



City Views @ Sammamish

ISSUE 68

CITY OF SAMMAMISH NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2008

Lee Felling takes the mayor's gavel

After serving four years on the City Council, including last year as deputy mayor, Lee Felling was selected by his colleagues to take over the mayor's role in 2008. Mark Cross, the outgoing mayor, handed Felling the ceremonial gavel at the Jan. 8 council meeting. The council also selected Don Gerend to serve as the new deputy mayor.

"Lee is a very organized and focused individual," City Manager Ben Yazici said. "I know he will do everything he can to make 2008 a very productive year."

Felling, who has lived in the Heritage Hills neighborhood since 1983, retired several years ago after a 25-year career in corporate finance and operations. Before that he served as an Air Force Captain in the Strategic Air Command. He has both a BS and an MBA from the University of Oregon. Before he joined the council in 2004, Felling served on the Sammamish Planning Advisory Board, the volunteer group that created the city's first comprehensive plan.

In his spare time, something he may have less of as he takes on his mayoral duties, Felling likes to delve into railway history, travel, and go hiking and camping. He and his wife Audrey have a son, Jeff, and two grandchildren, Cody and Amanda.



Mayor Lee Felling

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First phase of Parkway project goes to final design

At the end of an exhaustive meeting on Jan. 8, the City Council voted 5-2 to authorize the final design work on the first phase of the East Lake Sammamish Parkway project.

Unless the council asks for changes, the design will add bike lanes, a sidewalk on the east side of the road, and a combination turning lane/raised

median between the two existing travel lanes. Landscaping and stormwater treatment facilities will also be added.

The first phase stretches for about a mile from Inglewood Hill Road north to the 2600 block of the parkway. The cost, including right-of-

See PARKWAY, pg. 2



Lee Fellingge
Mayor

I feel much honored to serve as your Mayor for 2008. I am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead for our city and eager to work constructively and inclusively to make

2008 a year of continued progress.

I suppose there are many reasons people get involved in elected city government. For me, having had a career in the private sector, it was a fascination with learning how local government can be made to work best. I wanted to understand and act on what it takes for local government to be responsive to citizens, provide good value for taxpayers and make sound long-term decisions on often complex issues.

Sammamish is a great living laboratory for creating good government. We are a new city of great fundamental strength trying new ideas. While we have our challenges, some of which I

will address in future letters, I think it is useful to reflect on our strong fundamentals and put those challenges in perspective.

Sammamish has been recognized by Money magazine as the 11th best place to live among small towns in America. According to Seattle Business Monthly, Sammamish earned third place in a "best for business" ranking of 35 suburbs in the Puget Sound region. The business magazine pushed Sammamish toward the top of the list based on the city's "low-crime rate, high property values" and "well-educated populace."

We are served by two excellent school districts, Lake Washington in the north and Issaquah in the South. The YMCA has decided to move ahead constructing a new facility. The King County Library System will construct a new, much larger library next to City Hall. The Boys & Girls Club is looking at opening a new facility in the old library building. A forward looking Town Center is being planned. We have a vital

and growing Chamber of Commerce.

The most fundamental strength of all, of course, is our people. They have taken a location with great natural beauty and made it into a wonderful place to live. They have been willing to serve us all as members of the Arts, Parks, and Planning Commissions, the Youth Board and many other ad hoc as well as continuing committees. They have given generously of their time and knowledge to preserve our beautiful natural environment for future residents, and they have provided thoughtful input regarding policies and directions being considered by the city. We also have a very talented city staff that really cares about the work they do on behalf of Sammamish citizens.

Yes, we have our challenges. However, considering all of our strength, I am very optimistic about success in 2008. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

PARKWAY, cont. from pg. 1

way acquisition, environmental analysis and preliminary design work, some of which has already been done, is estimated at \$17 million.

"The council took a long, hard look at this," City Manager Ben Yazici said. "They listened to residents who wanted more widening of the roadway, and they listened to residents who wanted less widening.

"In the end, our engineers, consultants and traffic modeling told us the right answer was somewhere in the middle, and that's what the council voted for. I think they struck the proper balance."

The vote was not unanimous.

Councilmembers Kathleen Huckabay and Don Gerend voted against authorizing the final design.

When and if future councils ap-



East Lake Sammamish Parkway

prove the second and third phases of the parkway project, the improvements will stretch from the Inglewood Hill Road intersection to the northern city limits, a distance of approximately three miles.

"This first phase of improvements will resolve a lot of the safety issues we face, many of which are found at the Inglewood Hill Road intersection and just to the north," Yazici said. "This project will make this section of the road much, much safer."

More information on the project is available on the city website at www.ci.sammamish.wa.us/ELSP.aspx or by calling Project Manager Jeff Brauns at 295-0561.

City revamps permit process

Quick, one-visit turnaround expected for many applicants

Starting 2008 with a brand-new process, the city expects to send many applicants out the door with a building permit in hand after one visit to City Hall. Although more complicated permits will take longer, residents who want to build a deck, remodel their kitchen or add on to their house will often be able to wrap up the permit process in one “over-the-counter” meeting with a city permit technician.

“We collected a lot of feedback about our permit process last year,” City Manager Ben Yazici said. “We’re taking this step as a response to that feedback, and to meet our City Council’s commitment to excellent customer service.”

The permit applications that qualify for the speedy, over-the-counter process will still undergo rigorous review. Building Official Andy Higgins says it’s important not to sacrifice precision in exchange for speed.

“When residents build something new, they’re adding something to Sammamish,” Higgins said. “Ideally, with proper permitting, it will build value on their property, and at the same time add value to the community at large.”

Permit Center Manager Darci Donovan has posted an over-the-counter permit application packet on the city website (www.ci.sammamish.wa.us/files/document/4223.pdf) that explains the new process. The packet is also available in hard copy form at City Hall.

“After residents take a look at the packet, they should just give us a call at 425-295-0500 and ask for the permit



Plans Examiner Dawn Flores

center,” Donovan said. “We’ll answer any questions they have and get them all set up for our over-the-counter process.”

The new initiative is part of a multi-pronged effort to improve the city’s overall permitting process. Working with a consultant in 2007, the city gathered feedback from the community, conducted an internal review, and arrived at a number of potential improvements. Additional changes to the city’s permitting process are expected to be implemented later this year.

When it comes to this first step, the new over-the-counter initiative, Yazici says much of the credit should go to Plans Examiner Dawn Flores.

“Dawn worked out the details of this new approach as part of her Master Employee Project,” Yazici said. “She organized an employee committee, put everyone’s best thoughts on the table, and created a process our permit staff can really get behind. We’re looking forward to having a lot of happy customers, thanks to Dawn.”

The city’s Master Employee program allows staff members to enhance their compensation by taking on a challenge that goes above and beyond the normal requirements of their job description. Flores says the project was both fun and challenging, with a lot of coordination among staff members required.

“We put our heads together and focused on making the permit process easier and faster for as many of our customers as possible,” Flores said. “We’re confident our residents will find it useful.”



Permit Technician Lisa Werre at the permit counter.

Adventures in code enforcement

As she investigates complaints, Code Enforcement Officer Joan Burlingame's primary goal is to keep people safe. So imagine how she reacted when she first saw a 2,000 pound hot tub suspended in mid-air on a deck that was nailed, not bolted, to the side of a house.

"It was scary," Burlingame said. "That hot tub could have provided everyone with a very nasty surprise."

As she does when she comes across code violations, she made sure the hot tub situation was rectified.

"If the individual had applied for a permit in the first place, we would have told him his design wasn't going to work," Burlingame said. "We love to help people figure things out and stay safe."

To make sure they're on the right track, whether they're building a deck, cutting a tree, or remodeling their kitchen, people should do one of three things, Burlingame said. They can go to the city website (www.ci.sammamish.wa.us/BuildingPermits.aspx), call 425-295-0500 and ask for the permit center, or just wander into City Hall and talk to a permit technician.



When filled with water, this hot tub weighs about 2,000 pounds. It was installed without undersupport, without a permit, on a deck that was nailed to the side of a house.

What are some common mistakes? A lot of people don't realize you need a permit to take down a tree, Burlingame said, adding that it's also a surprise to some that a deck more than three feet off the ground at any point also needs a permit.

"It's best to inquire if you're not sure," she said. "We don't want any plummeting hot tubs in Sammamish."

Planning Commission weighs in on Town Center

After a thorough review of the Draft Town Center Plan, the Planning Commission is scheduled to pass on recommended amendments to the plan at the City Council's regular meeting on Feb. 19.

Since October, the Planning Commission has heard public input from land owners, residents, developers and other stakeholders on a variety of subjects, including market viability, urban design, and impacts on transportation and the environment.

As it considers the Planning Commission's recommendations, the City Council will offer additional opportunities for public input over the coming months. The council is expected to approve a Final Town Center Plan this summer. More information on the Town Center Plan is available on the city website: (www.ci.sammamish.wa.us/TownCenter.aspx.)

Public Hearing on comp plan amendments

The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing regarding proposed changes to the Sammamish Comprehensive Plan on Thursday, Feb. 21, 6:30 p.m., at City Hall, 810 228th Ave. S.E., Sammamish.

Those with questions regarding the amendment process can call Emily Arteche at 295-0522. Comments may be submitted via email at earteche@ci.sammamish.wa.us, or through regular mail to the address listed above. Comments must be submitted no later than the close of business on Feb. 28.

Matt Micona: City "Employee of the Year"

Sammamish was less than a year old when Matt Micona came aboard as the city's first "computer guy." Just out of high school, Micona wasn't much older than the city. But just a few years later, despite his youth, Micona was selected at the city's "Employee of the Year" for 2007.

"Matt is amazingly productive," City Manager Ben Yazici said. "In other places where I've worked, we had three or four people doing the work that Matt somehow does all by himself."

As the city's Information Systems Coordinator, Micona oversees an array of computer, phone and high-tech challenges that are part and parcel of city business. Yazici was especially impressed when the staff moved into the new City Hall without skipping a beat in 2006.

"When we moved from the Safeway shopping center to the new building, I couldn't believe how seamless it was," Yazici said. "I can't begin to imagine how much work, planning and intelligence went into that."

Micona and several others were recognized during an Employee Appreciation lunch in December. The others were:

- Joanna Puthoff (Facility Coordinator) - "Excel-



Matt Micona, center, received the city's "Employee of the Year" award. He's flanked by Finance Director Lyman Howard, left, and City Manager Ben Yazici.

lence in Service" Award.

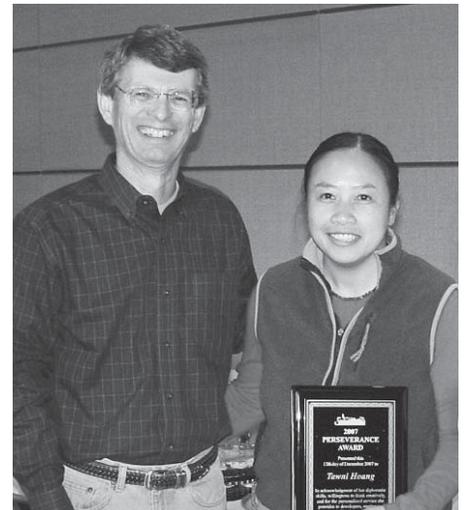
- Tawni Hoang (Project Engineer) - "Perseverance" Award.
- Capt. Pete Sandford - "Fire Dept. Employee of the Year."
- Officer Steve Perry - "Police Officer of the Year."
- The "Team of the Year Award" went to city staffers who worked on the inaugural "Fourth on the Plateau" celebration.



Joanna Puthoff holds the "Excellence in Service" award as Parks Director Jessi Richardson looks on.



Capt. Pete Sandford, right, was chosen as "Fire Dept. Employee of the Year." He's joined by Fire Chief Lee Soptich of Eastside Fire and Rescue.



Tawni Hoang holds the "Perseverance" award and is joined by Public Works Director John Cunningham.

Project updates:

More information available online at:

www.ci.sammamish.wa.us and

www.sammplat.wa.org



East Lake Sammamish Parkway

Northeast: At their January 8 meeting, the City Council authorized final design for the initial segment from Inglewood Hill Road to NE 26th Street (approximately the 2600 block).

First steps in the final design include obtaining geotechnical field data, utility coordination, and supplementary surveying. A public open house will be held this summer to review the design plans. The cost, including construction, right-of-way acquisition, environmental analysis and preliminary design work, some of which has already been done, is estimated at \$17 million. Construction is anticipated in 2009. Key features of this project include widening the roadway to three lanes to add either a center turn lane or landscaped median, bike lanes, and a sidewalk on only the east side. Stormwater treatment facilities will also be added. The remaining

two segments will be designed and constructed in future years. Project manager Jeff Brauns can be reached at jbrauns@ci.sammamish.wa.us or 425-295-0561.

212th Avenue Southeast Sidewalk:

This project will construct sidewalk along the west side of 212th Ave SE in the vicinity of Ebright Creek Park and close the existing gaps between the park and the Crossings at Pine Lake subdivision to the south and the future Chestnut Lane subdivision to the north. Construction is scheduled for late 2008 or 2009. Project manager Jeff Brauns can be reached at jbrauns@ci.sammamish.wa.us or 425-295-0561.

244th Avenue: This project will improve 244th Avenue between Southeast Eighth Street and Northeast Eighth Street by creating a two-lane, tree-lined

street with a median and/or center turn lane, as needed. The street will include a 630-foot-long bridge structure that will close an existing gap in the corridor. Construction, with an estimated cost of \$13 million, will begin as early as spring 2008. Project manager Jed Ireland can be reached at jireland@ci.sammamish.wa.us or 425-295-0563.

South Pine Lake Route Project:

Necessary utility work continues, in advance of the city project, which will make improvements between 212th Avenue Southeast and 224th Avenue Southeast, along Southeast 32nd Street, 216th Avenue Southeast, Southeast 28th Street, 222nd Place Southeast, and Southeast 30th Street. Design is nearly complete, and the Wetland Mitigation Plan has been tentatively approved by the Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Ecology. The plan calls for the purchase of mitigation bank credits from an existing wetland project in order to offset the small amount of wetland impacted by the road widening. Construction is expected to begin in spring 2008. Project manager Jed Ireland can be reached at jireland@ci.sammamish.wa.us or 425-295-0563.

City Council retreat highlights

The 2007 City Council retreat, which began on the evening of Jan. 10 and ended at noon on Jan. 12, produced broad-ranging discussions of city issues. The retreat, which was held in Gig Harbor, was also attended by senior city staff. Among the highlights:

- Council affirmed its commitment to the “contract city” approach.
- Council affirmed the city’s overall project list.
- The city will accelerate its pursuit of potential partnerships with the YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, and other non-profits to generate more

recreational opportunities in the community.

- The Council will hold a budget retreat at mid-year to review long-term budget issues.
- In 2009/2010, the council will develop a process for evaluating barricades and other connectivity issues. No barricade removals are in the existing work plan.
- The city will look at the placement of a Public Works shop on the Noelke property along 244th Ave. N.E.
- The city will conduct a public survey to gather detailed feedback on specific park projects that may be part of a parks bond package.

Young volunteers preserve Commons ravine

A steep slope hazard area will be protected by youngsters early this year when the city coordinates a reforestation project in Sammamish Commons, the city's park and civic complex along 228th Avenue Southeast. The young volunteers, all between 14 and 18, will clear and then replant the site over the course of three outdoor working days in March and April.

Other features of the project include a field trip to Beaver Lake Preserve, a meeting with city planners, and volunteer contributions to a project webpage and project brochures.

"This should be a rich learning experience for our young people," said Dawn Sanders, the city's volunteer coordinator. "They're going to have a 360 degree view of how a community can protect its natural resources."



Potential volunteers learn about the preservation challenge last month. The ravine they will work on is in the background.

CITY HALL CALENDAR

February

Tuesday, Feb. 5

City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, Feb. 7

Planning Comm. Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 12

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

Wednesday, Feb. 13

Parks and Rec Comm. Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Monday, Feb. 18

President's Day, City Hall closed

Tuesday, Feb. 19

City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, Feb. 21

Planning Commission Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Monday, Feb. 25

Arts Commission Meeting, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Feb. 27

Samm. Youth Board Mtg, 6 p.m.

March

Tuesday, Mar. 4

City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, Mar. 6

Planning Commission Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Mar. 11

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

Wednesday, Mar. 12

Parks and Rec Comm. Mtg, 6:30 p.m.

Monday, Mar. 17

City Council Study Session, 6:30 p.m.
Arts Commission Meeting, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, Mar. 18

City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Mar. 19

Sammamish Youth Board Mtg, 6 p.m.

Thursday, Mar. 20

Planning Commission Mtg, 6 p.m.

NOTE: Unless otherwise noted, all meetings are at City Hall. Times, dates and locations are subject to change. Please consult the city website for the most current information.

SAMMAMISH CITY COUNCIL



Lee Felling
Mayor



Don Gerend
Deputy Mayor



Jack Barry
Councilmember



Mark Cross
Councilmember



Kathleen Huckabay
Councilmember



Michele Pettiti
Councilmember



Nancy Whitten
Councilmember

Thanks, volunteers!



Photo by Jon Bromberg

Mayor Lee Felling, volunteer Lisa Lamb, and Dawn Sanders, the city's volunteer coordinator, at the January 18 dinner honoring residents who volunteered with the city in 2007. Members of city boards and commissions, and individual volunteers like Lisa were thanked by councilmembers and staff alike.

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Ben Yazici	City Manager
Pete Butkus	Deputy City Manager
Lyman Howard	Finance Dir/Ass't City Mgr
Kamuron Guroi	Com Dev Dir/Ass't City Mgr
John Cunningham	Public Works Director
Jessi Richardson	Parks & Rec Director
Mike Sauerwein	Admin Services Director
Melonie Anderson	City Clerk
Steve Hartwig	City Engineer
Brad Thompson	Police Chief
Bruce Disend	City Attorney
Tim Larson	Communications Manager



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