

SAMMAMISH

ISSUE 177

CITY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2017

It's time for a kitchen table conversation about money

THE CITY WILL REMAIN FINANCIALLY HEALTHY, BUT WHAT APPROACH DO RESIDENTS PREFER?

When families face important financial choices, they always gather – at least in the movies – around a kitchen table that seems to invite frank and honest conversation.

Although he doesn't have a table big enough to accommodate 62,000 residents, City Manager Lyman Howard says it's time to talk.

"This community will remain financially sound," Howard said, "but it's not going to happen on auto-pilot. As a community, we have some thinking to do and some choices to make."

To that end, the city will stage a community roundtable meeting in

See MONEY, pg. 4



Cars at a standstill during the morning commute on Issaquah-Fall City Road.

Update: Issaquah-Fall City Road

ANOTHER PUBLIC MEETING WILL BE HELD NEXT MONTH TO SHARE THE NEWS ON PHASE ONE IMPROVEMENTS

When 10,000 Klahanie-area residents came into Sammamish last year, the city knew that a big responsibility was going to follow them through the door – a \$36 million item known as Issaquah-Fall City Road.

But that's what the city wanted. By annexing the Klahanie-area, Sammamish would gain control of the traffic-choked arterial, and finally be able to give some relief to residents

of Trossachs, Aldarra-Montaine and other Sammamish neighborhoods that rely on Issaquah-Fall City Road, and have long been frustrated by its narrow profile.

Although construction of Phase One improvements won't start until June of 2018, design work and the public outreach effort are well underway.

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MAYOR'S MESSAGE

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METROPOLITAN MARKET

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SAMMAMISH TOWNHOMES

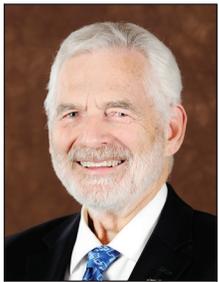
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The very important art of Inclusion/Acceptance

When you come to City Hall, it's usually to ask how you can help the city, or how the city can help you.

So, it may be a bit of a surprise to discover that City Hall is also an art gallery, and a great place to meet the artists.

But that's exactly what it is, thanks to a Sammamish Arts Commission decision many years ago to turn the lobby and balcony at City Hall into a special place of art.



*Don Gerend
Mayor*

Here's how it works. Every three months or so, a new exhibit

is installed featuring the works of one or more artists.

It might be photography of polar bears and mustangs (a beautiful exhibit shown last year by Gail Twelves), or a wide range of printmaking by a dozen or so regional artists and printmaking instructors.

And then there was the work of Bainbridge Island artist Amanda Devine, spanning 40-years and encompassing installations, conceptual art and unconventional mixed media.

Another striking exhibition was Don Fels' "Vanishing Points", providing a history lesson gleaned from World War II.

Each new exhibit begins with a reception and a chance to meet the artist or artists.

The current exhibit, which opened last month, was organized by the Sammamish Arts Commission in partnership with The Renaissance School of Art and Reasoning and ten profes-

sional artists from this area.

The topic – an important one these days – is "Inclusion/Acceptance".

To explore the subject through art, 24 students joined the professional artists and richly adorned City Hall's "Commons Gallery" with a variety of art pieces.

In addition to interspersing their art with that of the professionals, the students also contributed poetry, which they read during the Feb. 9 reception, an evening event in the City Council chambers featuring parents, teachers, artists and students.

Speaking at the event, Arts Commissioner Barbara Jirsa, the exhibit curator, stated, "This exhibition is an opportunity for the community to engage visually and through poetry on what it means to be inclusive and accepting.

"If inclusion is a state of being valued, respected and supported, what does that look like and how can we embrace it?"

"Certainly a timely topic. This is a wonderful example of art providing the vehicle for conversation and community engagements."

The Renaissance School of Art and Reasoning is a Lake Washington School District "Choice School" serving sixth- through eighth-grade students.

Using a curriculum that meets state and district standards, students develop in an environment of artistry, rigor and warmth, learning to think and act using multiple approaches and perspectives.

All students are known and nurtured as important individuals who have an active concern for their com-

munity and society.

The school was founded in 2006 by teachers and parents who envisioned an engaging and challenging academic environment that would meet the needs of middle school students.

Head Teacher Linda Amaya said the premise for the "Inclusion/Acceptance" project flowed from a reading this past semester of Ray Bradbury's "All Summer in a Day."

The story of a young girl misunderstood by classmates gave them a springboard to launch their creativity and reflect on what inclusion meant for them.

The students were given free rein over their choices of media, and were required to write artist statements explaining where their inspiration and thoughts came from, a process that allowed them to reflect on the emotions and circumstances that can be such an important part of a middle schooler's life.

The idea of collaboration between the Arts Commission and the school is credited to Gee Randhawa, a volunteer at the school.

And I can tell you, the idea has produced a terrific exhibit we should all enjoy, and learn from.

Just come to City Hall between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and take a look at the creativity, and the sense of inclusion/acceptance, these talented artist's, both young and old, possess in abundance!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don Gerend".

Freedom of religion, and freedom from fear

IN SAMMAMISH, THESE ARE FUNDAMENTAL VALUES WE WILL ALWAYS PROTECT

As Sammamish City Manager, one of my great pleasures is the opportunity to administer and deploy the resources of this community on behalf of each and every resident, regardless of religion, ethnicity, place of birth – or any of the other distinctive qualities we do our best to welcome in this diverse and thriving city.

But as the recent bomb threat to the Stroum Jewish Community Center on Mercer Island shows, even the best communities are not immune from the menacing symptoms of hate.

The same holds true in Redmond, where the Muslim Association of Puget Sound mosque was vandalized twice last year.

As similar stories filter in from around the country, scaring both children and adults, we

must speak up, reassure our neighbors, and break any silence that might, in the eyes of the vulnerable, carry a menacing message of its own.

So, to all our residents, whatever your background, please know this: Your city, your police department, your City Council, and your City Manager will protect and defend the dignity and wellbeing of all people.

If any of you feel under immediate threat, please call 9-1-1. And if you want to talk to me, please call 425-295-0550.

We mean what we say. You are welcome here, we are enriched by your presence, and we will earn your faith by practicing what is best in the American tradition, and rejecting the hateful actions of a twisted few.



Lyman Howard

UPDATE, cont. from pg. 1

“We had two public meetings last year, and will have another one in April or May,” City Manager Lyman Howard said. “We’ve also met with homeowners’ associations, the Issaquah School District, and other stakeholders.”

The robust public process is especially important for this project, given that Phase One construction is going to last for two years, and traffic disruptions will be substantial.

“People in Trossachs and the Klahanie area have been asking for the widening of this corridor for many years,” Howard said. “Now that it’s in our jurisdiction, we’re going to take care of it. But it’s not going to be painless.”

Among other things, the project team, after gathering input at public meetings, will have to map out a detour plan. Those meetings will be heavily

publicized to ensure that all stakeholders can have their say before those important choices are made.

The first phase of the Issaquah-Fall City Road improvement project (between 242nd Ave. S.E. and Klahanie Drive S.E.) will widen the corridor to four lanes and add curb, gutter, sidewalk, bike lanes and landscaping. This wider roadway, extending for seven-tenths of a mile, will replace the two-lane bottleneck that currently passes by

Pacific Cascade Middle School.

A second phase of the Issaquah-Fall City road improvements, extending to the northeast from Klahanie Drive Northeast to Issaquah-Beaver Lake Drive, is tentatively scheduled for construction in 2020. The \$36 million price tag is the total for both phases.

To stay up to date, please:

- Sign up for email alerts at www.sammamish.us. Just click on the “Join our mailing list” tab in the upper, right corner of the home page and follow the prompts.

- Look at the project webpage by going to www.sammamish.us and click through *government*, *public works* and *current projects*.

- Read the city newsletter that arrives in your mailbox every month.

- Contact Project Manager Sam Park (spark@sammamish.us, 425-295-0538).



First public meeting on Issaquah-Fall City Road project (May 12, 2016)

MONEY, cont. from pg. 1

the near future, review the results of a statistically valid community survey, and find several other ways to divine what Sammamish residents want. After digesting all that feedback, the City Council will then hold a retreat in late June that will focus solely on city finances.

For the past eight years, the city has not taken the one percent increase in property tax revenue allowed by the law. It has banked them for future use instead. And unlike most cities, Sammamish does not impose a utility tax or a business and occupation (B&O) tax.

But since incorporation in 1999, the city has averaged \$12 million per year in capital spending on roads, parks and other infrastructure. And, naturally, as the city's infrastructure has grown, so have its maintenance costs and other expenses.

The net result is that the city's long-term financial forecast shows that operating expenditures will likely surpass operating revenues in 2020.

"We have two ways to maintain our healthy balance sheets," Howard said. "We can keep taxes where they are, but move slowly on infrastructure and services. Or we can raise our revenues and build things faster."

In the past, community sentiment seemed to lean toward tax stability, but rapid residential growth, and the strain it's placing on city roads, appears to be creating a more mixed view.

"At a roundtable meeting on growth late last year, we heard some people say they'd be willing to pay more in taxes if it would expand our road network and reduce traffic con-

gestion more quickly," Howard said. "And we saw similar online comments during our Virtual Town Hall on growth."

To enhance everybody's opportunity to generate an informed perspective, the city, through this newsletter and other public outreach tools, will be sharing basic financial facts and outlining potential options.

"Those of us in City Hall don't have a preconceived idea of how this should go," Howard said. "We just want to follow the community's lead."

"That's the reason we need to talk. We've invested heavily in the community over 18 years, and, as we have in the past, we need to make



some adjustments to keep our balance sheets in great shape."

The first option is simple: Slow down spending, know that projects and other investments will proceed at a slower pace, and accept current or lower levels of city services. That will help keep revenues above expenditures for the foreseeable future.

The second option is anything but simple because it involves the discussion of new taxes, a topic that can trigger strong feelings.

"We're going into this discussion knowing that we'll hear a lot of unvarnished, frank opinions," Howard said. "And that's the way it should be. Good decisions require an honest exchange of ideas."

So, in terms of taxes, here's what's on the table:

- The city could use its eight years of banked capacity on property taxes. That would bring in a total of \$1.6 million.

- Most cities impose a utility tax on electricity, natural gas, telephone, cable, etc. If the city imposed a 2 percent utility tax, it would bring in \$2.2 million per year. That translates into approximately \$133 in utility taxes per household, per year.

- As a largely residential community, Sammamish would benefit little from a B&O tax. At 0.2 percent of gross sales, the tax would raise an estimated \$105,000 annually.

- If the city created a transportation benefit district, it could impose a 0.2 percent license or sales tax on all vehicles in the community. That would produce \$105,000 per year. It could also impose a \$20 fee per vehicle. That would bring in about \$640,000 annually.

- The city could employ a voter-approved bond to pay for a major project, and raise property taxes to pay it off over a fixed period of time.

Sammamish has limited retail space and no big box stores. As a result, only nine percent of the city's revenue comes from sales tax.

"More than most cities, we depend on property taxes," Howard said. "The case can be made that Sammamish should diversify its tax base, and perhaps add a utility tax. But I know we're going to hear voices that say just the opposite. It's going to be an interesting back and forth."

If you'd like to participate in this "kitchen table" conversation about money, come join your fellow residents at the city's roundtable discussion. The place and time is still being determined, but the final details will be publicized shortly.

Live/work units add something new to Town Center

SAMMAMISH TOWNHOMES ARE EXPECTED TO BE MOVE-IN READY BY THIS FALL

If you're northbound on 228th Avenue, shortly after you pass City Hall on the left you will encounter "The Sammamish Townhomes" development on the right.

Located near the intersection of 228th Avenue and Southeast Sixth Place, the new units, still under construction, will introduce another first to Sammamish Town Center and the city as a whole: live/work units.

The 13 units, which will likely be move-in ready by fall 2017, will have first-floor, handicap-accessible work spaces ranging from 450 to 574 square feet. The work areas will also have their own separate entrances.

The townhomes are perfectly suited for small business owners such as accountants, artists, entrepreneurs, salespeople and other home business operators.

The non-work areas will feature large living rooms, bedrooms, bathrooms and the usual appointments

and spaces found in a townhome.

These live/work units, which will vary in total size from 2,300 to 2,700 square feet, fit nicely into the Sammamish Town Center Plan's emphasis on mixed-use development.

Adopted by the City Council in 2008, the plan calls for a variety of housing types and a mixture of retail, recreational, commercial and public spaces. The 240-acre planning area in the geographical center of the city will also be bound and fed by a network of pedestrian-friendly pathways.

In addition to the live/work units, Sammamish Townhomes will feature another 62 standard residential townhomes.



Sammamish Town Homes going up on the east side of 228th Ave. S.E.

Resident feedback needed for land acquisition plan

As new homes continue to rise in Sammamish, the city's been hearing from residents who think the city should purchase land and preserve it for something other than residential development.

To that end, the city is formulating a "land acquisition strategy." But it needs a lot of public input to make sure the ultimate approach reflects the desires of the community.

So far, here's what the city is doing:

- It held a public meeting on land acquisition on Feb. 15

- It launched a Virtual Town Hall

on the topic. Just go to goo.gl/w6L8M0 and use the city's new online public input tool to share your perspective.

- It is conducting a statistically valid community survey on land acquisition issues.

- A second public meeting has been scheduled for May 11, and a third for June 14.

Before the land acquisition strategy is adopted this summer, there will also be a series of Parks Commission and City Council meetings that will review the issue.



Metropolitan Market opens in Town Center

GRAND OPENING CELEBRATION SET FOR 9 A.M. ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22

The city's Town Center Plan calls for a mixed-use environment, a place where residents can live, work, play and shop.

Starting Wednesday, March 22, at 9 a.m., the shopping portion of that plan is going to spring to life in a very big way when Metropolitan Market holds its "grand opening."

"This is a big moment for our community," City Manager Lyman Howard said. "All the hard work our volunteers and residents put into the Town Center Plan over many years is starting to pay off."

The new grocery store is part of Sammamish Village, a TRF

Pacific development that will also feature apartments, medical offices, quick-serve restaurants and a variety of other services.

This will be the seventh location in the Pacific Northwest for Metropolitan Market, a well-regarded grocery chain known for re-

gional and international specialty products, made-to-order items, salad and hot bars, fresh soups and an excellent cheese selection.

The store is located on the northwest corner of the intersection of 228th Avenue Southeast and Southeast Fourth Street. Metropolitan Market will remain open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



Metropolitan Market occupies the ground floor at 301 228th Ave. S.E.

City hall LEGO event for kids very constructive!

Building things in Sammamish is quite popular these days – maybe too popular – but the March 5 "Build it Sammamish" LEGO event had one big advantage – all the buildings left town immediately after construction!

Under the guidance of visiting LEGO artist Dan Parker, kids created houses, machines, monsters and much more at the free Saturday event.

After helping the kids, and a few parents, explore their creative talents, Parker gathered up his bits and pieces and moved on to his next stop.

Sponsored by the Sammamish Arts Commission, 4Culture and the city of Sammamish, the construction fun took place in the City Council chamber.



The "Build it Sammamish" Lego event brought kids and interested adults to City Hall.

CITY CALENDAR

MARCH

Wednesday, March 15

-Sammamish Youth Board,
6 p.m.

Thursday, March 16

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

Saturday, March 18

-Volunteer at Lancaster Pond,
9 a.m. - Noon
-Make it a Glass Day,
1-3 p.m.

Monday, March 20

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

Tuesday, March 21

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

Saturday, March 25

-Volunteer at Ebright Creek,
9 a.m. - Noon

Monday, March 27

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

APRIL

Monday, April 3

-City Council Study Session,
4:30 p.m.

Tuesday, April 4

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

Wednesday, April 5

-Parks Commission Meeting,
(CANCELLED)

Thursday, April 6

-Parks and Planning Commissions,
Joint Meeting, 5 p.m.
-Parks Commission Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
-Planning Commission Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, April 11

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

Wednesday, April 12

-Human Services Task Force Meeting,
1:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 15

-Eggstravaganza, 10 a.m. - Noon

Tuesday, April 18

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

Wednesday, April 19

-Sammamish Youth Board,
6 p.m.

Thursday, April 20

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

Saturday, April 22

-Sammamish Walks,
City Hall
10 a.m.

Monday, April 24

-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.

Taking on the Kokanee Challenge

Utilizing a King Conservation District member grant, the city hired Triangle Associates to raise awareness of the rare kokanee salmon living in our local streams. The city also wanted kids to learn how human actions can impact our waterways and the "little red fish" that spawn there.

In the fall of 2016, Triangle taught a "Healthy Watersheds, Healthy World" classroom workshop to students in 31 classrooms at nine different elementary schools.

In a competitive element of the program, students that participated had to record the stormwater pollution prevention actions they took in a 30-day period. The winning school, for the second year in a row, was Cascade Ridge Elementary. Congratulations to the classes of Mrs. Jochim, Mrs. Trull and Mrs. Shawver!

Volunteer opportunities

Saturday, March 18, 9 a.m.

Lancaster Pond

Join the Sammamish Stormwater Stewards as they enhance wildlife habitat.

Saturday, March 25, 9 a.m.

Ebright Creek

Join volunteers with the Washington Native Plant Society as they remove invasive weeds.

To sign up, go to www.sammamish.us and click your preferred date on the city calendar.

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SAMMAMISH CITY COUNCIL



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Mayor*



*Bob Keller
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*Tom Hornish
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*Kathy Huckabay
Councilmember*



*Christie Malchow
Councilmember*



*Tom Odell
Councilmember*



*Ramiro Valderrama
Councilmember*

New City Council Schedule

After approving the change in February,
the City Council will now follow this meeting schedule:

First Monday of the month – Study Session, 4:30 p.m.
First Tuesday of the month – Regular Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
Second Tuesday of the month – Study Session, 6:30 p.m.
Third Tuesday of the month – Regular Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Notes:

- “Special Meetings” can be added to the schedule
 - Council Office Hours are on the first Tuesday of the month, 5-6 p.m.

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Aaron Antin	Finance Director
Angela Feser	Parks & Rec Director
Beth Goldberg	Admin Services Director
Steve Leniszewski	Public Works Director
Jeff Thomas	Community Dev Director
Melonie Anderson	City Clerk
Michelle Bennett	Police Chief
Jeff Clark	Fire Chief

Newsletter suggestions or concerns?
Contact Communications Mgr **Tim Larson**
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