



City Views @ Sammamish

ISSUE 53

CITY OF SAMMAMISH NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2006

Incorporation continues to pay off

Compared to county, city has lower taxes, better services

After weeks of number crunching with department heads and his financial staff, City Manager Ben Yazici took a break from the details and sketched out the the city's financial picture in broad strokes.

"Before incorporation, the county used to invest about a million dollars a year up here," Yazici said. "Since incorporation, our City Council has invested around \$10-12 million a year. Obviously, it pays to keep the taxes at home."

Whether it's improved mainte-

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Looking north across the Community Sports Field at Skyline High School, with school buildings visible in the upper right.

Four-acre sports field to open at Skyline High

Community field replicates facility at Eastlake High School

Working with the Issaquah School District, the city has nearly completed a large, synthetic turf field on the campus of Skyline High School. At press time, the field was expected to open for use by both residents and students sometime in November.

"We feel like we're on a roll," said

City Manager Ben Yazici. "The Community Sports Field at Eastlake High School has been a big success, and now we're going to have something almost identical at Skyline."

The new field, which has lights for night activity, will be used year around by soccer, lacrosse, softball

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Mayor Michele Pettiti

With our youngest daughter graduating from high school this year, my husband and I want to downsize. We want a master bedroom on the main floor and a grand living room, with no formal dining or separate living room.

Unfortunately, there are virtually no choices for us in Sammamish. Most of the new homes are over 3,000 square feet in traditionally laid out neighborhoods.

The predominance of large, expensive homes also squeezes out teachers, police officers, firefighters and many other valuable workers in our community. That's a problem the City Council is trying to address through our proposed Town Center, which will feature a variety of housing types.

To that end, on Friday, October 20, I hopped on a bus with city staff, property owners from the Town Center planning area, and

members of the Planning Commission and Town Center Committee. Our goal: to look at a variety of housing choices available elsewhere in East King County that might give us some ideas.

During the tour, we learned about "affordable housing" – defined as a residence that costs, including utilities, up to 30 percent of a household's income. We also saw examples of other modest housing options, all of which are rare or non-existent in our affluent community.

One example was Greenbrier Heights in Woodinville – 170 units clustered on a 20-acre site, leaving almost 10 acres in open space, trails and wetland preservation. The unit mix includes 50 senior apartments, 50 rental units for low-wage earners, and 70 homes ranging from 1,000-square-foot cottages to four-bedroom residences.

The development, which also includes a multipurpose community center and computer lab, was the product of great cooperation. Woodinville waived permitting fees, King County provided the land, Cam

West built it, and ARCH (A Regional Coalition for Housing) manages it.

Danielson Grove, built by the Cottage Company as a demonstration project for the city of Kirkland, was another stop on our bus tour. I fell in love with it.

The site, only 2.25 acres, features 14 three-bedroom homes and two cottages, all arranged around a commons area, lovely gardens, and a center courtyard built over the vaulted storm detention system. The three bedrooms are finished beautifully with the latest Built Green technology, and average only 1500-1700 square feet!

I am proposing to our staff and council that we look into a similar demonstration project here in Sammamish. We may have to tinker with a couple of our ordinances to make sure its allowed under our code, but I think it would be well worth our effort.

We need more housing choices in Sammamish!

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and baseball players, among others.

"It's lined for lots of different sports, so we're going to get tremendous use out of it," Yazici said, noting that the synthetic turf will bear up under continuous use in all weather conditions.

"Skyline students can use it during the day, while our other residents can reserve it for evening use," he said. "I can't thank the Issaquah School

District enough for their contributions to this joint effort. This is a win for everybody in our community."

While the school district supplied the land, the city spent \$2.5 million on construction. At four acres, the Community Sports Field at Skyline High School is slightly larger than the Eastlake field. Taken together, the two new fields put a 7-acre dent into the sports field deficit the city inherited from its days as part of unincorporated King County.

Like the Eastlake field, which

opened in January, the new facility won't require the construction of parking space.

"We'll just use the regular school parking areas in the evening," Yazici said. "From an environmental and financial perspective, that's one of the things that makes these joint ventures so appealing."

When it opens later this month, the city will schedule the field for evening use. Interested residents should call 425-295-0585 to reserve space.

Improving road “connectivity”

Temporary barricades will gradually come down

For a variety of reasons, there are a number of non-permanent barricades across a handful of city streets.

In some cases, the barriers were put in place because the streets were roads to nowhere, pathways to non-existent neighborhoods. In other cases, the streets on the other side of the barricades weren't yet adequate to handle through traffic.

But, as roads improve, new neighborhoods pop up, and other circumstances change, the barricades will come down.

“We'll do it carefully and thoughtfully, but removing the barricades will have many benefits for our community,” City Manager Ben Yazici said. “In transportation parlance, it

will improve our ‘connectivity.’”

The benefits of connectivity include the following:

- Better emergency access for fire and police units.
- Shorter car trips.
- Reduced overall congestion.
- A greater sense of community.

Signs that say “Future Road” have been or will be placed on barricades to let neighbors and drivers know that a barricade will eventually come down. Before the barrier is removed, however, the city will hold public hearings and take steps to ensure a smooth transition.

Those steps may include:

- Road and sidewalk improvements.

- Speed enforcement.
- Traffic calming measures.
- Temporary signs to aid drivers.
- Community education.
- City monitoring to respond to problems.

“We know there is going to be some heartburn associated with this over the next few years,” Yazici said. “A number of residents have already expressed their concern about barricade removal.

“But our comprehensive plan calls for the promotion of traffic circulation, and we need to apply our rules consistently.

“I hope people will keep the benefits in mind, and approach this with a good, community spirit.”

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nance of parks, better roads, more police officers on the street, or any number of other improvements, the shift since incorporation in 1999 has been dramatic.

“And thanks to a very responsible fiscal approach, our property tax rates are lower than they would have been if we had not incorporated,” Yazici said.

The accompanying chart shows a \$348 tax difference in 2006 on a \$600,000 house. The higher county taxes would have been owed on the house if residents had not voted to become a city.

“Mayor Petitti and the rest of the council deserve credit for making tough decisions that keep our investment level high, and our balance sheet healthy.”

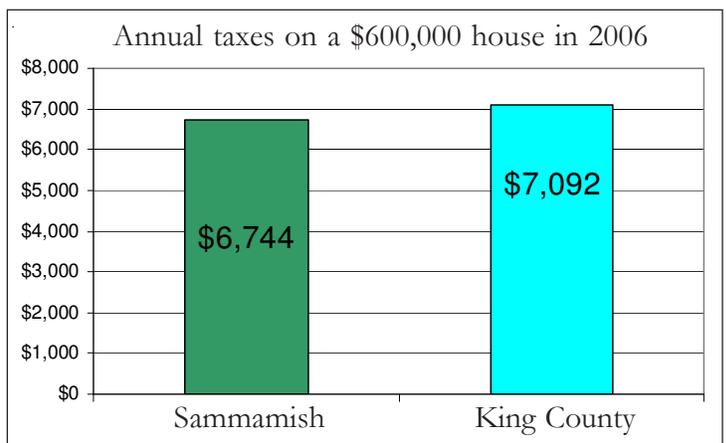
In the 2007/2008 biennial budget, due for council approval later this year, the general fund is expected to have an ending balance of \$9 million.

And that's in the wake of a very busy 2006, which included, among other things, the construction of Ebright Creek Park, the Community Sports Field at Skyline High School, the extension of Issaquah-Pine Lake Road, and multiple sidewalk projects.

“We're making steady progress,” Yazici said. “The question now is whether our residents want to accelerate the level of investment.”

When it comes to parks, the voters may get a chance to answer that question next year. The City Council is considering placing a park bond on the ballot in 2007.

“Whatever the voters decide, I know our conservative financial approach will continue. Our community likes to live within its means,” Yazici said.



The Town Center bus rolls again

Property owners in the Town Center planning area, along with members of the Town Center Committee and Planning Commission, joined Mayor Michele Petitti on another bus tour of nearby communities Oct. 20.

This trip focused on different housing types that might work in the proposed Town Center – everything from cottages to multi-story residential developments to affordable housing.

A previous bus tour looked at overall Town Center design; a future trip will look at examples of civic developments such as community, youth and aquatic centers.

“The bus tours make it all very tangible,” Director of Community Development Kamuron Gurol said. “Everyone can see and touch real examples of what might work in Sammamish.”

During the tour, the Town Center bus visited Woodinville, Redmond, Kirkland, Bellevue and Issaquah. After a long public process, the City Council is expected to adopt a Town Center plan in 2008.



Town Center bus tour participants discuss housing types at Danielson Grove, a demonstration project in Kirkland.

Ham radio classes available in November



Sammamish resident Rick Olsen and his ham radio setup.

Radio operators help during emergencies

Residents interested in becoming ham radio operators can earn their entry level FCC amateur radio license by attending a three-day weekend course starting the evening of Friday, Nov. 17.

Should an emergency knock out normal communication channels in the city, ham operators are expected to be a valuable communication link. The class is being held by the Sammamish ARES/RACES GROUPE (SARGE) and the Sammamish Citizens Corps Council.

Registration information is available by contacting Clay Jackson at 425-868-7471 or n7qnm@n7qnm.net.

City searches for new parks director

Jeff Watling built a 6-year record of success in Sammamish

Acknowledging the difficulty of his job, Sammamish Parks and Recreation Director Jeff Watling used to smile and say: "It's not easy retro-fitting a park system into a developed community."

But that was Watling's task – finding places for parks in a city where most of the flat, buildable land had already been developed before the city incorporated in 1999. But based on the heartfelt compliments he received at his going-away lunch, the recently departed director more than met the challenge.

"Jeff is a very capable manager, and a very nice person," City Manager Ben Yazici said. "He helped the city buy land, renovate parks, and create new ones – and he did it with a very effective and light touch. We'll miss him a lot, and I know he'll miss Sammamish."

Based on his success here, Watling was offered the parks director job in Kent, a city with twice the population of Sammamish and much closer to his home in the Auburn area.

"We're working hard to find a replacement," Yazici said. "Jeff set a high standard."



Jeff Watling
Former Sammamish parks director

Updating shoreline goals and policies

With the city's Shoreline Management Master Program Update well underway, interested residents were invited to an informational open house at City Hall on Oct. 19. The lively, well-attended event featured maps, pictures, informational materials, consultants, and staff

members from the city and the state's Department of Ecology.

"The event had great, positive energy," said Maren Van Nostrand, the city's project manager. "We're planning to have additional public meetings periodically as the update effort continues."

Mandated by state law, the shoreline update will set goals, policies and regulations in line with new guidelines from the Department of Ecology.

"It's basically like a comprehensive plan for shorelines," Van Nostrand said. "It's both a planning and regulatory document."

One of the first steps is completion of the Shoreline Inventory and Characterization Report, essentially a description of existing conditions. That report is scheduled for posting on the city's website (www.ci.sammamish.wa.us) before the end of the year. A hard copy of the report will also be available for viewing at City Hall.

A draft of the update will be approved by the City Council in mid-2007, and the final update will be reviewed by the Planning Commission and City Council in 2008 and 2009.

For more information, Van Nostrand can be reached at 425-295-0538 or mvernostrand@ci.sammamish.wa.us.



Residents learn about the Shoreline Management Master Program Update at the Oct. 19 Open House.

Correction:

Ebright Creek Park will finish up in December

Last month's city newsletter erroneously stated that Ebright Creek Park would open in November. In fact, construction won't be complete until December, and a date for public use has not yet been set.

The \$3.5 million, 12-acre neighborhood park is located on the west side of 212th Avenue, near the intersection with Southeast 13th Place.

When it opens, residents will be welcomed by a picnic area, wetland boardwalk, sports court, play lawn, and children's play area, among other things.

Originally scheduled to begin



Ebright Creek Park, looking southwest from near 212th Avenue.

construction in 2003, the park was delayed by appeals. A number of residents objected to a youth soccer/baseball field, citing noise and traffic concerns. That field was eliminated from the design.

"This is going to be a great neighborhood park," said Pete Butkus, the city's acting parks and recreation director. "It should really help with the park deficit we have in the western part of the city."

Skyline parade leads to victory

Homecoming game is a 40-10 Spartan win

The fourth annual Skyline High School homecoming parade – a quick march up 228th from Discovery Elementary to Skyline – was just the beginning of a festive Oct. 27 evening. Later that night the Spartan footballers beat Sammamish High School (from Bellevue) by a score of 40-10.

To make way for the parade, the northbound lanes of 228th Avenue were closed for a short period. To maintain two-way traffic, one of the southbound lanes on 228th was used for northbound traffic.



Skyline High School students hand out goodies along the parade route.

Beaver Lake advisory board vacancies

The city is seeking applicants for five vacancies on the advisory board of the Beaver Lake Management District, an entity that monitors the quality of the lake. Three of the positions will go to lakefront property owners; two of the positions will go to non-lakefront property owners.

Board members will serve a five-year term and meet four times a year. Applications are available on the city website (www.ci.sammamish.wa.us), or through the City Clerk at 425-295-0511. Applicants must submit their materials by the close of business on Thursday, Nov. 30.



Beaver Lake, as seen from the shore of Beaver Lake Park.

CITY HALL CALENDAR

November

- **Tuesday, Nov 7, 2006**
City Council Meeting, 6:30 - 10 pm
Sammamish City Hall
- **Wednesday, Nov 8, 2006**
Parks and Recreation Commission Special Mtg., 6:30-9 p.m.
Sammamish City Hall
- **Thursday, Nov 9, 2006**
Planning Commission Meeting, 6:30 - 8:30 pm
Sammamish City Hall
- **Friday, Nov 10, 2006**
Veterans' Day
City offices closed
- **Tuesday, Nov 14, 2006**
City Council Study Session, 6:30 - 10 pm
Sammamish City Hall
- **Wednesday, Nov 15, 2006**
Arts Commission Meeting, 7 - 8 pm
Location TBA
- **Thursday, Nov 16, 2006**
Sammamish Youth Board Meeting, 6 - 7:30 pm
Sammamish Library
- Sammamish Town Center Committee Meeting, 6:30 - 8:30 pm
Sammamish City Hall
- **Monday, Nov 20, 2006**
City Council Study Session, 6:30 - 10 pm
Sammamish City Hall
- **Tuesday, Nov 21, 2006**
City Council Meeting, 6:30 - 10 pm
Sammamish City Hall
- **Thursday, Nov 23 and Friday, Nov 24, 2006**
Thanksgiving Weekend
City offices closed
- **Monday, Nov 27, 2006**
Parks and Recreation Commission Mtg, 6:30 - 9 pm
Location TBA
- **Wednesday, Nov. 29, 2006**
Technology Committee Meeting, 6:30 - 8 p.m.
Location TBA

December

- **Tuesday, Dec 5, 2006**
City Council Meeting, 6:30 - 10 pm
Sammamish City Hall
- **Wednesday, Dec. 6, 2006**
Tree lighting, 5:30-6:30 p.m.
Sammamish Youth Board
City Hall

- **Thursday, Dec 7, 2006**
Planning Commission Meeting, 6:30 - 8:30 pm
Sammamish City Hall
- **Tuesday, Dec 12, 2006**
City Council Study Session, 6:30 - 10 pm
Sammamish City Hall
- **Thursday, Dec 14, 2006**
Sammamish Youth Board Meeting, 6 - 7:30 pm
Sammamish Library
- **Monday, Dec 18, 2006**
City Council Study Session, 6:30 - 10 pm
Sammamish City Hall
- **Tuesday, Dec 19, 2006**
City Council Meeting, 6:30 - 10 pm
Sammamish City Hall
- **Wednesday, Dec 20, 2006**
Arts Commission Meeting, 7 - 8 pm
Location TBA
- **Monday, Dec 25, 2006**
Christmas, All day
City offices closed

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

SAMMAMISH CITY COUNCIL



*Michele Petitti
Mayor*



*Mark Cross
Deputy Mayor*



*Jack Barry
Councilmember*



*Lee Felling
Councilmember*



*Don Gerend
Councilmember*



*Kathleen Huckabay
Councilmember*



*Nancy Whitten
Councilmember*



If you know someone who has provided exceptional service to the community through volunteerism, now is the time to nominate them for a Sammi Award. The Board of Directors for the Sammi Awards will close the nomination window on Dec. 10.

The annual Sammi Award celebration, which honors service in nine different categories, will be held on March 17, 2007, at Eastlake High School.

The categories are: arts, business, courage, learning promotion, teen spirit, Trevor Price Children's Award,

unsung hero, youth advocate and spirit of Sammamish.

The nomination form can be downloaded from the Sammi website at www.sammiawards.org. If you would like to help with the Sammi's, or want to become a sponsor of the awards program, more information is available by calling Diana Duenkel at 425-891-3528.

After three nominees are selected in each category, an independent selection committee will then choose the recipients of the 2007 Sammi Awards of Distinction.

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Lee Felling, Councilmember

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Don Gerend, Councilmember

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Kathleen Huckabay, Councilmember

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Nancy Whitten, Councilmember

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Ben Yazici

City Manager

Pete Butkus

Assistant City Manager

John Cunningham

Public Works Director

Kamuron Gurol

Community Dev Director

Lyman Howard

Financial Svcs Director

Pete Butkus

Parks & Rec Director

Mike Sauerwein

Admin Svcs Director

Steve Hartwig

City Engineer

Bruce Disend

City Attorney

Melonie Anderson

City Clerk

Brad Thompson

Police Chief

John Murphy

Fire Chief

Tim Larson

Communications Manager



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