

BAINBRIDGE ISLAND METROPOLITAN PARK & RECREATION DISTRICT
BOARD RETREAT MARCH 31, 2022
HYBRID MEETING

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

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ken DeWitt, Tom Goodlin, Dawn Janow, Jay Kinney, Tom Swolgaard.

MISSION STATEMENT: Commissioner DeWitt read the Park District's mission statement: The mission of the Bainbridge Island Metropolitan Park & Recreation District is to build a healthy community through effective, sustainable stewardship of the District's parks and open space, and through the development and delivery of innovative cultural and recreation opportunities.

BOARD POLICIES AND VISION: Commissioner DeWitt said he would like to hear from fellow board members about what they would like parks and programs to look like at the end of this year and in five years from now. Commissioner Swolgaard said the Park District needs to get back to where it was before the pandemic. Commissioner Janow said she would like parks and programs to look pretty similar to how they do now. She would like to continue to expand and enhance the ranges of ages, abilities, and types of participants; but she thinks the Park District is headed in the right direction. Commissioner Goodlin said that the way he looks at the Park District there are three areas. One area is operations and maintenance, which from what he can tell is well run and he would like to see that continue. Another area is recreation which offers a bounty of programming. While he would like to see recreation continue to grow, the main challenge is finding staff. The third area is capital projects and there are some areas that need attention: 1) additional trails and trail connections; 2) Ray Williamson replacement pool should be worked on so that maybe in five years there will be a solution even if it is not yet constructed; 3) sports groups have demonstrated a need for additional lighted artificial turf fields; 4) tennis constituents have been vocal about the need for more tennis courts and improved maintenance of tennis courts; 5) gymnastics struggles to have adequate facilities; 6) additional pickleball courts may be needed. The Park District needs to listen to constituents, look at the need and demographics, and respond to the best of its ability. Commissioner Kinney said the Capital Improvement Fund projects for the next 3-5 years are already lined up and prioritized. What should be prioritized is adding additional land to Strawberry Hill Park, as opportunities to do so are rare. The Park District is currently working toward a lighted artificial turf field. Pickleball courts were built recently, and the pools are being improved so that they last longer. Trails have been added and more will be added. There probably is a need for an additional tennis court or two. Park District finances took a turn for the better with the passage of the 2021 levy lid lift. Bainbridge Island Recreation Center seems to be paying for itself and it might turn a profit, which could help the rest of the Park District. A Natural Resources Manager has been hired to look at the health of the Park District's forested lands, which is a big deal particularly with climate change. The Park District may have to do something with waterfront parks due to shoreline loss. Specifically, the barracks at Fort Ward Park, as the bank is crumbling and receding closer to the barracks. The plan for the next 3-5 years is solid, and staff cannot handle much more than has been laid on them. Commissioner DeWitt said the way the Park District is heading with Strawberry Hill Park is that it will be a mini Battle Point Park. Commissioner Janow said she thinks it is awesome, she cannot think of a better additional campus, as it is close to downtown. There is a point where adding more amenities to Battle Point Park will require additional infrastructure such as parking and restrooms. Commissioner Goodlin said developing Strawberry Hill Park makes sense and he looks forward to seeing it. Battle Point Park has been the go-to park for various facilities. However, people in the neighborhood are concerned about the amount of traffic and not increasing it would be good for them.

Commissioner DeWitt said the City of Bainbridge Island's sustainable transportation plan does not clearly address improving access to parks. There is room on the side of Battle Point Drive and Arrow Point Drive, next to Battle Point Park, to put in paths off of the road. He asked if the Park District should be doing that or if it should be pushing the City to do that. Commissioner Janow said that she thinks that if the Park District got involved that would be overstepping. However, the

board can lend influence and ideas. Commissioner DeWitt said there is a lot of traffic around the Battle Point Park entrance and that is the type of thing he would like to have the board think about and talk to staff about in the future. Commissioner Goodlin said in general the Park District ought to do what it can to get non-motorized traffic off the road. The Park District can assist where it has property and can encourage the City to evaluate and put in paths. Commissioner Swolgaard said for years the Park District has been trying to stitch all the parks together with trails, and with the help of the Bainbridge Island Parks Foundation is doing a tremendous job, that should be continued. Commissioner DeWitt said the Park District has taken the stance that the City is responsible for transportation options and the Park District is responsible for recreation trails, but sometimes the two intersect. Commissioner Goodlin said there is a lot of conversation right now about non-motorized access and paths and getting people off the roads, he thinks the Park District should do what it can to support that.

Commissioner DeWitt asked if the Park District is meeting the needs of all demographic groups, and how this can be measured. Commissioner Janow said the two things that come to mind, and they are already being addressed, are more tennis courts and lighted artificial turf fields. She would like to encourage volunteers in the 20–40-year-old range. She would also like to see the Park District develop a cell phone application. Commissioner DeWitt asked how the Park District is meeting the needs of the handicapped and disabled community. Commissioner Kinney said the Park District now has two accessible playgrounds. Commissioner Goodlin asked if there are ADA accessible trails. Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin said some trails do meet the ADA standard and some are considered rollable. Recreation Division Director Mark Benishek said the Park District has two all-terrain wheelchairs and an adaptive kayak seat and paddle. Executive Director Terry Lande said youth and adult programming for people with disabilities is an area that has been identified by staff as in need of additional programming and there is a plan in place to hire a staff person to address this. It used to be common, but now it is passé to keep people with disabilities separated. Mark Benishek said the Park District currently has a rec companion program for children and young adults, so they can participate in mainstream programming with an accommodation. A rec companion is a staff member who is matched with an individual participant to integrate them into mainstream programming. Staff has seen a large amount of growth in that area of programming as more patrons learn about it and see the benefits. Terry Lande said that the new staff member would also be a proponent for accessibility in parks and facilities. Commissioner DeWitt asked about the needs of the senior community and said the Senior Center is struggling right now. Terry Lande said Park District staff is careful not to step on the toes of the Senior Center or compete with them. Commissioner Goodlin said the Aquatic Center is heavily used by seniors and there was a complaint today about there not being enough lap swim lanes. Terry Lande said seniors are involved in a lot of Park District programming and the Park District provides a lot of opportunities around what the Senior Center provides.

Commissioner DeWitt said the Park District is doing a lot of things that are green. One of the big things is looking to see if there is a way to provide alternative power to facilities. Commissioner Swolgaard said it may be time to look at the Aquatic Center again to see if solar panels are now light enough to put on the roof. Commissioner DeWitt said last time it was investigated, the roof would not support that kind of weight, but they are lighter now. Commissioner Goodlin said there will be an opportunity when the Ray Williamson replacement pool is built to incorporate those sorts of things. There are ways to invest a little bit more in the way things are built to lower operational costs and have less energy consumption. Dan Hamlin said staff is currently working with the City's emergency response folks to assess facilities for alternative energy sources and energy storage. Commissioner Goodlin asked about fleet vehicles. Terry Lande said it will take several years to get to where the Park District can afford to purchase electric trucks. Commissioner DeWitt said as a board member he does not want to buy something just because it is the popular thing to do. Electric car batteries for instance are not recyclable right now. He wants to look at the true environmental cost for some of the things being done. Commissioner Goodlin said he thinks staff is on track to make changes as they make sense. One thing the board can do is help reduce vehicle trips and the length of vehicle trips. For example, an additional lighted artificial turf field on the island cuts down on the number of

times parents must drive to Bremerton. A trip to activities at Strawberry Hill Park could be combined with errands downtown. Developing central destinations for activities makes sense.

Commissioner Kinney said that one of the purposes of tonight's meeting is to look more than five years into the future. Acquiring BIRC did not solve all the office needs for the Park District. There is still a necessity to identify what is needed for long-term office space. Commissioner Janow asked staff to think about what an optimal situation for staff offices would be. Commissioner DeWitt said if offices could be moved from BIRC, there would be more room for programming, which would bring in more revenue.

ROLE OF BOARD VS. STAFF: Commissioner DeWitt asked at what point a Capital Improvement Fund project should require board involvement. Commissioner Swolgaard said the board relies heavily on staff to let the board know when something needs work. Executive Director Terry Lande said the board has an opportunity to weigh in every budget cycle. The biggest problem with CIF projects is that, due to the state of the construction industry, the Park District cannot hire contractors or staff, or even get businesses to take on projects of the size needed. The CIF budget has been increased but staffing levels have not increased yet. Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin said staff is also dealing with supply chain issues. Commissioner Goodlin said building a replacement pool is not a priority, much to his frustration. He thinks the Park District should get started on it because it will take a while to accomplish. He would be in favor of starting an ad hoc committee to begin the process. Commissioner DeWitt said one of the things that has been looked at is the viability of going up against the Bainbridge Island School District for a bond. Commissioner Janow said there are a lot of projects that get explored by the board. From her perspective she does not see a replacement pool as a viable project in the next five years. Commissioner Kinney asked how long the Ray Williamson pool can be preserved before it becomes too likely to fail. Terry Lande said staff currently has a request for qualifications posted to hire a consultant to evaluate the Ray Williamson pool to address that question. Commissioner Kinney said it would be unrealistic to think the Ray Williamson pool will last forever, at some point it will need to be replaced. He said maybe it is time to start working with the School District so that a replacement pool can eventually be built. Terry Lande said the Park District may want to put a survey out in a few years to see what the average voter will support regarding a replacement pool.

Commissioner DeWitt asked how the board feels about the process through which the CIF projects are being handled currently. The board indicated that they are comfortable with the way CIF projects are handled. Commissioner Goodlin said members of the public were upset about how far the Bainbridge Island Recreation Center acquisition process got before it went public. He said there does need to be a balance; he does not know how to achieve that but thinks the Park District ought to be aware of it. Commissioner Kinney said if the acquisition was more public the Park District would not have gotten BIRC. Commissioner Goodlin said he is not complaining, but it was a common sentiment that he heard, and some members of the public would say the process was not good.

Commissioner Janow said before Asaph Glosser left the board he brought up the idea of having dedicated Park District cell phones for commissioners to use. Terry Lande said if any commissioners are not comfortable with using their personal devices the Park District will provide a dedicated cell phone.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL/NGO: Commissioner DeWitt said the Park District is currently working to get programmatic permits from the City of Bainbridge Island. City and Park District staff are talking to each other, and progress is being made. Executive Director Terry Lande said after 20 years with the agency he would say the comradery and the information exchange between the Park District and all the public agencies on the island is better today than ever before. The relationship between the Park District and the Bainbridge Island Land Trust needs work. Commissioner DeWitt said there are still a lot of challenges with the Park District's relationship with BILT, but the discussion has opened up. The Park District's relationship with the Bainbridge Island Parks Foundation is good.

TRAILS: Commissioner DeWitt asked if the board wants staff to be looking at roller-friendly trails to see, for example, if there is an appropriate number of accessible trails. Commissioner Swolgaard said roller-friendly trails should be added where it is appropriate for the terrain. Executive Director Terry Lande suggested that if the board is going to have a policy in this area that it be that staff be aware of ADA and other accessibility issues when developing trails. Commissioner DeWitt said his thought on it is to do an inventory of trails and decide what trails are appropriate for what type of accessibility. Commissioner Goodlin said some elderly folks who walk the trails are concerned about bikes going too fast. He knows in some communities they designate different types of trail usage by the day. He asked if as the trail system grows there is a way to post such a schedule for trail use. Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin said what staff has heard from the board over the years is that trails are to be multiuse. Restrictions on trails are not generally supported, mainly because it cannot be enforced. The Trails Advisory Committee has talked about user conflicts and how to handle them. The use of e-bikes needs to be addressed. State law requires that it be posted if e-bikes are allowed, therefore they are not allowed currently, although people are using them. If the board wants to switch to single use trail sites staff would need to hear clear direction on that. Commissioner Kinney asked if staff feels that any policies are needed regarding trails. Dan Hamlin said staff is operating on the multiuse trail standard and that should be discussed to make sure the board thinks that is the right direction. Commissioner Janow said it would be interesting to learn more about single use trails and have a discussion. Commissioner DeWitt asked if the board wants to give direction to staff at this time regarding roller-friendly trails. Commissioner Kinney said the topic should be deferred until the bike park at Strawberry Hill Park is complete to see what impact that has on multiuse trails. Commissioner Goodlin said at some point more feedback would be appreciated regarding what is being considered on the subject of trails. Dan Hamlin said there will be a presentation from the TAC soon regarding what they have been working on.

The City of Bainbridge Island is asking for the Park District's support concerning moving the priority for the Sound to Olympics trail from the Sakai Park to Sportsman Club Road section, to prioritize the Sportsman Club Road to Koura Road section. The reason behind this is that the state is going to replace the Murden Creek culvert under SR 305 with a bridge, which can be built an extra 40 feet wide to accommodate the STO. The City wants to apply for a 3.1 million dollar federal grant and have Park District support for it. There was consensus from the board to support moving the priority north to the Sportsman Club Road to Koura Road section of the STO.

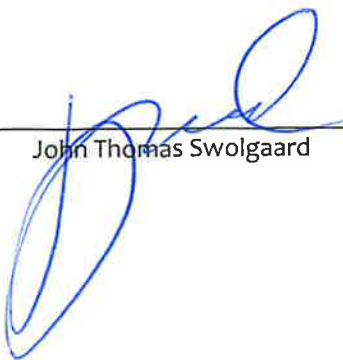
MAJOR ITEMS ON PARK DISTRICT AGENDA FOR 2022: Commissioner Goodlin said he would like to know more about how to go about evaluating the planning for various parks. Commissioner Janow said at this point the board needs to wait for staff to give presentations on the planning for the many projects already in progress. Commissioner DeWitt asked if the Park District wants to talk with the Bainbridge Island Parks Foundation about getting an easement to connect Sands Field to Strawberry Hill Park. Commissioner Goodlin said the general answer would be yes, but he does not know what it will take. Commissioner DeWitt said it would require one or two easements. Executive Director Terry Lande said he would not want to ask BIPF to investigate that connection right now as they are very busy. Commissioner Janow said that is something that she and Commissioner Kinney, as the board liaisons to BIPF, can talk about with BIPF in the future.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:27 pm.

Helen M. Stone
Terry M. Lande
BAINBRIDGE ISLAND METROPOLITAN
PARK & RECREATION DISTRICT

BY: 
Kenneth R. DeWitt

BY: 
Jay C. Kinney
BY: 
Tom Goodlin
BY: 
Dawn Janow

ATTEST: 
John Thomas Swolgaard