Hi, Olga...I appreciate the further clarification on the advisory character of the code and totally understand what you’re referring to now. This is helpful...thank you!

Yes, 25% of the existing significant trees on the original site must be retained as part of the preliminary plat approval and still be there at the recording of the final plat. Every precaution is taken prior to the start of construction to assure that protective fencing is installed outside the dripline to avoid damage/disturbance to the root zone of the retained trees during the clearing and grading phase. With that being said, it’s all too common that trees are lost during the plat construction or blow down after surrounding trees are removed. If this happens, the developer is required to replant a certain ratio of replacement trees for the retained tree(s) that is lost after approval.

In addition, they must show those retained trees on future building permits to be protected during home construction.

I didn’t work on the plat of Lawson Park. I am curious why we allowed grading within the dripline though with the apparent option to replace. Though too late to address this particular plat now, I will look into that matter for future developments. In my opinion, there shouldn’t be that perception of wiggle room. I agree that the retained trees should still be there after the development is completed unless extraordinary circumstances prevail. Tree retention is not optional.

Unfortunately, the City does not have an arborist on staff. In the event that staff has concerns with the tree retention plan and/or arborist report supplied with the submittal, we do have a consulting arborist available to assist with plan review and assist the City with recommendations.

Again, thank you for your input. Your comments are very valuable in helping me know what issues are important to the citizens here in Sammamish. This type of dialogue is really helpful in evaluating our current code and how to improve it...and as you said, reach a consensus! 😊

Mona

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From: olga.barooah@yahoo.ca [mailto:olga.barooah@yahoo.ca]
Sent: Wednesday, August 13, 2014 2:10 PM
To: Mona Davis
Subject: Re: Tree retention rules

Dear Mona,
Thank you for clarification.
However, this is the part of the code, which concerns me and has led me to believe the code has an advisory character:
SMC 21A.35.210 Tree Retention Requirements
(5) Trees identified for retention shall be selected to the EXTENT FEASIBLE (my capping), subject to the following criteria:
(b) Trees that have a reasonable chance of survival once the site is developed.
What I am reading is trees dedicated for retention can be removed if they are in the way of construction. Of course, these trees will be replaced with similar trees per City regulations but the whole point of this ordinance is to retain ORIGINAL trees, isn't it?

I am also speaking from my personal experience. Lawson Park construction is taking place right behind my fence. The original tree retention plan discussed at the final public hearing (April 2013) had trees to be retained marked. However, unaware to the public, the plan was changed ALLOWING the builder to remove certain trees if they obstruct construction.
The latest Demolition and Tree Preservation Plan shared with the public this May, 2014 (the Plan dated 8/28/2013) has the following wording:
Saved trees where clearing limits encroach into the dripline shall be inspected by an arborist and if it is determined that the tree will not survive then replacement trees will be provided per City of Sammamish requirements.

This wording together with the City Code quoted above leaves me with an impression that builders have lots of wiggle room and legal ground NOT to be concerned with preserving existing/original trees.
On a different but related note, does the City have its own or contracted arborist to inspect sites and trees? Is the arborist who currently decides on which trees in new developments stay or go brought in by the builder? If so, is the City considering hiring/contracting its own arborist?

Thank you very much, Mona. I hope it will be possible to reach a consensus where Sammamish residents, builders and trees will all be content.
Thank you again and please let me know if any questions,
Olga

On Aug 12, 2014, at 3:00 PM, Mona Davis <mdavis@sammamish.us> wrote:

Hi, Olga...thank you for following up with your comments. I will add these to the public comments and appreciate you taking the time to provide them. I do want to clarify that the current code does require tree retention as part of the approval process. It is not advisory, but a requirement to retain a percentage of the trees based upon the type of development. SMC 21A.35.210 states:

(2) All new subdivisions and short plats SHALL retain significant trees subject to the following standards:
(a) Within areas unconstrained by environmentally sensitive areas and associated buffers, a minimum of 25 percent of significant trees shall be retained.
(3) All new commercial and institutional developments SHALL retain significant trees subject to the following standards:
(a) Within areas unconstrained by environmentally sensitive areas and associated buffers, a minimum of 30 percent of significant trees shall be retained.

I hope this helps to clarify. Again, I appreciate your comments and additional feedback on what your preferences would be for tree retention. I will be sure to add your name for future notifications on upcoming meetings regarding tree retention and look forward to your further participation.

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Thanks again,
Mona

Mona Davis, Senior Planner
City of Sammamish
Community Development Department
801 228th Avenue SE
Sammamish, WA 98075
Direct: 425-295-0529
mdavis@sammamish.us

<image001.jpg>

From: olga.baroah@yahoo.ca [mailto:olga.baroah@yahoo.ca]
Sent: Tuesday, August 12, 2014 2:09 PM
To: Mona Davis
Subject: Re: Tree retention rules

Dear Mona,

Apologies for taking so long to respond the the tree retention survey. Please see my comments below.
Also, how can I get updates on the tree retention discussion by the City?
Thank you and please let me know if any questions,
Olga Barooah

* Do you have any comments pertaining to what is currently in place for tree retention? The current code has an advisory character. It does NOT mandate that the builder retain 25% of significant trees for residential developments and 30% for commercial developments. Instead, it agrees that the trees in the way of construction can be removed and replaced with new trees. I do not see any language in this code obliging the builder to keep the trees.

* Do you have recommendations to improve the current code? The City needs to change the language of the code to mandate tree retention instead of simply suggesting that trees need to be retained.

* Should certain types of trees (such as cottonwoods) be eliminated from counting as significant? No

* What should be the tree retention requirements for existing single-family lots? Original trees must stay.

* What should be the tree retention requirements for new developments? Retaining at least 40% of existing significant trees.
Additional Comments
There is a need for transparency from the City's side as far as tree retention goes. At this point, the City does NOT bear any responsibility for determining tree coverage and subsequent tree retention in new developments. Currently, the City relies on the information provided by the builder. The City needs to appoint the person to be responsible for the trees in new development AND make this information public and available! It is of so much more importance right now given the unprecedented level of construction in Sammamish.
Also, tree retention plans provided by the City and the builder during the final public hearings regarding new site developments must be FINAL. There should not be any room for changing the language of the plans and allowing for more tree removals than announced in the final public hearings.

Name (please print): _Olga Barooah_
Best way to contact you: olga.barooah@yahoo.ca

On May 1, 2014, at 9:14 AM, Mona Davis <mdavis@sammamish.us> wrote:

Good morning!

You may find the tree regulations on line via our City website. This link should get you to the code, but I’ve also attached a Word version for you as well:

http://www.codepublishing.com/wa/sammamish/

The specific regulations are in SMC 21A.35.210 through 240.

I'm also including a questionnaire that was utilized at the open house.
Hope this helps!
Mona J

From: olga.barooah@yahoo.ca [mailto:olga.barooah@yahoo.ca]
Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2014 10:07 PM
To: Mona Davis
Subject: Re: Tree retention rules

Hi Ms Davis,
Thank you for following up on my request. I did get a response from Rob Garwood.
Where can I access tree retention regulations?
Thank you very much.
Best,
Olga

On Apr 30, 2014, at 10:28 AM, Mona Davis <mdavis@sammamish.us> wrote:
Hi Ms. Barooah...I forwarded your original message to Rob Garwood, who worked on the subdivision of Lawson Park, and asked him to respond to your concerns about the trees. I reminded him again this morning and believe he’s working on your questions.

Thank you for following up with me...I’m sorry it’s taken us a bit to get back to you. I hope that you will continue to be involved in the tree retention discussion later this year. If you have specific concerns about our current tree retention regulations and have suggestions on how they can be improved in our process of reviewing the current code, I’d appreciate hearing from you.

Thanks again,
Mona

Mona Davis, Sr. Planner
City of Sammamish
(425) 295-0529

From: olga.barooah@yahoo.ca [mailto:olga.barooah@yahoo.ca]
Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2014 9:39 AM
To: Tree Retention; Emily Arteche
Subject: Fwd: Tree retention rules

Hello Ms Davis and Ms Arteche,
I wanted to resend the below email in case it did not go through the first time around.
Thank you for your attention to this matter.
Regards,
Olga Barooah

From: Yahoo <olga.barooah@yahoo.ca>
Date: April 15, 2014 at 2:07:50 PM PDT
To: "treeretention@sammamish.us"
<treeretention@sammamish.us>, Emily Arteche
<earteche@sammamish.us>
Subject: Tree retention rules

Hello Ms Davis and Ms Arteche,

I was glad to see a publication in the latest issue of City of Sammamish about city’s intention to review tree retention plans.

I am writing in regards to the tree situation on the Lawson Park construction site. I know that after clearing the site the builder was supposed to leave 25% of the trees intact. However, we noticed that the builder cut several trees after the construction
had started. One set of trees was cut on Lot 17. The other set of trees was cut on Lot 30.

I am very concerned that the builder will continue cutting the remaining trees on the pretext of the trees being in the way of construction or being accidentally damaged during the construction.

My questions are as follows:
1) Does the City have a system in place to ensure the builder keeps the required 25% of the trees post-construction?
2) Does the builder have any incentive (apart from moral obligations) to keep the trees?
3) Also, once the houses get sold, are there any regulations requiring the owners of the treed lots to keep the trees?

Thank you very much for your help,
Olga Barooah
Resident of Renaissance Ridge

Please be aware that email communication with Council Members or City staff is a public record and is subject to disclosure upon request.

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<tree retention questionnaire.docx>
<SMC21A.35 tree retention current code.docx>

Please be aware that email communication with Council Members or City staff is a public record and is subject to disclosure upon request.