

**BAINBRIDGE ISLAND METROPOLITAN PARK & RECREATION DISTRICT  
BOARD RETREAT MARCH 6, 2021  
ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

**CALL TO ORDER:** A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 10:30 am by Chair Janow.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Kristine Cox, Ken DeWitt, Dawn Janow, Jay Kinney, Tom Swolgaard.

Commissioner Janow said that she is excited to hear from staff and appreciative of all the work that has been done to prepare for today. This is a great opportunity to look at Park District history and accomplishments and she would like to use today to look ahead and plan realistically for the future.

Executive Director Terry Lande said the presentation staff has prepared which reviews the last 13 years is intended to set the table for the next discussion about where the Park District goes from here. Administrative Division Director Amy Swenson reviewed in a presentation the extensive history of over 50 parks, trails, playgrounds, amenities, and facilities the Park District has installed, built, acquired, or renovated since 2008. The major Park District programs that have begun since 2008 include: 1) Student Conservation Corps, 2) Trails Crew, 3) invasive species program, 4) outdoor adventure department, 5) signage and branding, 6) trail connections, and 7) events department. In order to accomplish everything the Park District added some efficiencies to operations including: 1) online registration system, 2) vehicle replacement plan for more efficient equipment to reduce labor hours, 3) merged customer service at the Aquatic Center, 4) energy efficiency projects, 5) upgraded accounting software, and 6) new timesheet software. Terry Lande said that compared to where the Park District was in 2008 when the last levy lid lift was passed by voters, staff has taken on a lot including parks, operational issues, programming, and initiatives and as a result the Park District has grown by leaps and bounds. Commissioner DeWitt asked for data on how many miles of trails have been added since 2008, as that is a big factor in personnel costs. Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin said there were 23 miles of trails in 2008 and there are 40 miles of trails today. Commissioner Janow asked how much acreage the Park District has gained since 2008. Senior Planner Perry Barrett said the Park District has added close to 300 acres to the park inventory. Commissioner Janow asked how the ratio of active use to natural and undeveloped areas of parks has changed since 2008. Commissioner Swolgaard said that is not a fair question as nothing other than the Lumpkin property has been left completely undeveloped and vacant, at the very least there are trails going through all the other properties. Dan Hamlin said that Park Services staff had 17 sites to maintain in 2008 and there are now 32. Perry Barrett said in the Park District's 2020 Comprehensive Plan the Park District had a count of 1,300 acres of natural area.

Staffing level comparisons between 2008 and 2019 were presented, data from 2020 was not presented due to impacts on the Park District from the coronavirus pandemic. The Park District had 42 full-time and regular part-time staff positions in 2008 and the same number in 2019. There was some movement between the number of full-time and regular part-time staff positions in each of the three divisions (Administration, Recreation and Park Services). Part-time staff worked 4,319 hours in July of 2008 compared to 11,175 hours worked in July of 2019. Of the hours worked in July of 2019, 855 were attributed to Student Conservation Corps and Trails Crew, both programs that were introduced after 2008. Much of the rest of the increase in part-time hours is attributed to Recreation Division programming. The increase in part-time hours is being managed by the same number of full-time and regular part-time positions. The Park District has become more efficient by purchasing more efficient equipment and adjusting full-time and regular part-time positions to areas in need of emphasis after staff has resigned or retired. Dan Hamlin said one example of increased efficiency is mowing. Staff has been able to reduce the number of hours spent mowing since 2008 by using larger mowing equipment, even with the addition of about 50 acres of park land that needs to be mowed. Commissioner Swolgaard commented that there have not been very many people who have left employment with the Park District voluntarily, rather it has been mostly through retirement. Terry Lande said that some people have also left due to a spouse getting a job somewhere else in the country or in order to

advance above the manager level, as there are few positions above the manager level in the Park District. Commissioner DeWitt said the Park District has a very flat management structure in which there is not a lot of bureaucracy. Recreation Division Director Mark Benishek noted that with basically the same amount of full-time and regular part-time Recreation Division staff since 2008, there has been a 94% increase in revenue from recreation programs. The increase in the part-time hours in the Recreation Division is directly offset by revenue generated by recreation programs. Terry Lande said that while the Park District has been very resilient, staff is now working at maximum capacity and at some point the revenue and expense lines will cross and the Park District will not have the ability to do anything more.

Commissioner Kinney asked what the overall budget was in 2008 compared to today. Amy Swenson said that in 2008 the overall budget was about 5.5 million dollars and now it is about 8.8 million dollars. The increase in the budget is due to increased recreation program revenue and the 2008 levy lid lift revenue which was collected starting in 2009. Dan Hamlin said the most important thing to remember about the 2008 levy lid lift is that 75% of it is not available for operations, as it was determined by the board to be set aside for acquisition and development. In 2009 1.1 million dollars was received from the levy lid lift and that year all that revenue was set aside for acquisition and development. In 2010 levy lid lift revenue decreased to \$665,000 due to the recession. All revenue from the levy lid lift was set aside in 2009 and 2010 for acquisition and development, including the purchase of the Hilltop property and additional property for the Gazzam Lake Nature Preserve. The levy lid lift revenue is now holding steady around \$650,000 per year and the Park District is now using 25% of the revenue for operations. The reduction in revenue from the levy lid lift is due to the dive in assessed value during the recession, as well as the levy lid lift being limited to 1% plus new growth. Commissioner Janow asked what percentage of the Park District's budget comes from levy lid lift revenue. Terry Lande said the levy lid lift accounts for about 8% of the Park District's total budget. Commissioner DeWitt said it is important to know that the Park District is receiving about \$500,000 less than it was in 2009 from the levy lid lift.

Potential capital projects for Sakai Park and the Ray Williamson Replacement Pool were reviewed by Amy Swenson in a presentation, including construction and operation costs. In 2018 a facility condition assessment was done for deferred maintenance needed on all Park District facilities which equal about 70,000 square feet. Facilities were found to be in good to fair condition. Staff is planning to address deferred maintenance through the capital improvement plan over the next ten years. It will cost 7 million dollars to complete all the necessary deferred maintenance on facilities including the Ray Williamson pool and the administration office. Mark Benishek reviewed areas of need in the Recreation Division including: 1) additional support staff for expansion of programs, 2) additional administration assistance to support growth, 3) staff training and education, 4) recreation facilities including indoor covered areas, and 5) equipment and technology. Dan Hamlin talked about Park Services Division staffing needs which include: 1) capital improvement project staff, 2) regional park staff, 3) trail staff, 4) assistant planner, 5) permitting expeditor, 6) landscape architect, and 7) forest coordinator. Other needs for the Park Services Division include: 1) office space, 2) equipment to promote efficiency, 3) support equipment for any new staff, 4) increased materials and supplies including funding for fuel and utilities, 5) administrative support, 6) maintenance management software system, 7) newer vehicles and equipment, and 8) more indoor and outdoor space for the maintenance shop. Amy Swenson covered Administration Division needs including: 1) additional skilled staff for human resources, purchasing and accounting; 2) additional executive, records, and accounting support staff; 3) additional and more conducive office space, and 5) additional equipment and software systems.

Amy Swenson said the Park District's current levy lid lift rate is at 59 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. If the levy lid lift was to be raised to the maximum of 75 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value, the Park District would bring in about 1.49 million dollars of additional revenue per year based on current assessed values. Commissioner DeWitt asked if 75% of the 1.49 million dollars would have to go to acquisition and development. Amy Swenson said that would depend on how the board decides to encumber it. Commissioner Kinney recapped that the levy lid lift is currently at 59 cents per \$1,000 of assessed

value, of which 75% goes to acquisition and development and 25% to operations. The increase to 75 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value would mean an increase of 16 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value, which could be unrestricted if the board chooses. Terry Lande said in 2005 when the metro park district was approved by voters the levy lid lift was set at 75 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. In 2008 the levy lid lift valuation had gone down to 62 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value and was approved by voters to be raised back up to 75 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. The Park District has not had a levy lid lift since 2008. Once a levy lid lift is established it goes from a set number of cents per \$1,000 of assessed value to a dollar amount.

Commissioner Kinney asked what the mechanism is for proceeding with a levy lid lift. Terry Lande said the mechanism is that it must be approved by a simple majority of Bainbridge Island voters. If a levy lid lift is approved by voters in 2021 the levy lid lift funds would be received by the Park District starting in 2022. If the board decides to take the levy lid lift to the voters in 2021 there are still two election cycles for which the board could decide to put a levy lid lift on the ballot, one in August and one in November. The Park District begins the budget process for the following year in September, therefore if staff knew in August if a levy lid lift was passed by voters, staff would only have to make one budget for 2022 rather than one for if the levy lid lift passed and one for if it failed in November. Commissioner Kinney said it clearly makes sense to put the levy lid lift to the voters in August rather than November and asked if there is enough time to meet the May deadline for a resolution from the board. Terry Lande said there is enough time to meet that deadline. Commissioner Swolgaard asked if any other local agencies will be putting requests for funding on the ballot at the same time. Terry Lande said that he is not aware of any. Commissioner Janow said that she knows no action can be taken at this meeting but asked if any commissioners objected to moving forward to discuss a levy lid lift. Commissioner Kinney said if the levy lid lift was approved to be increased again to 75 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value that increase would generate 1.49 million in additional revenue which would help tremendously with addressing identified Park District needs. Amy Swenson said that if the board were to decide to move forward with either the Sakai Park or Ray Williamson Replacement Pool potential capital projects, at this time the Park District would not be able to operate them within the current budget structure. Commissioner Janow said from her perspective the Park District needs to address staffing to maintain the quality of the Park District and that she would be in favor of proceeding with a levy lid lift. Commissioner Swolgaard asked how much the current levy lid lift increases every year. Amy Swenson said the increase is limited to 1% plus new construction which is typically about \$120,000. Commissioner Cox said she is in favor of a levy lid lift because more revenue is needed.

Commissioner Cox asked if the Park District is capped at 75 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value and if there are any other funding options. While 1.49 million dollars may sound like a lot, in the grand scheme of things and considering identified needs it would be used up very quickly. Terry Lande said revenue from a levy lid lift is capped at 75 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. Amy Swenson said one of the few other options is to go through the City of Bainbridge Island to enact an ordinance for one-time impact fees on new development. Perry Barrett said another option would be going through Kitsap County for a Real Estate Excise Tax which is a tax collected on real estate at the time of sale. The Park District would have to apply to Kitsap County to receive funding if funds are available, as the Park District is not eligible to directly impose and collect this tax. Commissioner DeWitt said that the board has previously checked into impact fees and learned that the administration of such a program can cost as much or more money than is received. Commissioner Swolgaard said the School District tried using impact fees and gave it up. Terry Lande said he believes a levy lid lift would get the Park District through the next 10-15 years at which time another levy lid lift might be appropriate. Commissioner Swolgaard said the Park District can also raise fees to create more capital, although he thinks some Park District fees are relatively high now. Terry Lande said it is important for fees to remain community friendly. Another possibility for future funding is if the state legislature decides to move forward with giving local agencies the ability to pass a ballot measure for 1/10 of 1 percent of sales tax revenue. Commissioner Janow said the levy lid lift could happen more quickly than any of these other options. Terry Lande said staff has gotten very strategic about what Park District needs are and that if the board decides to go out

for a levy lid lift it would be communicated to voters that the levy lid lift is to address staffing and operational needs. The other area where there may be need is if the board decides to move forward with the potential Sakai Park or Ray Williamson Replacement Pool capital projects. While the Park District does not have the ability to pay for operation and maintenance of these projects within the current budget, levy lid lift funds would be able to facilitate the operation and maintenance of them.

Commissioner Swolgaard said there needs to be more discussion of a possible levy lid lift in regular board meetings to get public input. Commissioner DeWitt said that any serious discussion and any decision the board makes regarding a levy lid lift would have to be at a regular board meeting when it is an agenda item. Today the board can decide if this is something they want to pursue further and if they decide to proceed it will need to be on an agenda soon. Commissioner Cox said it should be discussed further and soon as an agenda item at a regular board meeting. Commissioner Kinney agreed that the board needs to have the levy lid lift as an agenda item at a regular board meeting so there is notice to the community and said that it should be worked on with great dispatch. Commissioner Janow directed Terry Lande to put the levy lid lift on an agenda for a regular board meeting considering the May deadline for a resolution from the board to have a levy lid lift on the ballot in August. Commissioner Swolgaard said to keep in mind that the Park District has paid off a few bonds in the last few years and estimated that 16 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value is about \$240 on a 1.5-million-dollar house. He knows that is a lot of money but does not think that it is a lot for what people get out of the Park District. The Park District could probably sell a levy lid lift to the community if the money is needed.

Commissioner Janow asked how the board wants to move forward with the Sakai Park and Ray Williamson Replacement Pool capital project advisory committees. Commissioner Kinney said there is interest from the community in moving forward and talking about the options and what to do for both Sakai Park and the Ray Williamson Replacement Pool capital projects. Even if the Park District does not decide to go to the voters for bonds for a few years, it is going to take a lot of lead time to educate people, have discussions with the School District regarding the Aquatic Center as well as to talk about what to do, when to do it, what goes first and how to pay for it. Commissioner Cox concurred that it would be good to get the advisory committees working doing research and being proactive as it will be a long process; she knows the aquatics community would love to be involved and hopefully one day see a new pool. She said a 50-meter pool could make a lot of money, as the 50-meter pool in Federal Way costs \$7,000 per day to rent. Commissioner DeWitt said it seems to him that for the advisory committees to work they need to be able to meet in person because it is tough to do anything substantial virtually, as the board has experienced firsthand during the last year dealing with the logistics of meeting virtually. He asked if anyone knows when groups will be able to meet in public again. Mark Benishek said that currently informal groups can meet with up to a certain percentage of room or facility capacity if social distancing guidelines are followed and participants wear masks. As our region trends towards the possibility of moving to Phase III in the Healthy Washington Plan the hope is that the capacity percentage will increase.

Commissioner Janow asked if the advisory committees should begin work before the possible levy lid lift or after so that the Park District is aware of whether there is even going to be funding available to operate potential capital projects. Terry Lande said the Park District should plan to reinstate the advisory committees in the fall. Commissioner Kinney said he believes some preliminary work can be done to set up the membership for the advisory committees and educate people about requirements and the process; that can be put in place before the advisory committees begin to meet in person which according to current projections could be as early as this summer. Terry Lande said his concern is that having the advisory committees for capital projects and a levy lid lift campaign happen concurrently could cause confusion between the levy lid lift and any future bond measures. A levy lid lift is important not only for continuing to run the Park District at status quo but for operational and maintenance funding for the potential capital projects. A 50-meter pool costs \$7,000 a day to rent because that is what it costs to operate and then some. Amy Swenson said her concern is staffing availability to

support both advisory committees and a possible levy lid lift. Mark Benishek concurred staff availability may be an issue as the Park District moves into the busiest months of the year which are in the summer, although staff will find a way to make it work if that is what the board decides. Dan Hamlin said the Park District is limited by a cap on the total dollar amount of bond measures it can go out for. Amy Swenson explained that there is a statutory limit on how much the Park District can bond which is based on assessed value on the island, which is currently 9.9 billion dollars. She will research the actual numbers for how much voted on debt and non-voted on debt the Park District can accrue. She believes the number is large, but she is not sure it is big enough for both potential capital projects. Commissioner Janow proposed that if the board decides to pursue the levy lid lift that the Park District begin work with the advisory committees after the August election, depending on the results of the levy lid lift vote. Commissioner DeWitt said that the Park District needs to be careful about confusing the levy lid lift with the bond issues because if the board decides to move forward on capital projects it needs to be able to show it can responsibly operate them; therefore energy should be concentrated on the levy lid lift first to have operational funding in place so that the advisory committees are not an exercise in futility. Commissioner Kinney agreed that it makes sense to wait to begin work with the advisory committees until after the Park District knows what is going on with the levy lid lift. Commissioner DeWitt said he believes that people will understand if the Park District explains what it is doing and why. Commissioner Janow said the board is in general agreement that it will hold off on the advisory committees until the levy lid lift process concludes, at which time the board will decide how to proceed.

Commissioner Janow asked commissioners to share their priorities and ideas for the Park District. Commissioner DeWitt said that several years ago the Greening Winslow plan was commissioned, and the Park District needs to make recreation space in Winslow a priority. As more and more new development continues to be concentrated in Winslow the board needs to keep in their focus that work still needs to be done to figure out and meet the needs of the core to meet the needs of the island as a whole. With sustainable transportation initiatives and climate change it is important to have facilities people can walk and bicycle to. Commissioner Cox said her focus is the Aquatic Center and starting the Ray Williamson Replacement Pool advisory committee. Commissioner Swolgaard said that he agrees with both Commissioner DeWitt and Commissioner Cox and said one of the reasons Sakai Park was purchased was to help fill the need in the Winslow area. He is concerned about infrastructure and maintenance needs and taking care of what the Park District already has, the more that can be done in this area the better off the Park District will be. Commissioner Kinney said when a topic comes up at a board meeting someone always says they did not hear about it before the meeting. The Park District should review notice protocols to see if there is anything additional that can be done or improved to make sure notice gets out to the people who end up mad about a new proposal. Commissioner Janow said her biggest concern is continued attention to climate change, therefore bringing a forester or similar position on staff is important to her to help guide the agency and to protect what the Park District has.

Commissioner Janow said the Park District's website could be improved for communication with the community regarding how to bring a new project forward, as it is not necessarily written out and would help the community understand the process. Dan Hamlin said the Park District has a Capital Projects Proposals from Outside Groups policy for new projects that do not exist within the Park District's budget. The first step in the process for capital project proposals is for the user group to make a public comment at a regular board meeting. If a board member says they are interested in hearing more about the topic staff is directed to investigate if it matches the Park District's mission, if there is funding, if there is an appropriate place for it, if there is a need and a user group, and how it impacts the community. If staff finds that an idea has merit they will report back to the board and if the board agrees to look further into it staff will continue to review the merits and develop a plan to propose to the board for initial review. After initial review by the board, the board can direct staff to answer more questions or decide not to proceed. If the board decides to proceed there will be additional meeting(s) to address the community before a decision is made. Although there is a long process to get something approved by the board, even when the board is nowhere near deciding staff is always accused of not being transparent. Commissioner

Kinney asked for confirmation that before a board meeting the agenda is published on the Park District website, sent to the Bainbridge Island Review, and sent to the people who have opted to be on the agenda distribution list. Staff confirmed that those are ways that the agenda is distributed. He asked if it would help to have a webpage devoted to proposed projects under review by the board, although he does not know if it is possible to get rid of all the negative responses. People who are mad are still going to be mad and one of the first things they say is that they were not informed, and the Park District may never be able to get rid of that type of response. Terry Lande said that he is not sure that will address the problem of people saying they were not informed because while it is simple for a user group to bring a proposal to the board it is challenging to actively find the groups early in the process that may be against a proposal. The people that come out against a project will probably not go looking for information they do not know to look for. Staff has investigated the idea of sending out the agenda to the entire Park District email contact list every other week, but there was quite a bit of pushback from people who did not want to get more emails. Terry Lande said that a proposed project needs an interest group and part of the process is making the public aware of the proposal. People come out to speak either in support or opposition to a proposal and even when they are angry you must embrace that, because that is the process. Commissioner DeWitt said that the process is not always pretty. Terry Lande said it is important to the process that it is not always pretty, in fact that may indicate that it is a good process if everyone gets to be heard before a decision is made. Commissioner Swolgaard asked about sending mailers as the City of Bainbridge Island does for public hearings to nearby neighbors within so many feet of a piece of property. Terry Lande said that only happens after the process has begun. Dan Hamlin said when the board comes to a point where they want to prepare to decide on a project the Park District does send mailers to neighbors for public hearings. Terry Lande said he is open to all suggestions for ways to get notice out to all interested parties.

Commissioner Janow said it is hard to battle misinformation on social media, which can spin out of control. It would be nice to have a webpage on the website where commissioners can point constituents to get the facts on a proposed project. Dan Hamlin said misinformation is a problem, but a webpage may not address the issue as some people continue to spread misinformation even after being presented with the facts by staff. Commissioner Janow agreed that there will always be people who spin an issue with misinformation, but that when the public hears the facts directly from a commissioner it is helpful in tamping down some of the angst. Terry Lande said the Park District is trying to combat misinformation on social media and maybe the answer is to post on Park District social media that the public can visit the proposed new webpage to get the facts directly. Commissioner Janow suggested that the Park District develop the proposed new webpage to post the facts that people can be directed to and that the Park District will have to just let social media sites do what they do, as she does not want staff to start getting involved on social media. Mark Benishek said the proposal for making a webpage for projects under review is doable but that attempting to communicate about them on social media would be a full-time job and that there is no way to control the narrative on that type of platform.

Mark Benishek showed the board how information regarding the mountain bike trail proposal is currently being presented on the homepage of the Park District's website. Commissioner Janow said she has been directing people to read the minutes from the February 18 board meeting where a lot of questions were answered during the presentation. Terry Lande said staff will add the minutes that apply to the proposed mountain bike trails as well as an email address to which people can submit questions regarding the proposal. The questions can then be addressed in a document that will be regularly updated and posted on the homepage. Dan Hamlin said he thinks these ideas are great but asked when the posting of a proposed project would begin, the proposed mountain bike trails project began as an idea in 2018. Terry Lande suggested posting a proposed project once the interest group has made a formal presentation to the board. Dan Hamlin said that is what staff is doing on the homepage, but people are still saying that the Park District is moving too fast and that they have not been properly informed. Terry Lande said he does not think the Park District can fix the notion that a special interest group will be ahead of the people who are opposed to a proposal, because people cannot get upset until they are made

aware of a proposal. Commissioner Kinney said the Park District may just have to accept that this may be a problem without a solution, because until there is a proposal there is nothing to say about it and yet there is always going to be someone who says they should have heard about it sooner; even though a proposal will always be vetted and changed before and if there is ever a final project. Terry Lande agreed and said he is afraid that is the case.

Terry Lande said staff will add a new webpage to the website for the Capital Projects Proposals from Outside Groups policy that also explains the project proposal process, as well as posting a link to it for context next to specific projects that are posted on the homepage. Commissioner Janow said that would be great and in addition asked about posting information on the new webpage about how fundraising is handled for the proposed projects. Commissioner DeWitt said that is a good point and not knowing that could be a cause of misinformation that taxpayers are footing the bill for proposed projects. Dan Hamlin said that the Capital Projects Proposals from Outside Groups policy covers funding. It says that if a project is a recognized Park District need and it is identified before the budget process the Park District can choose to put funding towards it, otherwise the user group has to come up with all the funding if the project is approved. However, if the project proposal process lasts long enough to go through a budget cycle it may be discussed and approved by the board to put taxpayer funding towards a project. Commissioner DeWitt recommended keeping it simple for people who are trying to get some quick information. Commissioner Janow said the ability to have a platform and being practiced at dispersing information will be important if the board decides to move forward with a levy lid lift or eventually go out for a bond.

Terry Lande reviewed topics for future board discussions. Climate change was mentioned today, and he believes that is an issue that staff is aware of and that the board will want to address once they are able to meet in person again. Dan Hamlin will eventually need to make a presentation to the board regarding what a forest management position would address and be responsible for. How the Park District is going to manage Pritchard Park needs to be addressed including use by people, rules regarding dogs, and how to handle vehicle and maintenance access. Perry Barrett will be making a presentation to the board to make sure the Park District board has a voice in the City of Bainbridge Island's Shoreline Management Plan, which is currently under review for an update. Electric bikes on trails needs to be addressed by the board eventually. Another topic that needs to be addressed is future trail issues with the Bainbridge Island Parks Foundation, private citizens, the Bainbridge Island Land Trust and how the interlocal agreement for trails with the City of Bainbridge Island is moving forward. On the March 18 regular board meeting agenda there will be a presentation from Bainbridge Island Football Club regarding proposed lighting of the artificial turf fields at Battle Point Park. The last time the board had a conversation about lighting of the artificial turf fields at Battle Point Park was thirteen years ago. On the April 1 regular board meeting agenda there will possibly be an update on the proposal for mountain bike trails in the Grand Forest North. The levy lid lift will also be on the agenda on one of those two nights A presentation from the interest group proposing tennis courts to be built at Sakai Park may be on the agenda for the April 15 regular board meeting.

Commissioner Kinney said the proposed mountain bike trails project is interesting to think about as an exercise in getting things done with the various values the board has to balance. The Park District's mission statement includes providing recreation and yet as a park there is pressure to protect the environment and conservation values as well as to deal with neighbors. There is a group that needs recreation, neighbors who do not want change at the park, hikers who both use and do not use the park as well as environmentalists who think the park should not be disturbed. The board must compare and weigh these issues and giving them the proper weights is part of deciding how to proceed. If conservation trumps everything the Park District will never be able to build another trail, if recreation trumps everything places will be leveled for ballfields. He would like to talk about how the board balances opposing philosophies, as that is what the decision comes down to. Terry Lande said how people interpret the intent behind why property was acquired is also an issue and that opposing philosophies about how it is best to steward the forest is a challenge. Commissioner Kinney said whether or not the board discusses this, commissioners will all have to think it through because weighing these competing values is what

the decision comes down to. Either way the board will make a large group of people unhappy. Commissioner DeWitt agreed and said that making these decisions is part of what the job of a commissioner is.

Dan Hamlin said the City of Bainbridge Island's Sustainable Transportation Plan is starting to ramp up and Park District staff has been informed that the City Council is looking at Park District trails as opportunities to increase connections for non-motorized routes. The board needs to be ready to be asked to apply different standards to Park District trails.

Commissioner Janow said that while most people do not know the difference between Park District and City of Bainbridge Island trails, this will further blur that line. Commissioner DeWitt said the board will have to be diligent about communicating what the purpose of Park District trails is, which is essentially recreational use and to connect into communities. The City of Bainbridge Island has a different perspective for their trails. Making a clear distinction between the purposes, philosophies, and who has authority over which trail will be essential to the conversation. The City of Bainbridge Island is looking at trails as transportation and that is only one part of how the Park District views trails. Commissioner Janow said that the Park District does not even have transportation in its mission statement. Terry Lande said there are opposing philosophies between the two agencies on stewardship, control of stewardship as well as isolation of stewardship, not unlike the fact that the Bainbridge Island Land Trust has a different view of stewardship. The Park District is supposed to blend recreation with stewardship and does not steward land to go unused by humans. The board gets to decide what stewardship looks like for the Park District including how to merge stewardship of parks with use by people and determining the right park for a specific kind of activity. A tough part of the job of being a commissioner is that a commissioner must apply their values and beliefs for how a piece of property should be utilized.

Commissioner Swolgaard said the Park District needs to work on relationships with the Bainbridge Island Land Trust, the City of Bainbridge Island, and the School District to work better together. Commissioner DeWitt said this issue is tied to the fact that different agencies have different missions and that building relationships is a long process. While the Park District's current relationship with the City of Bainbridge Island is not perfect it has gotten better, although now there is a new City Manager coming in and the relationship will have to be rebuilt. A big part of the process is to let staff work at the staff level because that is where the work gets done. Terry Lande said the Park District has by far the best working relationship staff to staff that it has ever had with the City of Bainbridge Island. The Park District also has good working relationships with the Fire District, School District, and the Bainbridge Island Land Trust. There are times where an agency's mission statement must override personal issues. You cannot build anything without a team and that is where the Park District is strong, the team is incredibly strong from the board to the staff and with patrons. There will be differences of opinion sometimes but that is okay. Commissioner DeWitt said the negotiations with the Bainbridge Island Land Trust over the Hilltop property are a good example of that. There were strong differences of opinion, but the agencies worked through it and are stronger because of it. Commissioner Swolgaard said that he does not want to roll over on issues just because another agency wants something a different way. However, in the past it has taken a lot of time to fix the Park District's relationship with the Bainbridge Island Land Trust due to differences of opinion over the Hilltop property. He does not want to go through that again and said there must be a balance. Commissioner DeWitt said that looking at and protecting the Park District's mission is important, as the Park District's mission is more global than some of the organizations that it deals with. Commissioner Swolgaard said the Park District board must look out for the greater good of the community because that is who the board represents. Commissioner DeWitt said there was a contingent of people who were using the Hilltop property before it became public and they were not happy about the change, but it was done for the greater good of the island. Commissioner Janow said that populations change, they are fluid, they fluctuate and are dynamic and that each generation perspective changes, and current needs must be assessed.

Loanne Harmeling thanked staff for outlining everything that has been done by the Park District since 2008, which was enlightening. She appreciated the conversation about posting the process by which project proposals are submitted for

board consideration and would like to know more about it. She said the interest group which she represents that is proposing two tennis courts to be built in Sakai Park would like to be on the agenda for the April 15 regular board meeting.

Kirk Robinson said that regarding the discussion about giving notice to the public, you can control the notice, but you cannot control the narrative. It is important to get the notice out, so people know the Park District is trying even if it is on social media or kiosks. When he was on the board there were discussions about using email contact lists that allow people to sign up for notices related to specific parks or areas of the island and that could be considered again. The biggest thing people complained about was not getting notice ahead of time, and when trying to anticipate which projects need notice given to the public it is better to err on the side of getting notice out. Regarding opportunities for raising money, a lot of it starts with the current budget, because the budget can only increase by 1% plus new growth every year. As that happens the assessed valuations continue to shift an individual's tax burden. It is important to note that the millage rate will always go down because the budget tends to go up at a slower rate than inflation of assessed valuations and that is how you get the gap of going from 75 cents per \$1,000 dollars of assessed value to 59 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. It is a good idea to look at having a levy lid lift and he encouraged the board to think of specific things like the acquisition and development component of the previous levy lid lift as it is prepared. An excess levy is another way to raise tax dollars, an excess levy is a one-year levy for very specific things, mostly maintenance and operations and is worth looking into. Impact fees can only be used for things which are a direct result of the development that is going in and cannot be used for making up a deficit in an existing level of service. Selling Park District swag to the public is an idea for generating revenue. Given that the Aquatic Center is a big piece of the budget in terms of both what it brings in and what it costs to run, and knowing that there are at least a couple of places in the state that have metro park districts specifically for pools, perhaps there could be a separate metro park district created for the Aquatic Center. This separate metro park district board could possibly run under the same board as the other metro park district, as there are cities such as Seattle and Cheney where the city council also serves as the metro park board. It is worth considering so that everything does not have to fit within the same cap on number of cents collected per \$1,000 of assessed value. One easy way to look at part-time staffing levels is in full-time equivalents. What was astounding to him, and he did not realize how well it was managed, was that from 2008 to 2019 there was the same number of full-time and regular part-time staff and part-time hours only increased by a little over three full-time equivalents. A lot of the part-time positions are for recreation programming and therefore they are offset by user fees and not funded by taxpayer dollars. It is important to realize that what Terry Lande did starting from the time the metro park district was formed was take every full-time or regular part-time position vacancy that came up and not simply replace the same position. He looked at the whole agency and what was needed, which helped change the culture of the agency and helped direct resources to where they were needed, and that is a good way to do things. Regarding the distinction Commissioner Janow was looking for as to whether parks are considered active or passive use, having ballfields as opposed to trails is one way to distinguish what kind of park is being looked at. The efforts from the Park Services crew never leave any park behind, however the effort put into active use park areas such as the south end of Battle Point Park is much greater than the effort being put into parks with only trails such as the Grand Forest North, as far as work requirements.

David Maron said that if the public could all hear the board talk as they have in these three hours about how they want to manage parks in thoughtful ways and try to get folks recreating they would see that the right questions are being asked and there is not a lot of hubris in the room. Regarding the conversation about how to let people know what is going on there are lots of options such as Wake Up Bainbridge or live streaming on Facebook. At the end of the day what he noticed is a lot of good questions being asked today and he is thankful for the process. The amount of people who showed up to comment on the proposed mountain bike trails in the Grand Forest North at the February 18 board meeting is an indication of how big trail riding is on the island; maybe that scared people but it is pretty cool that there is so much interest especially from youth. He thanked the board for their forward thinking about how to manage the immense amount of land for horseback riders, walkers, and bikers.

Commissioner Swolgaard said this was a good meeting and he enjoyed it. Commissioner Kinney said it was remarkable to see the presentation of all the work that has been done and the things that have been accomplished in the last 13 years; it is quite a legacy for Bainbridge Island. Commissioner DeWitt said if all the new trails that have been added were included in the presentation there would have been even more accomplishments to cover. It is amazing how far the Park District has come and seeing it has helped him to re-establish perspective. Commissioner Janow said she is honored to work with the fantastic group of people present today and she is humbled to share ideas and help move the agency forward.

**MEETING ADJOURNED** at 1:22 pm.

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

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

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Kristine Cox

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

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

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jay C. Kinney