

**BAINBRIDGE ISLAND METROPOLITAN PARK & RECREATION DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING March 21, 2024
BAINBRIDGE ISLAND RECREATION CENTER**

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

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

MISSION STATEMENT: Chair Swolgaard 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 CONSENT

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Upon making the following revisions to the minutes of the March 7, 2024 regular board meeting, Chair Swolgaard stated the minutes stand approved as corrected: On page 1, third public comment, add the following sentence to the end: She is also disappointed that Kitsap Therapy is no longer allowed to use Park District facilities to train physical therapy patients even if they pay or are members. On page 4, at the end of the paragraph starting with “Commissioner Goodlin,” replace the last sentence with the following two sentences: The pool can be fixed, or the pool can be fixed and improved. Pool improvement in his mind is a great benefit to the community.

GENERAL BUSINESS

KITSAP PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT STORM WATER EASEMENT AT GAZZAM LAKE NATURE PRESERVE: Acting Executive Director Dan Hamlin said that Civil Engineer Bryan Ransom with Kitsap Public Utility District came to the February 15 board meeting and talked about the potential need for a storm water easement at Gazzam Lake Nature Preserve. This easement is necessary for KPUD to complete their project. There have been changes to the easement draft in the board packet, primarily in sections 5 and 7. The main thing to note is the removal of language giving KPUD the right to remove vegetation in the storm water easement. KPUD wants the vegetation to stay. Bryan Ransom said storm water mitigation is being viewed by the City of Bainbridge Island as part of the maintenance of the facility. The storm water easement area extends 40 feet east of the existing KPUD easement for the entire length of the easement.

Commissioner DeWitt said the way he reads section 5 is that if the parking lot needs to be expanded, it allows for that. Dan Hamlin said that is correct. **MSC: Janow/DeWitt: Motion to approve the storm water easement at Gazzam Lake Nature Preserve with Kitsap Public Utility District.** Dan Hamlin noted that the Bainbridge Island Land Trust is aware of this easement and is supportive.

RAY WILLIAMSON POOL PROJECT DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL FUNDING OPTIONS FOR TWO LANE EXPANSION (PHASE II B): Senior Planner Matthew Keough said in December of 2023 staff presented the Ray Williamson pool renovation project in two phases and the idea that Phase II B could be an expansion project. On January 18 a rough order of magnitude cost estimate was shared for two different options for expanding the pool. At that meeting the board directed staff to reach out to the aquatic community with that concept. Staff did reach out to people involved in Aquatic Center programs as well as stakeholders resulting in about 2,000 people getting notice that an expansion was being looked at. On February 28 there was a community meeting at the Aquatic Center with 54 people attending in person (and 40 people on Zoom). A survey was launched that evening which closed on March 20. In the survey was an opportunity for respondents to ask questions and make comments. The results were compiled and reviewed and in response staff created a frequently asked questions document which has been posted online and updated about three times as new questions came up. There were 275 total survey responses. In response to the first question, 67% of respondents were in support of an eight-lane pool expansion

while 30% of people indicated they were not in support. The second question was if the community would be willing to fundraise for the six-lane option and 48% of respondents said no while 36% said yes. The third question was if the community would be willing to fundraise for the eight-lane option 53% of respondents said yes while 40% said no. Matthew Keough noted that sometimes enthusiasm starts at one level and comes down, as was seen at the onset of the survey and which came down slightly over time. The themes that were identified in the comments and questions were: 1) that it was a challenge to evaluate this project, 2) concerns about the cost and good use of funds, 3) concern about length of closures and the loss to the aquatic community, 4) what is the role of the pool and who is responsible, and 5) a strong desire for a new facility. For a lot of public projects, it is difficult to navigate public levels of support. While he cannot say that any one person is an expert, he knows from working on public processes himself that agencies often look at what is the public consensus. He tends to look for 75% of respondents to consider something a consensus and he has gotten professionals to speak to him on this point too. At no time in the survey was there a consensus on any one question, even on the first night the response levels never exceeded 70%. Per the standard of reaching 75%, there was not a consensus among people in the aquatic community.

Assistant Executive Director Amy Swenson gave information about what the board will have to do if a decision is made to go out for a bond for the eight-lane option. A 3/5 majority, or 60% of voters who vote in the election must vote in favor to pass a bond. August 6 is the first primary for which the Park District can have a ballot measure ready. Staff's current understanding is that May 3 is the deadline for appointing the three-person pro and con committees for the statements in the voters' pamphlet, having the required resolution signed, and for preparing the explanatory statement for the voters' pamphlet. Staff recommends that the board decide by the April 4 board meeting about whether to proceed and if so, what amount the bond will be for to allow enough time for bond counsel to draft the resolution. If the board decides to proceed by putting a bond on the ballot, staff believe it needs to be on the ballot for the August 6 primary. Acting Executive Director Dan Hamlin noted that a campaign committee of community members will also need to form to run the campaign in support of the bond measure. Amy Swenson noted that the Park District cannot provide any staff time or resources to the campaign committee. Commissioner DeWitt noted that individual commissioners can be involved in a campaign but not in their official capacity. Dan Hamlin said tonight there needs to be a decision about whether the board is heading in the direction of a bond so it can be seen whether a campaign committee will form by April 4. The April 18 board meeting is the drop-dead date for the board to direct staff to draft a resolution which would need to be filed by May 3.

Larry Hile said a good percentage of the island is out of town in August and if the burden is to get 3/5 of the vote the timing of that seems a little off.

Commissioner DeWitt said the reason that August is an important date is that if construction gets delayed then the permitting requirements will change, which will cause the cost to go way up. The word from the Bainbridge Island School District is that they may be going out for a substantial bond in 2025 which the Park District does not want to compete with. Dan Hamlin said the risk is if the potential bond is on the ballot in November, it could delay Phase II B. Phase II cannot be delayed due to both the potential for the code change and the fact that the pool can only be drained in the dry season. Commissioner Swolgaard asked what it would cost to run the election. Amy Swenson said it will probably cost about \$30,000; it varies based on how many things are on the ballot. Commissioner Janow asked about the associated legal fees. Amy Swenson said they would probably be \$10,000 maximum.

MSC: Kinney/Goodlin: Motion to seek a bond to fund Phase II B which includes the two-lane expansion and the additional depth of the pool in the amount of 8-10 million dollars. Commissioner Janow opposed the motion.

Amy Swenson said staff believes the amount should be closer to 10 million dollars due to potential cost overruns and the fact that staff does not have the final cost for Phase II B as Stemper Architecture Collaborative has not finished the study.

Commissioner DeWitt said that is smart because there was a Park District bond years ago which was too small due to low estimates and coming up with the extra money put financial binds on the Park District.

Commissioner Janow said she thinks more time is needed to digest a bond for Phase II B and hear from staff. There is nobody in the audience present tonight who is really supporting it. She fears jumping the gun on a bond when the survey results do not have a consensus and she is not hearing a lot of community support. She is not against it, and she wishes there was more of a turnout and more excitement for it. It is a big deal to get 60% of the community to vote for something. She is advocating for a little more time before the decision is made on whether to go for a bond.

Commissioner DeWitt said what tonight's vote does is give people two weeks' notice that a bond for Option II B is being considered and that public input is needed with a show of support by the next board meeting, or it is not going to move forward. Commissioner Janow said the motion on the table is to go for a bond. Amy Swenson noted that a resolution is needed to get a bond on the ballot. Commissioner Kinney said that the resolution will be another opportunity to vote on the issue. If the resolution does not pass it does not go forward, but this gets the wheels turning.

Commissioner Kinney said 8-10 million dollars is a lot of money and the island does not have an unlimited amount of money. Also, there are any number of projects the Park District could spend money on. What compels him to think the Park District should go in this direction is that if the Ray Williamson pool is going to be expanded this is the time to do it. If it is rebuilt as a six-lane pool it is going to be that way for 15-30 years. This is the swimming community's chance for a bigger pool. He had thought a bigger Ray Williamson pool would be primarily for competitive swimmers, but he has learned that a larger Ray Williamson pool would open time for recreational swimming in the Don Nakata pool for the public. Going for a bond gives the aquatic community a chance to make their case to the voters, and the island gets to vote not just the board.

Commissioner Goodlin said when Phase I and Phase II A were approved it was by using funds from reserves and borrowing the remainder. One of the benefits of getting a bond approved, beyond the renovation itself, is that there can be an argument that citizens are helping to support activities at other parks as well. There will still be money in the bank to do other development projects like at Strawberry Hill Park. He has inquired with people he swims with, and he met with people who are contrarians to understand what their concerns are. While he believes the community meeting on February 28 was good, if people were not up to speed it was a little confusing and the survey was probably a little perplexing. There was not a big opportunity for questions and answers from the audience. His take on it is there is a lower level of understanding. There is recognition in the community polled that there is a big need for additional pool space and that the aquatic community is being underserved. Some people are still holding out for a new pool not understanding that is off the table for the Park District, making Phase II B the one opportunity to add 33% pool capacity. A lot of messaging is needed to help people understand that. Another main concern is not being able to sense how two additional lanes and added pool depth would help increase programming. Staff did add that information to the FAQ document. The aquatic programs are going to be hit hard even if a bond does not pass, because the Ray Williamson pool is going to be down for a while. How to address that has got to be figured out. He likes the idea of a higher limit on the bond because as he suggested, getting a seasonal cover for the Bainbridge Island Recreation Center pool could be looked at as part of the bond as people will be displaced, and could broaden the appeal.

Commissioner Janow said this is a hard decision and there is no consensus in the community or on the board. She has talked to a lot of people including seniors, families, and folks on a different economic scale and they are happy with what the Park District services are now and for them to continue to live on the island increased taxes are a difficulty. The perception that the Park District sometimes goes over and above what is a recreational need does not feel welcoming to those populations. She is not averse to Phase II B. She wants all the dream projects to happen. But the Park District needs to be realistic and look at what makes sense in terms of the mission, in terms of meeting recreational needs versus meeting competition or

other needs. A challenge with Phase II B is there is no way to know what the cost will be until the pool is dug up and she thinks 10 million dollars will be necessary. She read all the survey comments and there are a lot of people who are happy with what the Park District has now. She understands the idea of going to the community and letting them decide but the Park District has been through some community battles regarding projects before and they are ugly, and everyone gets beat up. No matter which way the board goes on this they are going to take some hits and she finds it a hard decision to make.

Commissioner Goodlin said whenever you start a remodel, you never know what you will find. The existing Ray Williamson pool is 54 years old. In 2017 a report identified concerns about the piping underneath the pool. Stemper has identified as a task replacing the drains at the bottom of the pool but that does not address all the inlets into the pool. Therefore, there is some risk if the board decides to move forward with the existing shell. Dan Hamlin said that is one of the unknowns that could be discovered needs to be dealt with. Commissioner Goodlin asked staff to bring to the next meeting rough amounts for what the cost could be to a taxpayer for the bond values discussed.

Lisa Claesson-Gordon said the pool is truly a community center and everyone is a bad accident away from needing the pool for rehabilitation. With an aging and growing population, the eight-lane pool is important.

Martha Devereaux said she is a physical therapist and people need the Aquatic Center and the Bainbridge Island Recreation Center for physical therapy, public facilities are resources for the community.

Larry Hile said this is a bold step for the future and living on an island water safety is important.

STAFF REPORT

Administrative Division: Assistant Executive Director Amy Swenson said she has been spending a lot of time working on the accounting system transition.

Recreation Division: Aquatic Program Administrator Jenette Reneau said additional open swims and programming are scheduled for spring break and the Aquatic Center is hosting the regional American Red Cross aquatics training. Recreation Superintendent Bryan Garoutte said the teen flashlight egg hunt is coming up. There are 171 kids enrolled in spring soccer.

Park Services Division: Park Services Superintendent David Harry said staff are getting the Fay Bainbridge Park campground ready. Park Services Superintendent Lydia Roush said Earth Corps are out on Fairy Dell trail this week. The grounds crew has been working on ballfields. Staff have posted a position to get an intern through the Veterans Conservation Corps.

Acting Executive Director Dan Hamlin said the new ballfield machine removes the lips without damaging the grass in one or two passes. Staff has had recent meetings with the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial Association and the National Park Service. The NPS has presented to the Park District a cooperative management agreement for interpretation and education at the memorial site. It is a mechanism to pass nearly \$100,000 a year through the Park District to BIJAEMA. BIJAEMA is interested in running the program so staff will continue to work with both parties and will be bringing a cooperative management agreement to the board at a future meeting. Saturday he will be attending the third session of the Imagine Bainbridge Futures thinking group.

BOARD MEMBER REMARKS:

- Commissioner Janow said the Bainbridge Island Parks & Trails Foundation will be holding bike park fundraising events this weekend.
- Commissioner Janow said she visited the Comcast Property building which will be a nice additional facility.

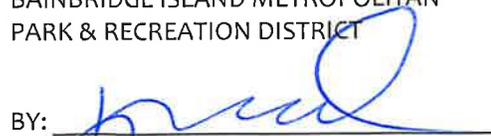
- Commissioner Janow said there is a new mom-led soccer group in Kitsap County which is nice in terms of diversifying sports and opportunities for kids on the island and addressing different needs for different populations.
- Commissioner Janow asked staff to keep records of public attendance at board meetings.
- Commissioner DeWitt said he mentioned at the last board meeting that he attended the Bainbridge Island Chamber of Commerce annual mixer, that was a misstatement, he meant the monthly mixer.
- Commissioner DeWitt said last week when he was doing volunteer work on Maui and had an interesting conversation with a lady who is a member of the National Association of Japanese Canadians in Vancouver. They talked about the experience for Japanese Canadians during World War II, and he learned that it was only a couple years ago that they got a lot of their rights back.
- Commissioner DeWitt had the opportunity while on Maui to visit the 4th Marine Division Memorial Park.
- Commissioner DeWitt asked if there is an update on the Grand Forest West parking lot expansion. Acting Executive Director Dan Hamlin said the storm water engineering has not been done yet.
- Commissioner DeWitt asked about the status of the effort to create a park zone. Acting Executive Director Dan Hamlin said it is still moving forward.
- Commissioner Kinney said on Tuesday night a friend of his that lives on the west side of the island near Hidden Cove Road put the word out that the herring were running near the shore. There were dozens of sea lions eating the herring and eagles flying around. It was a riot of activity and a spectacle like no other.
- Commissioner Goodlin said he visited the former Comcast building which has a lot of promise.
- Commissioner Swolgaard said this week he and his wife are taking care of four of their grandkids. The grandkids asked to go to Battle Point Park on Tuesday to play, and there must have been at least 50 kids and parents at the Kids Up! playground. The park was busy generally with a lot of activities going on and he thought about what a great place this is to live, and how the Park District is part of that.

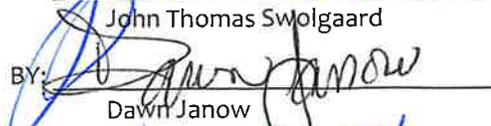
MEETING ADJOURNED to a six-minute recess at 7:24 pm with announced time to reconvene at 7:30 pm. **MEETING RECONVENED** at 7:30 pm.

MEETING ADJOURNED TO EXECUTIVE SESSION at 7:30 pm for discussion of real estate with announced time to reconvene at 7:50 pm.

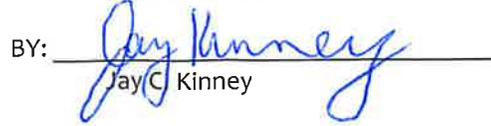
MEETING RECONVENED at 7:50 pm and **ADJOURNED** at 7:50 pm.

Helen Stone
 Dan Hamlin
 BAINBRIDGE ISLAND METROPOLITAN
 PARK & RECREATION DISTRICT

BY: 
 John Thomas Swolgaard

BY: 
 Dawn Janow

BY: 
 Kenneth R. DeWitt

BY: 
 Jay C. Kinney

ATTEST: 
Tom Goodlin