1-1 call? Would you like them to know your address, even if you call from your cell phone?

They will – if you go online to Smart911.com and create a “Safety Profile.” Just enter as much or as little information as you like, and the 9-1-1 center and the responders they send your way will have that information available to them if you call from a registered phone number.

The data is secure and will only

be shared with emergency service personnel when you call 9-1-1.

Setting up a profile is easy. After you go to Smart911.com, it takes as little as 10 minutes to provide the information you want to share. You can enter just your information, or provide valuable data on everyone in the household. It’s up to you.

This extra service is provided free of charge by King County to any callers who are automatically routed by their phone system to King County 9-1-1. That means Sammamish residents are eligible for the service without any charge.

King County prepares to pave the trail

When the East Lake Sammamish Trail opened in March 2006, it featured a gravel surface. But the dignitaries cutting the ribbon that day promised that a paved version of the trail would follow.

Based on the latest news from King County, the paving project should begin in Sammamish this summer.

The initial phase will stretch from the northern city limits down to Inglewood Hill Road, a distance of about 2.5 miles. Known as the “North Sammamish Segment,” this phase has an estimated construction cost of \$6.9 million.

When complete, it will have a 12-foot-wide paved surface with soft gravel

shoulders on both sides. It will also feature concrete driveways, four fish-friendly culverts, fencing, 27 retaining walls and wetland mitigation plantings along the way.

With the project expected to go out to bid in March, it’s possible construction could begin as early as mid-June, with an estimated construction schedule of 11 months. If everything goes swimmingly, that could translate into an opening around mid-May 2014. This northern section of the trail in Sammamish will be closed during construction.

The southern half of the trail in Sammamish is also due to be paved, possibly as early as 2015.

Residents with questions should contact Gina Auld, King County’s project manager for the trail, at either 206-263-7281 or g.auld@kingcounty.gov.



The gravel seen here will give way to a paved surface.

Please respect the ditch, a vital environmental tool

The city’s public works department receives requests each year from property owners who want to fill in roadside ditches so they can expand a driveway, create more parking space or improve the curb appeal of their home. But it’s usually not a wise move.

A well-maintained ditch plays a vital role in keeping pollutants, sediment and debris out of our catch basins, streams, lakes and stormwater ponds. They also provide a lot of conveyance capacity when stormwater is looking for a place to go.

The city considers requests on a case-by-case basis, asking important questions before replacing a ditch with a covered pipe. Is the ditch a potential hazard to pedestrians or traffic? Are there erosion problems that cannot be controlled by other means? Will the alteration negatively affect conveyance capacity or water quality? Since the city usually doesn’t get the right answers to these questions, most of the requests are turned down.

If you have questions about a ditch next to or near your property, please contact Senior Stormwater Program Manager Eric LaFrance at 425-295-0562 or elafrance@ci.sammamish.wa.us.



A roadside ditch in northwestern Sammamish.

Top performers recognized at employee luncheon

CITY HONORS EMPLOYEE, FIREFIGHTER,
POLICE OFFICER AND TEAM OF THE YEAR
AT JAN. 16 APPRECIATION EVENT

Employee of the Year

Debbie Beadle
Administrative Assistant
Department of Community Development

Police Officer of the Year

Alana Hall

Firefighter of the Year

Daryl Butler

Team of the Year

Dawn Sanders
Joanna Puthoff
Lynne Handlos
Special Events Staff



Debbie Beadle accepts "Employee of the Year" award from City Manager Ben Yazici (left) and Councilmember John James.



Sammamish "Police Officer of the Year" Alana Hall with Police Chief Nathan Elledge and Councilmember Don Gerend.



The "Firefighter of the Year" award went to Daryl Butler, seen here with Councilmember Tom Vance.



Parks Director Jessi Bon (left) and Councilmember Nancy Whitten (right) with the "Team of the Year," the three staffers (center) who stage the city's special events. They are (from left) Dawn Sanders, Joanna Puthoff and Lynne Handlos.

CITY CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

Friday, Feb. 1

City Council Retreat,
9 a.m.-6 p.m.
Cle Elum (Suncadia)

Saturday, Feb. 2

City Council Retreat,
9 a.m.-noon
Cle Elum (Suncadia)

Wednesday, Feb. 6

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

Thursday, Feb. 7

Planning Commission Meeting,
6:30 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 9

"Make it a Clay Day" for special needs
kids, 1-2:30 p.m.
EX3 Boys and Girls Club

Tuesday, Feb. 12

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

Wednesday, Feb. 13

Sammamish Youth Board Meeting,
6 p.m.

Monday, Feb. 18

Presidents' Day
City offices closed

Tuesday, Feb. 19

City Council Special Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, Feb. 21

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

Monday, Feb. 25

Finance Committee Meeting,
5:30-6:15 p.m.

Thursday, March 7

Planning Commission Meeting,
6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 12

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

Monday, March 18

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

Wednesday, March 20

Sammamish Youth Board Meeting,
6 p.m.

Thursday, March 21

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

MARCH

Tuesday, March 5

City Council Meeting,
6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, March 6

Parks and Rec Comm. Mtg, 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.

Beware of frozen ponds

It's not often that Sammamish weather gets cold enough for long enough, but some of the city's stormwater ponds do occasionally ice over. And that can be dangerous for pets and young children.

Please make sure to keep them away from icy stormwater ponds, many of which are not fenced. If they were to venture out onto the ice, they could very easily break through and put themselves in a very dangerous situation.

It is safest to keep a good distance from stormwater ponds no matter what the season. Stormwater ponds provide a vital function and are not a place to play.





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SAMMAMISH CITY COUNCIL



*Tom Odell
Mayor*



*Ramiro Valderrama
Deputy Mayor*



*John Curley
Councilmember*



*Don Gerend
Councilmember*



*John James
Councilmember*

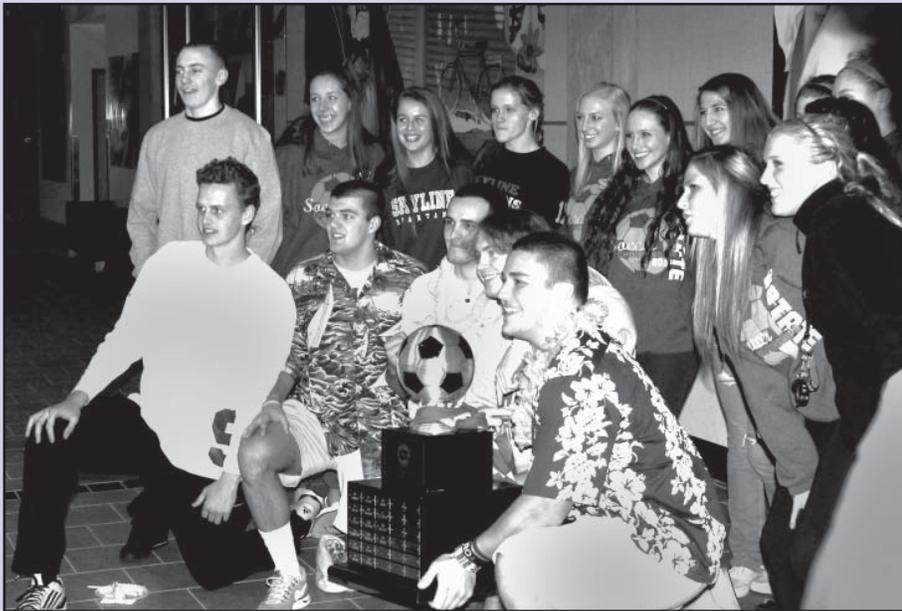


*Tom Vance
Councilmember*



*Nancy Whitten
Councilmember*

Hometown Champs!



Members of Skyline High School's state champion football team and state champion soccer team pose for a picture in City Hall after being recognized by the City Council.

CITY OF SAMMAMISH OFFICES

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Lyman Howard	Deputy City Manager
Kamuron Guroi	Com Dev Dir/Asst City Mgr
Joe Guinasso	Finance Director
Laura Philpot	Public Works Director
Jessi Bon	Parks & Rec Director
Mike Sauerwein	Admin Services Director
Melonie Anderson	City Clerk
Nathan Elledge	Police Chief
Wes Collins	Fire Chief
Bruce Disend	City Attorney

Newsletter suggestions or concerns?
Contact Communications Mgr Tim Larson
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