

## Mayor Christie Malchow's Conversation with Sammamish Seniors April 27<sup>th</sup>

Below are questions or topics and the Mayor's responses (paraphrased as best as possible). - DonG

1. **Active seniors want to participate in the community.** Mentioned the book club. **Mayor:** Council recognizes that you need a dedicated location. Nice to have a space to bring seniors together, but not an isolating space. Council goal this year is to identify the where; maybe a little fluid. Mentioned Big Rock Park North house and ADA issues. Structure and house at Big Rock Park South, also with issues. Trying to do our best to identify interim as well as more permanent facilities.
2. **Connection to Lower Commons.** **Mayor:** Yes, knew about purchase of easement off of SE 8<sup>th</sup>. Another connection possibility had mentioned to Parks Director for this alternative: from Big Rock Central along an easement from Lancaster Ridge behind Mary Queen of Peace church. Didn't know about possible easement from the new development to the south.
3. **Parks Department master-planning of Big Rock Park South.** **Mayor:** this will likely be mostly trails and passive recreation. Also, Beaton Hill Park, which has a conservation easement, will be master-planned. Also looking at Thompson Hill tightline project and pedestrian improvements; will have an open house soon on this; check the City website.
4. **Mayor:** Starting May 3 opening Council meetings to the public. Still also being connected via Zoom.
5. **Mayor:** Fourth on the Plateau and concerts are going to happen this year.
6. **Regarding the Emerald Necklace efforts,** we are hoping City staff can work with Sammamish Friends and the County on this ongoing project to have a 28-mile pedestrian loop around the Plateau. **Mayor:** It has been a long-held vision of the community and City staff, given staff availability, will be more than happy to work with the County on this program.
7. **7<sup>th</sup> councilmember?** Council couldn't identify a 7<sup>th</sup> member through April 17<sup>th</sup>. Moved over to the County. Ultimately it will be the County Council to select our 7<sup>th</sup> member to serve out the vacant seat until December 2023.
8. **TCIP: Transportation Capital Improvement Plan.** Progress on improving SE 8<sup>th</sup>? **Mayor:** Council seeking a grant for 218<sup>th</sup> and is split on adding SE 8<sup>th</sup> in that request. A lot of competing projects.
9. **Park Masterplans:** Council diversity of opinion is a benefit and helps Council to flush out facts and options. With six members it has been troublesome to get agreement on many issues. It is what the community wants on these masterplans, making informed decisions.
10. **Timing on new City Manager.** **Mayor:** That is in flux. Have our Deputy City Manager serving as our Acting City Manager. Have request for proposals for firms to help hire a new City Manager. The current Acting City Manager is doing a good job. No critical timeline.
11. **Staffing?** **Mayor:** During upcoming budget process will address staffing issues. Competing interests. Both capital side and operational side of City financing. City Manager brings forth proposals as to staff needs.
12. **Question about school taxes:** **Mayor:** Two thirds of our revenue come from property taxes. There are also property taxes for schools which are not a function of the City.
13. **City plans for climate change?** Sammamish is part of K4C (King County-Cities Climate Collaboration) and also climate plans embedded in the Comprehensive Plan which will guide Council in the future to enact policies.
14. **\$13 million Land Acquisition Fund status.** **Mayor:** I think there is a balance remaining, but not much. Council had set a yearly schedule of using the Fund and I believe that we have borrowed from future years.
15. **Bonds.** City has not had any bonding in first 23 years of the City. Will this continue or are the financial pressures too demanding? **Mayor:** A little premature to determine. Inflation might be a factor. Bonding also lets future generations to enjoy facilities now. Prefer to go to the voters rather than councilmanic bonds. There is an imbalance from the operational standpoint and will have to be an ongoing solution. Bonds would be more for capital projects. Sales tax is the short leg of the stool.
16. **City stance on zoning to allow more Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's).** **Mayor:** We have a lot of Home Owners Associations that don't allow ADU's. We have made some changes to make it easier.
17. **Strong points of our City's Mayor:** Connect with neighbors and friends as we hopefully come out of the worst of the pandemic. Farmers Market, the Commons, events in the parks, 4<sup>th</sup> on the Plateau are all positives for

connections. Negatives is, for example, the social media being an ugly place. Years ago we were voted the friendliest city. Appreciate that this Seniors forum is a place where we are respectful.

18. **Issues on your plate? Mayor:** Public Works department awarded for fish culvert and the bridge over north fork of Issaquah Creek. I will accept a national award in Washington D.C. for the City project.
19. **Cost benefit of the George Davis Creek project?** We are required by State law to remove fish passage barriers. I am on Kokanee Work Group. Advantage for us to provide more access for kokanee.
20. **Urban fire concerns? Mayor:** City and Eastside Fire & Rescue (EF&R) are working closely together. As far as cleanup of understory debris, there are benefits to understory decay, but will look to expert input.
21. **Fire response time.** Most calls are medical emergencies and response times are critical. Plans to reduce response time? **Mayor:** I don't know; agree that response times are critical. EF&R intended to place a fire station on ELSP, but hasn't come to fruition yet. Currently only two fire stations active in the City for fire. The third one, Station 81 by Pine Lake is medical aid only.
22. **Seniors living alone needing help.** Sammamish Seniors expanding connections with seniors in the community and hope to partner with the City. Any City facilities available on interim basis would be very important for senior meetings. **Mayor:** Yes the Senior Center is a good prescription for that. Older and especially if not well, isolation is tough and if we can find a place, it is really, really important.
23. **Mayor:** Hopes that everyone regularly checks the City website; lots of events and encourage feedback on topics, be they parks masterplans. Plug in and participate, and email Council.
24. **Planning Commission vacancies.** **Mayor:** Will be interviewing applicants shortly. Planning commission will take on a big role in Comp Plan update. First have to understand what the growth targets are during discussion with the County.
25. **Ethnic changes in the community.** **Mayor:** Yes, in the schools increased diversity; majority non-white now. Cultural events in the City are great for community connections and education.
26. **Access to new high school plans.** **Mayor:** Issaquah School District bonds are passing. Ingress/egress issues are of concern to City of Sammamish also.
27. **Mayor:** Will be speaking at the Sammamish Chamber luncheon on May 19<sup>th</sup>.
28. **Mayoral functions.** **Mayor:** Running the meetings and ceremonial mostly at ribbon cutting, etc. Fun Eagle Scout meetings, solar panel installation, North-end Mayors organization. No restrictions on Councilmembers participating in Sound Cities Association (SCA), Association of Washington Cities (AWC), and National League of Cities (NLC) committees and meetings.