

Council rejects Klahanie Park plan

By J.B. Wogan

With a 7-0 vote, the Sammamish City Council decided against becoming the temporary owner of Klahanie Park April 6. The city will still work to try and keep the park open.

King County had offered up the park on a three-year basis and on the condition that if Issaquah annexed the Klahanie development in the future, the park would transfer to Issaquah.

For Sammamish to take it over on a permanent basis, the Sammamish City Council would have to sign off on the transfer, the city of Issaquah would need to remove the park from its potential annexation area and the King County Council would have to give its blessing, too.

None of that may matter now though. The prospect of paying to maintain the park without having permanent ownership wasn't all that appetizing to Sammamish's council.

"Why are we cutting their grass for free? That's how I see it," Councilman John Curley said.

Concerned Citizens of Klahanie, a citizen group that opposes Sammamish's proposed takeover of the park, also turned some council members' heads.

"We've gotten a lot of e-mails from people in Klahanie. They really don't want Sammamish in their park. I

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Photo by J.B. Wogan

Mary Pigott takes her two golden retrievers, Jack, 10, and Annie, 7, for walks on the groomed trails in her backyard.

Mary Pigott gives city 51 acres for parkland

By J.B. Wogan

One day, Mary Pigott's 51.15 acres of fields and forested trails will all be yours, Sammamish.

As of April 6, Pigott, 59, has promised to hand over the lush strip of largely undeveloped land.

"It's the right thing to do," Pigott said. "I have had so much pleasure out of having this property as my big backyard, and I would like to share that with the whole community in a real and permanent way."

Pigott stressed that residents need to know her land won't become a park for years.

"I don't want people thinking this is a park now," Pigott said.

City Manager Ben Yazici is scheduled to sign an agreement in the next two weeks that would transfer Pigott's land to city ownership. The land would

come in installments, with the first chunk becoming the city's as soon as January 2011, but some not becoming public land for another 14 years. The transfer of ownership would come at no cost to the city.

On the Web

For more photos of the city's future park land on Mary Pigott's property, go to www.SammamishReview.com.

The land is worth slightly more than \$4.8 million, according to the King County Assessor's Office.

Pigott's property — which goes by the name Frog Pond Farm — includes a small horse barn, a chicken coop, a shed, three houses, a sports court, several ponds, a

wetland and a network of groomed trails.

Pigott has some notions of how the property could be used as public land, but she isn't wedded to any one idea.

"I strongly believe when I give a gift, I let go of it," she said.

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Science tries to assist salmon

By Warren Kagarise

On a rain-soaked night late last month, scientists gathered along the banks of Ebright Creek to complete the latest step in a monthslong experiment meant to pull a species from the edge of extinction.

The team used buckets to transfer Lake Sammamish kokanee salmon fry — not much larger than a paperclip — from aerated coolers for the last leg of the journey from a hatchery to the wild.

Months earlier, biologists and ecologists collected mature kokanee from the same creek, as part of a last-ditch effort to boost the population of the dwindling species. From Ebright, Lewis and Laughing Jacobs creeks, teams took the fish to the Issaquah Salmon Hatchery, where they harvested almost 35,000 eggs.

Scientists had not attempted to raise Lake Sammamish kokanee at a hatchery before. Throughout fall and winter, workers at the state hatcheries in Ravensdale and Lakewood raised the fry from fluorescent orange eggs.

Hans Berge, a King County senior ecologist, and team gathered March 25 to release about 14,000 fry into the same creeks where he and others netted spawning salmon last fall. In a reverse maneuver, the team plunked the

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Pigott

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Some of her ideas for the park:

- ◆ The name of the park would come from a public process where the community would generate names and select one.

- ◆ It would connect to the Sammamish Commons Park (just northeast of her property).

- ◆ It would have a fenced-off section for walking dogs off leash.

- ◆ One of the houses could host events, such as weddings.

- ◆ People could play Frisbee on some of the larger fields.

Her agreement with the city requires that the property not have formal athletic fields or a structure bigger than 2,500 square feet. Such stipulations preclude any chance of all-weather turf fields or a community center on Pigott's land, according to Parks Director Jessi Richardson.

"What makes me happy is knowing it's not going to be houses," she said.

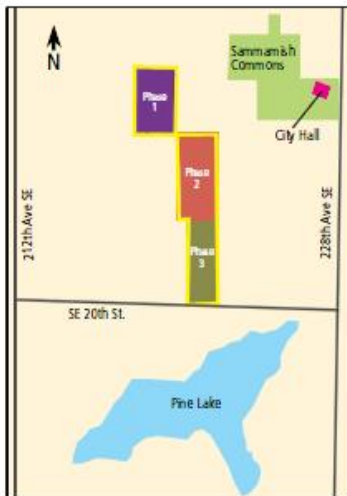
John Cashman, who lives on the west side of Pigott's northernmost parcel, was pleased to hear that she's turning her property into a park.

"I think it's great," he said. "I like what she's doing in trying to preserve land."

Mike Hines, a neighbor on the east side of her property, said he also supported the move, too.

"I'm glad that will not be high-density housing," Hines said.

The City Council, which gave



Mary Pigott has offered to donate roughly 51 acres to the city as future parkland. The city would take over the property in three phases over the next 10 to 14 years.

its approval of the deal at its April 6 meeting, expressed similar levels of excitement and gratitude.

"The citizens of Sammamish are going to be so blessed," Councilwoman Michele Pettit said.

"It's just wonderful to think that generations down, this type of amenity will be right in the center of the city," Councilwoman Nancy Whitten said.

Hines said he sometimes sees Pigott walking her trails next door. Though he doesn't know her well, she always stops to chat

and seems friendly, he said.

Pigott's golden retrievers, Jack, 10, and Annie, 7, enjoy the property's web of trails, bounding off into the woods, chasing off various forms of wildlife. Their daily excursions might be a precursor to other Sammamish dog visits to their future dog park. Pigott said friends who come to visit the property call it "dog heaven."

Coyotes, bobcats, ducks, woodpeckers, owls, frogs, blue herons and beavers are just some of the critters Pigott counts as residents of her backyard. She also has chickens, a goat and one horse.

Pigott moved to Sammamish in 1972, back when the land was less expensive here than anywhere else in King County, she said.

Pigott and her family have a long history of philanthropy. The Pigotts are known throughout the Puget Sound region for starting PACCAR, the international truck-manufacturing firm with headquarters in Bellevue. Pigott is the granddaughter of Paul Pigott, president of PACCAR from 1934 to 1961 and a regent for Seattle University and Stanford University. William Pigott Hall at



Photo by J.B. Wogan

The Pigott property has a man-made pond near Southeast 20th Street.

Seattle University is named after her great grandfather.

Pigott is a board member of the Nordliffe Foundation, a private nonprofit family foundation that seeks to improve the quality of life for people in the community; the foundation focuses on education, health, social services, civic improvement, religion, culture and the arts, the environment, historic preservation and youth programs.

For several years in the 1990s, Pigott ran an independent bookstore called Rainy Day Books in Issaquah's Gilman Station. Her late husband Roger Giesecke worked in the printing industry, making business cards and newsletters.

Over time, she and Roger — who died in 2008 — bought up the pieces of the land she owns today. Starting with 14.87 acres

extending north of Southeast 20th Street, Pigott and Giesecke acquired another 15.87 acres from their neighbors, Debbie and Mark Siefertson, in 1998 for about \$2.18 million. They acquired another 20.41 acres from Charles and Nancy Babcock in 1999 for \$950,000.

"We bought it because we didn't want somebody else to put houses on it," Pigott said.

Pigott and Giesecke were married for 11 years. For the last five, even before engaging city staff, the couple had discussed turning their land into a park.

"We both wanted this," Pigott said.

Reporter J.B. Wogan can be reached at 392-6434, ext. 247, or jbwogan@isspress.com. To comment on this story, visit www.SammamishReview.com.



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