

BAINBRIDGE ISLAND METROPOLITAN PARK & RECREATION DISTRICT

PUBLIC MEETING: PLANNING THE SAKAI PROPERTY

July 16, 2016

BAINBRIDGE ISLAND AQUATIC CENTER

INTRODUCTION

The public meeting for the Sakai property began at 10:01 am with Facilitator Bob Linz providing a brief summary of the public process to date. The outcome of this initial public process that began this year in January is for the community to generate a list of 10-12 recommended uses for the Sakai property that will be given to the Park District. Today's meeting is the third meeting. The first meeting was held on January 23, 2016 with over 180 people attending. Exercises were done to determine what the Bainbridge Island community values and to brainstorm possible uses for the park. From this, ten work groups of community members were formed to do research. A second public meeting was held on April 23, 2016 that was attended by over 100 people. Work group presentations were made, and a tentative list of recommended uses was generated. Not all the work groups had completed their work, so a decision was made to hold an additional meeting. The purpose of today's meeting is to give people a chance to present information that was not ready for the April 23 meeting. Several groups have formed since then and have asked to make a presentation today. Next Thursday at the July 21 board meeting, all the groups will have the opportunity to formally make their presentation to the Park Board of Commissioners. At the end of today's meeting, the list of 10-12 recommended uses for the Sakai property should be finalized and ready to pass on to the Park District. Facilitator Bob Linz said the Park Board is the decision maker and will determine what uses are included on the property. He said the Board can deviate from the list of recommended uses for any number of reasons, since they must consider how practical the uses are, constraints of other jurisdictions, professional input, costs, and fundraising feasibility. He said this method of public process is new, and that the Park District went into it without an agenda or pre-determined plan for the park.

The following board members were present at the meeting today as observers: Lee Cross, Ken DeWitt. The meeting was also attended by staff, and approximately 20 members of the community.

WORK GROUP PRESENTATIONS

The following work works groups were formed at the January 23 public meeting: Park Values; Survey; Financial Feasibility; Prioritize Projects; Demographics; Create a Table; Community Center; Youth Sports; Adventure Playground; School District and Park District Collaboration. The School District and Park District Collaboration group did not provide any information and the Adventure Playground group has withdrawn. Several additional groups have assembled after the initial 10 work groups were formed: 50 Meter Pool; Tennis; Mountain Bike. A proposal for an observation tower has also come up.

1) NEW GROUP: 50 METER POOL: This group represents a wide number of users who currently use the BI Aquatic Center and would like to see a new 50 meter x 25 yard pool on the Sakai property. The Aquatic Center is used all day from 5am to 10pm, and does not have enough space for everyone to use it. The proposed new pool would replace the 46 year old Ray Williamson Pool that exceeds the 30-40 year life expectancy for a pool like this. It is a six lane 25 meter pool with antiquated locker rooms and limited spectator seating. The Nakata Pool built in 2001 is for recreation purposes and cannot be used as a competition pool. Because the two pools are located on School District property, expansion is not an option. Building a new pool would result in 20+ lanes and cost up to \$8 million.

2) WORK GROUP: YOUTH SPORTS: This group presented on April 23 and came again to this meeting to provide additional information. Detailed results of the survey this group conducted of youth sports leaders are now available

on the District's website. Some of the conclusions that were formed as a result of this survey include: 1) There is a lot of interest in creating a multi-use sports facility at Sakai; 2) All survey respondents think the current sports facilities are inadequate; 3) The Sakai property is ideal due to its proximity to schools; 4) There is insufficient space for hosting tournaments; 5) There is little ability to play outdoor sports after sunset due to the lack of lighting. It was noted at the meeting that there is a dark sky ordinance that prohibits this type of lighting outside the Winslow core.

3) NEW GROUP: TENNIS: This group did not make a formal presentation, but a member of the group spoke to the lack of tennis courts on the island and advocated for six outdoor courts on the Sakai property. The high school courts have use restrictions and two of the other four public courts on the island are in poor condition. Tennis is a good sport for all ages and promotes a healthy lifestyle. It is a social sport that benefits from having a group of courts in one location. It is a sport that can be played outdoors year round, and while covered courts would be nice, the group would be happy with more outdoor courts.

Meeting adjourned for a break at 11:00 am. Meeting reconvened at 11:10 am.

3) NEW: OBSERVATION TOWER: A presentation was made by an individual who said he is a dreamy zany kind of guy who has been on the island for four years from the east coast. He thought it would be good to have an observation tower on the Sakai property to get above the treeline and see the views, so he designed a 94' tower. It would make a small footprint, have stairs that wind to the top with landings along the way up, a platform on top, and an elevator for wheelchair access. It would provide an opportunity for exercise, offer panoramic views, and offer a special place for reflection from a sky perspective.

4) WORK GROUP: FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY: As a follow-up to its April 23 presentation, this group made several comments pertaining to cost. During their financial review of the proposed uses, two things became readily apparent. 1) Anything requiring a building and parking will cost millions. 2) The buildable space is small with only one third of the Sakai property buildable. Given this, the group made several suggestions: 1) Since tax revenues are increasing, start setting aside extra funds now to accumulate a reserve towards a capital project; while a bond may still be needed, it would not be as large. 2) Utilize the property during the interim period for low cost, low impact uses that would not preclude a large capital project on the buildable area sometime in the future.

5) NEW GROUP: MOUNTAIN BIKE: This group has worked with the Park District before and was delighted when the board recently approved a pump track for Battle Point Park. The group would also like a pump track on the Sakai property. The site is close to schools and would serve a different group than the Battle Point Park pump track which will serve primarily families. A pump track on the Sakai property would serve kids who ride to school as well as the Winslow population. A pump track is a 3 foot wide dirt trail with 1-2 foot rollers and banked turns that can be used without pedaling. It teaches mountain biking skills, such as balance and turning, which can be used when biking on trails. Pump tracks are for all ages, are low impact and low cost. To build one on less than an acre would cost \$10,000.

Following the presentations and related comments and questions, Facilitator Bob Linz asked if there were any additional comments. One person was concerned that too many structures in the park would have an adverse impact on birding. Another person said it is important to keep a green vista visible from the street so the site is recognizable as a park and consistent with the image of when the property was promoted as the island's Central Park.

The list of the community's recommended uses for the Sakai property was then finalized as follows:

- 1) Multi-use indoor complex;
- 2) Fifty meter pool;
- 3) Mountain bike park;
- 4) Tennis courts/courts;
- 5) Trails;
- 6) Community recreation center;
- 7) Playground;
- 8) Passive use;
- 9) Multi-use outdoor complex with lighting;
- 10) Picnic shelter.

With the above recommended uses identified for the Sakai property, this completes the initial public process conducted by the Park District for the Sakai property. Work groups will have the opportunity to make formal presentations of their work to the Park Commissioners at the 7/21/16 board meeting. Bob Linz commended those who have participated in the process these past six months, saying information has been provided by bright, intelligent people who really did their homework. He thanked everyone for attending today.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 noon.

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

BY: _____

John Thomas Swolgaard

BY: _____

Kenneth R. DeWitt

BY: _____

Lee Cross

BY: _____

Kirk B. Robinson

ATTEST: _____

Jay C. Kinney