

**BAINBRIDGE ISLAND METROPOLITAN PARK & RECREATION DISTRICT
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING: DISC GOLF PROPOSAL FOR BATTLE POINT PARK
BAINBRIDGE ISLAND AQUATIC CENTER - JUNE 1, 2017**

CALL TO ORDER: A quorum being present, the public meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Chair Ken DeWitt.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Lee Cross, Ken DeWitt, Jay Kinney, Kirk Robinson, Tom Swolgaard.

Chair DeWitt welcomed everyone, saying a presentation for a proposed disc golf course at Battle Point Park will be made this evening that will be followed by a public comment period. No board action will be taken.

PRESENTATION

Park Services Director Dan Hamlin began by saying the group proposing the disc golf course at Battle Point Park has discussed their proposal with the board at several prior board meetings, and will this evening present their proposal to the public. He introduced Greg Scharrer who provided a recap of what has been done to date, including the overview and refined course layout presented during the 12/1/16 and 3/2/17 board meetings. His presentation this evening, explained that disc golf is similar to "ball golf" in that it progresses down fairways, but instead of using balls and holes, it uses Frisbee-like discs and metal baskets. It is an inexpensive and low impact activity that can be done by all ages. Battle Point Park is a great location due to its beauty and terrain, and the parking and restrooms which are already in place. The components of disc golf include 10' x 4' concrete tee pads and a metal basket for each hole. He reviewed the layout of the eighteen-hole course, saying it has been designed to be safety compatible with other park users through the use of sufficient buffers, clear visibility, and warning signs. He said the course is laid out in underused areas of the park with a section in the north end and a section in the south end. The budget to install the course is estimated at \$12,765. The price has been kept down due to free design services being offered and volunteers who will participate with the park crew during construction. Possible funding sources include private fundraising, grants, sponsorships, and the Park District. He also reviewed questions the board raised in prior board meetings, and the response the group provided.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Following the presentation, Chair DeWitt opened the meeting up to public comments.

John Mitchell, park neighbor, has lived here 18 years and his family uses the park every day. He questioned whether the board is aware of what disc golf is and why it is being considered for a multi-use park. Disc golf at Battle Point Park would involve destruction to the park and danger to users. Damage to trees, shrubs, wildlife, and the public would be significant. He said the discs are not traditional Frisbees. They are heavy and can travel over 70 mph. People using the park will have to be on guard for flying discs, and they may not see them coming. Serious injuries would result in litigation. Right now the park is beautiful and safe. There are babies in strollers, kids on bikes, and many elderly people who walk in the park. A disc golf course would change the park significantly. He does not consider disc golf to be an appropriate use for a multi-use park and urged the board to turn down the proposal.

Scott Daniels, park neighbor, said he is generally supportive of recreational opportunities for kids so in this regard the proposed use may be a good idea. However, as indicated in the master plan, the north side of the park is designated for passive use and the south side is designated for active recreational use. While the slide tonight indicated that the north end is underused, he said the use is just different. A lot of people use the north end for passive uses such as walking, pushing strollers, and bike riding, and they do not always stay on the path. He urged the board to be cautious when considering whether to insert active recreation into a beautiful, natural area of the park. A possible compromise would be to install a nine-hole course in the active area of the park on the south end.

David Stallings, park neighbor, said ten years ago he spent a fair amount of time near a disc golf course in Seattle, and he saw a lot of environmental damage. Trees were nicked, and the understory was damaged where discs were lost. He said he walks all through Battle Point Park with his dogs and grandson, and there are always people in the park. Some of the "underused" areas of the proposed course are his favorite parts. He will feel less safe with discs flying around. The discs are a hardened plastic with a dense narrow edge that can do damage unintentionally. Accidents happen and people will get hurt. He is concerned about safety, the environment, and the size and dense layout of the course saying it extends throughout the entire park, and into the passive area. Disc golf he said is not a passive activity.

Michele Bombardier, park neighbor, said she's lived here twenty-seven years, raised three children, and uses the park almost every day. She shares the same concerns already expressed, and said she is offended by the term "underused". She said the area this refers to is "open space", and as the island continues to grow, open space must be protected. She came tonight with an open mind to learn more, and after hearing what is proposed, is very disturbed by the enormous impact the proposed disc golf course would have. The course that is laid out cuts across the trail that leads to the Grand Forest. The north end of the park is for picnics, bird watching, walking, and it is one part of the park that can be used by people of all ages and abilities. Not all ages will be attracted to disc golf. An activity that will benefit only a small group of people will have a big impact on the park. More input from the neighbors is needed.

Nick Masla, said he does not live near the park, and is here to support the proposal. He said Battle Point Park is not just a neighborhood park. There are users of the park from all around the island. For the last nine months, there has been disc golf going on at the park and there hasn't been an issue. What's being presented tonight has been very well thought out. These guys are respectful and are not going to trample over other people's rights. They have such a joy over golfing that they want to share it with others. It's something older folks like him can enjoy as well as the younger generation. There could be more traffic, but it's not a neighborhood park. He hopes the board will listen to the broader community and support what these people have done.

John Mitchell, who spoke earlier, said the entire island is not aware of this proposal. The notice went to the neighbors. That's why he got it. People don't know about it or else there'd be more people here.

John Grinter, said he loves disc golf and has been playing it for years. He's a big fan of the sport, saying it's fun, popular, inexpensive, and for all ages. As much as he's a proponent of disc golf, he does not think Battle Point Park is a good location for it. There are too many people coming from too many directions. This doesn't mean the Park District should not look for other locations where disc golf could go. Several options he suggested include: 1) Fort Ward Park by the upper entrance, where there is a large population density, parking, and restrooms; 2) The active use area of Gazzam Lake where a disc golf course could be put in the middle of these sixteen acres. A mountain bike track could go around it. He asked that the board not give up on the idea of disc golf.

John Mitchell, questioned whether the board should make a decision on this proposal at the June 15 board meeting as planned. He doesn't think enough people know about it. He asked that the decision be postponed until later this summer.

CONCLUSION

Chair DeWitt thanked everyone for coming and providing their comments on the proposed disc golf course. He said the regular Park Board meeting will follow at 7:00 pm.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 6:54 pm.

Elizabeth R. Shepherd
Terry M. Lande
BAINBRIDGE ISLAND METROPOLITAN
PARK & RECREATION DISTRICT

BY: Kenneth R. DeWitt

Kenneth R. DeWitt

BY: Jay C. Kinney

Jay C. Kinney

BY: Kirk B. Robinson

Kirk B. Robinson

BY: John Thomas Swolgaard

John Thomas Swolgaard

ATTEST: Lee Cross
Lee Cross