



# NEWS

Vol. 44, No 1 *Fall 2024*  
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## Big Win in the Washington State Supreme Court Invalidation of the ABO Upheld

After years of expensive legal wrangling, we prevailed in defeating King County's Adult Beverage Ordinance 19030 (ABO). Central to this effort has been **Friends of Sammamish Valley**, formed with support from the **HHA**, to oppose the ABO. We had an ally in the legal battle: **Futurewise**. Many hands came onboard to oppose the ABO, understanding how it posed a significant threat to not only our neighborhood and local farmlands, but to all of Rural unincorporated King County.

In a nutshell, this ordinance was an attempt by the King County Permitting to avoid its responsibility to abide by and defend the zoning codes that protect our private property rights, the "protected" farmlands and our Rural communities in general. While this court decision is a big victory, the underlying problem remains:

King County's Permitting Division, which handles both permitting and code enforcement, has gone rogue. As long as a developer or violator is willing to pay for permits, KC Permitting looks the other way if code violations occur. So this victory is just one battle in the larger campaign to address the root problem of a systemic culture that puts making money ahead of doing its job to administer and enforce our zoning laws. Find more info on our website.

## Harvest (aka Wine Village) development ...and one more reason we need the HHA

In 2000, the City of Woodinville approved zoning changes to allow for mixed-use development on these parcels. The prospective owner and developer assured the community that the project would adhere to the original vision. However, within less than a year, the owners sought to increase the scale of the project. Despite this, the City Council held firm, maintaining the original plan for 17 years—until a new council was seated that granted the developers' requests for increased scale and density on four separate occasions. Only after significant public opposition did the City finally put a stop to further expansion.

Given the Tourist District zoning that applies to all City lots at the base of our hill, we can expect more such requests in the future. Additionally, there is growing concern about how Ste. Michelle will evolve under its private equity ownership. The key takeaway is that strong and sustained citizen engagement is essential—both with the County and the City—or short-term profiteers will exploit our neighborhood and the Valley's farmlands.

## HH Roadside Cleanup Rises Again

Our tradition of hosting community Adopt-A-Road cleanups is back on track, thanks to King County reopening the program after its pause due to COVID. A big thank you to Daryl Miller, who has taken over from John Snow to organize the efforts, as well as to all the neighbors who pitched in. We also appreciate everyone who takes time throughout the year to pick up bits of debris. Keep an eye out for a spring cleanup next year!

## One Brief Shining Moment

I had the pleasure of attending the musical *Camelot* at Village Theater last week. The story of King Arthur's effort to create a civil society governed by the Rule of Law vs rule by sword has questionable historical origins, but the sentiments are especially germane in our modern society. Realizing that the lofty ideals of his beloved Camelot were failing to hold, the final reprise has Arthur tell a young lad, "Don't let it be forgot, That once there was a spot, For one brief shining moment, That was known as Camelot."

While we struggle nationally to maintain our hold on the lofty ideals on which our nation was founded, look no farther than your back yard to find similar challenges here. As you can read in this newsletter, our municipality, King County, has been failing to support the Rule of Law when it comes to upholding the zoning codes that have protected our neighborhood, the Valley farmlands and the "rural character" that makes living here uniquely attractive.

Working with partners from across Rural King County, the HHA is working to change that. We have found some traction recently with the Executive and his staff, especially in the wake of yet another loss by KC in court over related issues (see "Big Win" article).

And that brings me to the most important point: **The HHA board needs some fresh new faces!**

The existing board members have been at this way too long, but we're still here! It is time to pass the torch. We raised our children here and it has been wonderful, yet it is getting close to time to go. If you feel that you might be living here for a while, it would be a mistake to take for granted the qualities that attracted you here in the first place.

We have good zoning and policies in place, but there will always be a need to defend them if we hope to protect our private property and community from short-sighted profiteers who are happy to sacrifice our community to put a few more \$\$\$ in their pockets. Since 1976, the HHA has been central to this successful effort. The institution and knowledge is here for concerned neighbors to take it into the future.

Consider contacting a board member about how you can become involved. If we don't continue to stand up for our community, we will soon be replacing "Camelot" with "Woodinville" in King Arthur's lament.

Michael Tanksley  
President

## Neighborhood Parks and Trails

The trails, parks, and open spaces that wind through our neighborhood are a big part of what makes this area so special. Whether you're taking a peaceful walk or enjoying a scenic ride, there are plenty of beautiful spots to explore, including Gold Creek Park (KC Parks), the Tolt Pipeline Regional Trail (Seattle Utilities & KC Parks), and the 10 Acre Woods (HHA). These areas serve as the backbone of our green spaces, while many smaller connecting trails provide essential links throughout the community. A big thank you goes out to the "trail angels" who help clear fallen trees and debris, keeping our trail system accessible year-round. For a map of the local trails, check out the Hollywood Hill Trails map under the "Resources" section on the HHA website.

## Public Benefit Rating System Program

King County's Public Benefit Rating System (PBRs) offers tax breaks for property owners who participate in the program. Two main ways to qualify are by providing a trail for non-motorized users and by preserving native vegetation on your property. For more information, feel free to reach out to Mike at [wmtanksley@comcast.net](mailto:wmtanksley@comcast.net).



## King County Permitting Has Gone Rogue: A Call for Reform

The priorities at King County Permitting have become inverted, with revenue generation now taking precedence over compliance with zoning codes. An initiative led by the County Executive to reform Permitting is urgently needed.

Zoning codes exist to protect our private property investments, farmlands, and rural communities. They are not merely suggestions but the result of decades of work to accommodate growth in ways that safeguard our collective quality of life.

King County Permitting's role is to administer and enforce these zoning codes with integrity, adhering to the letter of the law. Unfortunately, a culture has emerged within Permitting that prioritizes revenue over code compliance and enforcement. Zoning laws that limit permit fee maximization are often disregarded, leading to issues like the ABO debacle and the Murray Franklyn case, which are briefly discussed in this newsletter.

A decision in the 1990s to fund 100% of Permitting's budget through permit fees has contributed to this shift in priorities. However, Permitting is an essential public service and should be funded accordingly. Separating its budget from permit fees must be part of the long-term solution.

Reform must begin now. Waiting for changes to funding or zoning codes will be ineffective if Permitting's underlying cultural issues are not addressed first. Changes to the budget or codes are not required to start the process of reform.

Executive Dow Constantine and his staff oversee the directors of Permitting. Effective reform will require the Executive to take action and ensure that Permitting begins respecting the laws it is supposed to administer. The HHA is collaborating with other groups and individuals across Rural unincorporated King County to advocate for this reform and to support the Executive in initiating these necessary changes.

## Urban Development in Our Rural Neighborhood: King County Permitting's Zoning Code Violations

Despite the court's decision to reverse Murray Franklyn LLC's Boundary Line Adjustment (BLA), King County Permitting continued to issue development permits for unqualified lots within the 24-acre Keesling tract. These permits have allowed homes to be constructed on lots that do not meet the required minimum size for "building sites" under the RA-2.5 zoning, a key issue highlighted in the court's reversal of the BLA.

Additionally, 17 acres of century-old "legacy forest" at the head of Gold Creek were clearcut, far exceeding the amount of land permitted to be cleared on undeveloped lots. If the minimum lot sizes had been respected by KC Permitting, forest retention requirements could have been upheld.

After successfully reversing the BLA, the "Neighbors" group took legal action against the individual building permits. The case appeared promising, as the applicable zoning laws clearly show that these lots do not qualify as legitimate building sites. However, just weeks before the scheduled court hearing, the ongoing clearcutting and rapid construction took its toll on the group, and the lawsuit was ultimately abandoned. In exchange, the developer agreed to preserve a small number of additional trees, though very few remain.

A positive outcome of this situation is that the court's decision reaffirmed that these lots are too small to qualify as building sites. This clarification is critical in the ongoing efforts to reform the permitting process, which has repeatedly ignored zoning codes in favor of generating revenue through permit issuance.

We extend our thanks to all the Hill residents who contributed their time and resources to this challenge. For more information and background on this issue, please visit our website.

## Friends of Sammamish Valley

The HHA was an integral part of Friends of Sammamish Valley's (FoSV) founding and continues to work closely with FoSV on zoning and code related issues. To learn more about FoSV, or simply to take a look at the tremendous amount of effort that has gone into fighting for our community, visit: [GoFoSV.org](http://GoFoSV.org).



## DUES

It's been a few years since our last newsletter, and with the HHA's revenue coming solely from newsletter responses, our funds are running low. While the HHA is a volunteer-run organization, there are still administrative costs that add up. These funds are essential for supporting important efforts, like our challenges to the ABO and the BLA, which are crucial to our long-term success. Annual dues are \$35, and additional contributions are always appreciated.

## Join HHA's Email List

In the past, hard-copy newsletters like this were sent out quarterly, but now they're rare. Most of our updates and announcements are now shared via email. Rest assured, we don't share the email list, nor do we overwhelm members with messages. If you'd like to stay informed, please send your contact information and property address to [me@amydiehl.com](mailto:me@amydiehl.com), and cc: [wmtanksley@comcast.net](mailto:wmtanksley@comcast.net) to be added to the list.

Hollywood Hill Association  
P.O. Box 404  
Woodinville, WA 98072

## *Your Association*

The Hollywood Hill Association is a private, state nonprofit corporation, formally chartered in 1976. We are an all-volunteer, community based organization, dedicated to the preservation of our community character.

President	Mike Tanksley
Secretary	Lew Packia Raj
Treasurer	Mark Castro
Directors	Ron Baum Catherine Yoo vacancy

Webmaster	Amy Diehl
Email manager	

Website [www.hollywoodhillassoc.com](http://www.hollywoodhillassoc.com). Board meetings are scheduled on an as-needed basis at the homes of Board members. The Board welcomes HHA members who wish to attend these meetings as long as prior arrangement has been made. Because these are business meetings, space availability and legal issues may require closed meetings from time to time. Contact any Board member if you are interested in attending.

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