

**BAINBRIDGE ISLAND METROPOLITAN PARK & RECREATION DISTRICT  
 REGULAR BOARD MEETING SEPTEMBER 5, 2019  
 STRAWBERRY HILL CENTER**

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

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ken DeWitt, Dawn Janow, Jay Kinney, Michael Pollock, Tom Swolgaard.

**BOARD CONSENT**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Upon hearing there were no corrections to the minutes of the August 15, 2019 regular board meeting, Chair Kinney stated the minutes stand approved as submitted.

**APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS: MSC: Janow/Pollock: I have reviewed the following vouchers, warrants and electronic payments and move that they be approved for payment.**

<b>Batch Date</b>	<b>Fund Number &amp; Name</b>	<b>Warrant Numbers</b>	<b>Total Batch Amount</b>	<b>Pre-Approved</b>
8/20/19	001 General Fund 300 Capital Improvement Fund	18800-18838	80,964.21	8/20/19
8/27/19	001 General Fund 300 Capital Improvement Fund	18839-18875	291,594.51	8/27/19

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**RECREATION TRAILS:** Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin said the Trails Advisory Committee has been working to update the Park District’s Trails Vision Plan which will be included in the Comprehensive Plan. He introduced committee members Jim Kondek and Jon Benjes who have both been instrumental in this work. He also noted that the City of Bainbridge Island is involved in this discussion, and that the work of COBI staff member Mark Epstein has been significant. He provided an overview of the revised Trails Vision Plan during a Power Point presentation. The presentation noted that the Park District is responsible for recreation or soft surface trails while the City of Bainbridge Island is responsible for transportation or hard surface trails (concrete and asphalt). It went on to describe the goals for recreation trails, some of which include: promoting health, providing connections, protecting sensitive areas, partnering with others, and allowing for multi-use. Other considerations include emergency access, management practices, potential conflict among differing user types, and trail improvements such as parking and bike racks. Trail standards are being updated and consider trail width, topography, access to trailheads, and more. There are several challenges that must be addressed at some point and will require direction from the board. These challenges were discussed as follows:

**E-Bikes:** The use of electric assist bikes is increasing and whether to allow them on recreation trails has become a question. Consideration should be given to various concerns such as e-bike speeds (20-27 mph), fast uphill speeds, safety, equipment limitations, trail damage, and enforcement of regulations. It was noted that WA State regulations prohibit the use of e-bikes on recreation trails unless authorized by a local jurisdiction. Board discussion followed. Commissioner Pollock asked how much e-bike use is recreational and how much is done as an alternative to using a car. He expressed some concern that e-bikes are seen by the City as an answer to getting out of the car, and yet there is not a safe infrastructure in place to support this. He thinks this is a City responsibility that should not be placed on the Park District. He questioned whether a mix of e-bikes with pedestrians on trails with limited visibility is wise. Commissioner DeWitt said having additional classifications that specify what uses are appropriate for different trails may help. Some trails he said are not safe for bicycles, let alone e-bikes. He said if the Park District is going to allow e-bikes on trails, more funds will need to be committed for maintenance and upgrading trails for this additional use.

While Dan Hamlin indicated there is no evidence that e-bikes cause extensive trail damage, Commissioner Janow noted damage can be done to the vegetation along the trails as pedestrians step out of the way of e-bikes. She mentioned the need for education about different uses on different trails so there are some trails for every use. She also said it is important to protect contemplative trails. Commissioner Swolgaard said he wants to hear from e-bike users to learn whether e-bikes are being used for recreation or transportation purposes. He said the Park District needs to coordinate with the City and collaborate. Executive Director Lande also mentioned the importance of working with the City on these issues.

Chair Kinney asked if any members of the public would like to speak.

Matt Cummings, island resident, said he rides mountain bikes and has several e-bikes as well which he got to see what they're all about. He said e-bikes go fast, are like a motorbike, and are a machine. He's observed e-bike usage on the island to be primarily for transportation and has seen most along Highway 305 and other roads. There is a lot of e-bike use on Sunrise which he said is dangerous due to the rolling hills and limited visibility. An alternative with better visibility is converting old utility easements to trails e-bikes can use and mentioned several communities that have done this. He agrees e-bike usage in the Grand Forest is dangerous since the trails are tight and so heavily used by pedestrians, many who are older, and some with leashed dogs. He thinks the board is on the right track when considering different trails for different types of uses.

Loanne Harmeling, island resident, suggested talking to the bike store owners on the island to get a sense of who is buying e-bikes. She said she is a bike rider and has found that having separate bike and pedestrian trails is the best way to protect pedestrians. She mentioned several parks in Seattle that have done this successfully.

Another man spoke encouraging the board to trust its citizenry, saying people generally want to obey rules when they are well founded. He also said that while transportation infrastructure is primarily the City's responsibility, the reality is that bike commuters use park trails. As an example, he mentioned the trail that connects the two parts of Mandus Olson Road. He encouraged the board to identify those trails that might be more "arterial" trails in parks that could also serve as transportation. He said that while demographics show current e-bike use to be done mainly by older people, as the parent of two children close to driving age, he likes the idea of e-bikes as an alternative to cars. He sees the onset of e-bikes as an opportunity to promote safe transportation options and encouraged the board to be proactive in considering this.

Commissioner Janow, board liaison to the Trails Advisory Committee, said this discussion is being had tonight so consideration of these issues can be considered for the Park District's comprehensive plan that is now in the process of being updated.

### **Wildfire Concern:**

Park Services Director Dan Hamlin said another concern that affects trails is wildfire concern. A lot of factors are affecting the island's forests now including warmer climates resulting in dry conditions, and wind storms that create fuel for fires when knocking down trees. Age is also having an impact on the island's forests, with mature second growth prone to root rot, and the cedars used to replace them no longer the best alternative since cedars are dying off due to drought conditions. Trail corridors can be used to create fire breaks and a defensible line. Trails must also be considered for emergency access in the event of wildfire.

### **Special Purpose Trails:**

Park Services Director Dan Hamlin said the next concern has to do with user conflict management and whether some trails in parks should be designated for a special purpose. He indicated the number of different uses on island trails as

including pedestrians, mountain bikes, equestrian, and leashed dogs, and said they don't always mix well. He cited several challenges related to creating special use trails including: 1) where trails are already established, users react when designated for a single use; 2) limited amount of land for adding trails; 3) impact of use and mitigation; 4) increased usage making it necessary to do something; 5) community considerations; 6) managing risks. He said mountain biking is an example of a use that has increased to the point where something must be done. The demand is increasing, and the renegade trails that are showing up is an indication of the need for mountain bike specific trails. Jon Benjes, speaking on behalf of the Gear Grinders and BI Mountain Biking Club, urged the board to continue expanding the trail system on Bainbridge Island, and indicated a dire need for mountain bike specific trails. He said mountain bike growth on the island is extraordinary and that there is not a single trail specifically for this use; Mountain bike specific trails would include jumps, high speed downhill flow trails, and gravity trails that don't require pedaling. He said mountain bike specific trails would provide another place for mountain bikers to ride that would alleviate conflicts on other trails. He said they're here to help. Dan Hamlin said Grand Forest North is being considered for mountain bike specific trails and an agreement is being drafted for design work that should come to the board in October. Commissioner DeWitt noted an eventual trail easement connection will make it possible to connect Grand Forest North with Grand Forest West and asked that this trail be kept separate from the mountain bike trails.

Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin summarized what he heard from the board about next steps on e-bikes saying staff will ask for input from e-bike users, assess how and where to integrate e-bike use into trail routes so reasonably accommodated, come up with a plan, and bring it back to the board.

**MEETING ADJOURNED** at 7:07 pm for a break. **MEETING RECONVENED** at 7:15 pm.

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: CHAPTER 1 CONTEXT & SETTING:** Senior Planner Perry Barrett provided a recap of the comprehensive plan process to date saying the public input component was conducted in June of this year with the outcome reported at the 8/15/19 board meeting and posted on the Park District's website. At the 8/1/19 board meeting, the board's initial review of Chapter 1 Context & Setting was done. Staff has since revised Chapter 1 with the board's input (no public input into the draft was received), as well as biologist input that was not available at the time of the initial review. This evening the board will conduct its second review of Chapter 1 which includes the revisions from the initial review. He asked whether the revised draft reflects the general sentiment of the board. After making several minor revisions, the board agreed that the revised draft reads well and incorporates the input previously provided by the board. Perry Barrett said a board work session will be held next week on 9/12/19 at which time an initial review of Chapters 2 & 6 will be conducted.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Recreation Division: Division Superintendent Bryan Garoutte said a new pottery clinic at the Eagledale Pottery Studio is coming up; a new teen partnership between local agencies and organizations including the Park District is being formed; table tennis is being offered for the first time; gymnastics has extended open playtime hours; there were 440 participants this summer in sailing programs. Division Director Mark Benishek said planning is underway for the Haunted Hayride with the direction around the park reversed this year; all day camp was extended to accommodate students when the Blakely School opening was delayed; fitness offerings have been expanded for active adults; new cooking classes are being offered; BI Swim Club swimmer Kevin Houseman competed recently in Budapest where he placed third in the world in the World Junior Swimming Championship.

Park Services Division: Division Superintendent David Harry said the new pedestrian sidewalk connecting facilities at Strawberry Hill Park has been completed with glow in the dark aggregate used. The aggregate is charged by sunlight and provides a low-tech alternative to lighting that will last a long time. Division Director Dan Hamlin said the pirate

ship playset is coming next week to Fay Bainbridge; kiosks are being improved and the pool slide was recently resurfaced.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS:** Chair Kinney reviewed upcoming board meetings and work sessions needed to address the comprehensive plan update and the 2020 budget.

**BOARD MEMBER ITEMS:**

- Commissioner DeWitt updated the board with information he received at a recent BI Parks Foundation meeting. He said 240 people attended the recent gathering at the Moritani Preserve; the community grant cycle is beginning soon; the final link in Lost Valley has been acquired so the trail can be built.
- Commissioner Pollock said he received a letter from a senior at Bainbridge High School asking to use Sakai Park as a temporary parking lot for the high school. Park Services Director Dan Hamlin said he received the same letter and has responded from an operational perspective saying the land is too soggy for this type of use. It was also noted that City approval for this would be needed and restrictions related to run-off and stormwater drainage would apply.
- Commissioner Pollock said he has heard concerns in the community about the City's plans to put 100 units on 4 acres at the Suzuki property, and said he knows the Park District had at one point been willing to receive the property as a park. Board members recalled the proposal the Park District had some time ago presented to the City which involved the property being turned over to the BI School District with the Park District operating a portion of it as a passive park. Commissioner Swolgaard said he presented the proposal to the City and it was rejected. The question was raised over whether the Park District might want to approach the City again saying the offer still stands. It was decided to consider this after the election this fall since any change in the City Council could affect the project.
- Commissioner Swolgaard said he attended with several others a recent gathering for Blakely Harbor Park and that the donor for the jetty bridge said he wants to dance across the bridge when done.

**MEETING ADJOURNED** at 8:15 pm.

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

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jay C. Kinney

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
John Thomas Swolgaard

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Kenneth R. DeWitt

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dawn Janow

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Michael Pollock