

**BAINBRIDGE ISLAND METROPOLITAN PARK & RECREATION DISTRICT  
 REGULAR BOARD MEETING FEBRUARY 18, 2021  
 ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

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

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

**ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA:** Add an Executive Session at the end of the meeting for ten minutes to discuss real estate.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Peter Murchie is a Bainbridge Island community member, parent, avid user of parks and facilities and president of the Bainbridge Island Football Club. BIFC appreciates the efforts of the board and staff for the time they generously invest to make Bainbridge Island a great place to live and play. In the complex and trying time of the coronavirus pandemic what the Park District delivers has never been more important. BIFC has had a strong partnership with the Park District over the years including the installation of turf fields 4 and 5 at Battle Point Park and recreational soccer programming. Historically projects such as the turf fields, hockey rink, disc golf course and pickleball courts have been created through innovative funding sources and private fundraising. Outdoor activities face a growing challenge from population growth for access to field space, especially in the winter. BIFC has been working with partners to develop an opportunity to expand field space availability at Battle Point Park by installing state of the art lighting for fields 4 and 5. They request twenty minutes at the March 4 board meeting to present a proposal and to get input and ideas to address historic concerns and the positive impact the plan would have for the sporting community. They believe the confluence of community needs, technology know-how, and funding wherewithal can create something of immense benefit for the sporting population and the Bainbridge Island community.

**BOARD CONSENT**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Upon making the following revisions to the minutes of the February 4, 2021 regular board meeting, Chair Janow stated the minutes stand approved as corrected: On page 4 at the end of the third line replace “for” with “to address.”

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

Batch Date	Fund Number & Name	Warrant Numbers	Total Batch Amt	Pre-Approved
02/02/21	001 General Fund 300 Capital Improvement Fund	20961-20983	28,503.55	02/02/21
02/09/21	001 General Fund 300 Capital Improvement Fund	21014-21022	20,541.17	02/09/21
02/16/21	001 General Fund 300 Capital Improvement Fund 310 Land Acquisition Fund	21025-21062	85,563.71	02/16/21

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**GRAND FOREST NORTH MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS:** Commissioner Janow said this is the first time the board has seen the Grand Forest North mountain bike trails proposal. Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin reiterated that tonight is the first time the board is seeing the proposal, which first came to the Trails Advisory Committee. The Trails Advisory Committee has worked through some details to be able to bring this proposal forward to the board including doing research on the site. Preliminary work to develop the proposal was done with Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance and Gear

Grinders. In 2006 the Park District had nearly 20 miles of trails, the Grand Forest North multiuse loop trail was blocked off by many downed trees. At that time, the Park District did not have the resources to reopen the multiuse loop trail because of the work being done to upgrade other major Park District trails at Gazzam Lake Nature Preserve and in other areas of the Grand Forest. The ¾ of a mile multiuse loop trail in the Grand Forest North was reopened by the Park District in 2010. The Gear Grinders volunteered to help the Park District reopen the multiuse loop trail for public use with the understanding that they would be allowed to use it for some of their practices. The Gear Grinders are a huge part of the Park District's trail volunteer work force, working at nearly all the Park District's trail work parties on everything from multiuse trails to those that cannot even be used by mountain bikes. This proposal is for an internal, mountain bike specific trail system inside the current Grand Forest North multiuse loop trail. The current loop trail would remain a multiuse trail. Discussions began in October 2018 and in March 2019 there was a meeting at the site to see if the terrain would work. In December 2019 a critical areas study was completed, and no critical areas were found on the site. This topic was slated to be brought before the board in March of 2020, about the time the coronavirus pandemic shutdown started. The topic was delayed in hopes of being able to handle it at an in-person meeting. Park District board meetings are still being held virtually and it is unknown how long virtual meetings will continue, meanwhile the need for mountain bike specific trails has increased and there are currently no dedicated mountain bike trails on the island. Dan Hamlin thanked the public for attending tonight, as he is aware there is a lot of concern about this topic.

John Benjes, president of Bainbridge Island Mountain Biking Club and a coach with the Gear Grinders, said mountain biking is growing in popularity everywhere including here on Bainbridge Island. Nearly 600 individual youth participants have enrolled in Park District mountain bike programs in the last five years, and the Gear Grinders' teams have grown over the last 7-8 years. This represents just part of a much larger mountain bike community. The proposed design allows for the preservation of the existing multiuse loop trail while adding a component to accommodate the growth of the sport and the need for mountain bikers to use mountain bike specific trails. Currently mountain bikers must leave the island to ride mountain bike specific trails, and he believes there should be some on Bainbridge Island and that Grand Forest North is a good place for them. The role of the Bainbridge Island Mountain Bike Club and the Gear Grinders would be to reach out to the larger mountain bike community on Bainbridge Island to develop a strong relationship for the future. There are a lot of very skilled mountain bike trail builders on the island and they will show up to volunteer for this project; they will also do fundraising to cover most expenses beyond volunteer labor. This project is all about creating a place for kids and families to learn to mountain bike and to enjoy for years to come.

Trails Director Mike Westra with Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance has had experience building several mountain bike parks and he has also been involved in back country trail projects. The perimeter multiuse loop trail would remain a standard multiuse trail but would be pushed closer to the edge of the property in some places in this proposal. The proposed inner mountain bike specific trails are focused on kids, families, and beginners to provide an environment where users can have fun learning with the opportunity for progression of skills. The proposed mountain bike trails have been designed but can be fine-tuned as they are built to fit both the environmental features and the needs of the riders. The design used is called a stack loop, to allow for loops to offer a variety of experiences in a small space and to elongate the trail ride experience by repeating parts of the loop and then riding additional parts. The design is kid and student friendly, with optional features for progression. Risk management best practices were considered during the design process to reduce risk and user conflict including using speed control features and maintaining visibility. There is also a skills zone in the proposed plan with optional features that can be used to build a rider's skill level.

Dan Hamlin emphasized that the outer multiuse loop trail would remain a multiuse trail, as it is today. A mountain biker can choose to enter or exit the internal loop system. Commissioner DeWitt asked about the inner trail that is labeled as multiuse in the proposed plan. Dan Hamlin replied that it is a one-way only mountain bike trail where the rider would be going uphill,

therefore a pedestrian could safely use the trail at the same time. Commissioner Cox said she thinks the proposal is fantastic and asked if there could be a single multiuse trail through the middle. Mike Westra said that because the mountain bikers would only be going one way and always be climbing the risk for collision or user conflict is very low. Commissioner Janow asked about intersection points between the multiuse loop trail and the mountain bike specific trails. Mike Westra said there would be some features such as chicanes to prevent high speeds at intersections as well as signage so that a user must make a conscious decision to enter the mountain bike trail area. Dan Hamlin said that the mountain bike trails will be designed to slow down the mountain bikers so there is always a deliberate action to enter or exit the area. Executive Director Terry Lande said it would be apparent not only to mountain bikers, but any other user that they are entering an area where mountain bikes are more prevalent. Terry Lande asked for confirmation that while there would be some adjustments to the perimeter multiuse loop trail, that no trails are being taken away, as the proposed mountain bike trails do not exist today. Dan Hamlin confirmed that statement as true. Commissioner Kinney asked if Dan Hamlin has walked where the new trails would be and how long it would take to get it permitted. Dan Hamlin said he has walked the area and confirmed that the schematic is accurate and that since no critical areas were indicated by the critical areas study it would be the shortest possible timeline for permitting. Commissioner Kinney asked how long it would take to build the mountain bike trails. Mike Westra said the timeline will depend on the budget and volunteer power. If built by staff the work could be done in a couple of months, if it is done with volunteer power it could be closer to a year. Dan Hamlin said that parking is intended to remain on Koura Road, as Hart Lane is a private drive and that no areas of Grand Forest North qualify as wetlands, as confirmed by the critical areas study. Commissioner Janow thanked everyone who has already sent in comments to the commissioners regarding this project, as community engagement is critical to the work of both staff and commissioners.

Dave Joslin, coach for the Gear Grinders, thanked the board for entertaining this option and said it is very impressive to see the work that Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance has done. He said that Bainbridge Island is an awesome place because of the partnership Gear Grinders has had with the Park District. Club members do a lot to build and maintain trails on the island, and he believes people would volunteer to build and maintain the mountain bike trails proposed tonight. Gear Grinders volunteers have been working to maintain trails throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Grand Forest North has the most technical trails in the Park District's trail system and is already being used by mountain bikers for skill building. Adding mountain bike trails will enhance the usefulness of this land. He emphasized his support for the project and hopes they can help build it soon.

Nolan Joslin is a student rider with the Gear Grinders and has been a team captain for four years. He said that this would be nice to have to allow for more mountain bike trail time without the need to drive off the island. It is difficult for students to get off the island to mountain bike specific trails on school days due to the added driving time. He said the trails in this proposal seem very repeatable. He is willing to volunteer to build it and he will encourage other Gear Grinders members and maybe even his neighbors to help as well.

Kelly Muldrow, a coach with Gear Grinders, said that he and his son began their mountain bike careers at the same time. He said there are a lot of wonderful trails bikes can use on the island, specifically in the Grand Forest and at Gazzam Lake Nature Preserve. He believes that the status of mountain bikers sharing the trails with other users currently proves that they can share the trails without having it be a negative experience for other user groups. The mountain bike specific trails would allow mountain bikers to progress in their skill sets, as learning and keeping up skills requires specific practice. Features such as little jumps, little drops and steep descents don't exist on a multiuse trail. He does worry about conflict between bikers and other trail users and said that technical training is important to have in a specific and safe place where there will be less opportunity for conflict with other trail users.

Kent Salisbury said that the Park District has done a marvelous job in planning this and while he is an experienced road and mountain biker, he is also an experienced horseman. He is aware of both the thrills and the risks of these activities. The Grand Forest is a wonderful multiuse resource with no restricted areas. Yielding procedures between different user groups on the trails is clearly defined for multiuse. He is concerned about cordoning off a segment of the Grand Forest for a single use. He said that horse people are not intolerable to cyclists, but horses are flight animals. He reviewed some horse body language and a horse's ability to sense its surroundings. He said that horses have been a part of Bainbridge Island life for generations and an important use of horses on the island is for therapeutic riding. He is concerned about things that could startle the horses and lead to possible accidents. He said that putting mountain bike specific trails in the Grand Forest North will restrict access when there are other mountain bike courses available elsewhere. He is concerned that riders will leave the mountain bike course and pose a risk to other users. It changes the character of the forest from a leisurely and therapeutic multiuse experience to a speed course with injury risks.

Duncan McIntosh, a community member, parent, and Gear Grinders coach, is excited for the prospect of having dedicated mountain bike trails on the island. Mountain biking is an activity that his children do and that they do as a family. Multiuse trails on the island are great, but they do not have features to permit a rider to develop skills. To ride mountain bike specific trails, they must leave the island. The Grand Forest North is a perfect place for mountain bike specific trails due to its size and the elevation change. The mountain bike community is growing and demand for this project is only going to grow too. He likes the multiuse trail concept generally used on the island but could not be more enthusiastic about this project, which he believes will benefit both mountain bikers and other user groups.

Jim Phillips, a Gear Grinders coach, shared that the recent Park District investments in disc golf, pickleball, playgrounds and dog parks all create social spaces that build community. Bikers can be solitary by nature. Dedicated trails will not only cut down on rouge trail building but will help the mountain bike community to come together as they build, maintain, and share something they are passionate about.

Tim Wentzel, representing Squeaky Wheels, said he lives near the Grand Forest North and sometimes rides in it on his mountain bike and sometimes he walks his dog there. It is very useful to have a space where one can get off the street and ride in the woods to promote bike riding for kids. The pump track at Battle Point Park is for little kids and the proposed mountain bike trails would be the next level up. As we look to reduce carbon emissions and get the next generation interested in other modes of transportation, why not give people a chance to ride mountain bikes on the island without having to drive for 40 minutes. He thinks a lot of accommodations for things such as line of sight were made in this design. He has heard nothing but good things from all the training done by the Gear Grinders. Squeaky Wheels has been supportive of Gear Grinders in their effort to promote kids having fun riding bikes outside and said this is another use for a kind of underutilized area. He supports the reduction of carbon emissions, additional activities for kids and better use of a park for more people.

Charmelle Poole is the volunteer horse community representative on the Trails Advisory Committee. She thanked the mountain bike community for their volunteer work on trails which benefits all user groups. She moved to Bainbridge Island in 1975 when people could ride their horses on the road with no problems. Today one rarely sees a horse on the road as it is too dangerous and the only safe place to have a trail experience is in public parks. She knows this is a Pandora's box dilemma as public land decreases and she would hate to see horses and ponies be unable to use the public trail system due to overuse. While many horse owners do not own a way to trailer their horses around, the mountain bike community has extensive opportunities across Washington State including 200 acres in Port Gamble. There are three ways that mountain bikers can get to Port Gamble, including riding trails from Poulsbo, carpooling, and by taking a bus part way and then riding their bikes or taking a taxi. She suggests that the Park District provide a bus to get kids to Port Gamble for a more robust experience than the current proposal would provide. She would like the Park District to think about these options before



shrinking the current trail system, disrupting wildlife and bird habitat, changing historic trails, and limiting the quiet woods experience not to mention expense. The mountain bike community has already been given a portion of Battle Point Park, the experience of which could be enhanced by going to Port Gamble.

Ed Campbell said he and his wife love Bainbridge Island and what the Park District is doing with the parks. He said he is very impressed with this group and that cycling is a very healthy activity. When it is not muddy, he can log 40 miles a month walking the trails. For him personally, mixing pedestrians and cyclists has been a profound safety hazard. He believes he has been nearly injured several times and has had some disturbing encounters. He wonders if it would be possible to limit the outer multiuse loop trail to pedestrians. Dan Hamlin said that mountain bikers would have to use the outer multiuse loop trail to access the inner trails; biking is currently allowed there and staff is trying to make sure nothing is taken away from any user group with the proposed addition of the mountain bike trails. Ed Campbell said some mountain bike riders are very courteous, and some come out of nowhere behind him and it is a safety concern. He thinks these are wonderful activities separately but there is a way to separate the activities, and that would be very important to him.

Colleen Fisher thanked the Park District and the Gear Grinders for all that they do to maintain the parks. She has been riding horses in the Grand Forest for more than 21 years. Traffic has increased generally, and mountain bike traffic has increased drastically in the last five years. Her personal experience with mountain bikers while riding the trails has been mixed, some people are very courteous, and some are not. She said when people are not courteous it can be very dangerous for her on her horse. She has been extremely lucky two times to not get hurt after her horse was spooked. Her biggest concern is combining these two sports within a small urban park. She lives where she lives so she can access these trails on her horse or on foot and is in the Grand Forest about six days a week. Her concern is how mountain bikers will access the inner trails, how fast will they go to get to the inner trails, and what they will do when they get bored with the inner trails. Some people follow rules and some people do not and she asked how we can control those people who do not. She would like to be a part of a group to help educate people regarding how to interact with horses. She worries about little kids on ponies on their first trail ride. Colleen Fisher said that she knows someone who is an established mountain biker on Bainbridge Island who said their concern is that this will change the whole dynamic and the park and it will no longer be a peaceful place.

David Maron said that it is appropriate to have mountain bike specific trails on Bainbridge Island. Multiuse trails work great until users need more specific features. On the island there are different types of fields for different uses such as soccer and lacrosse, baseball, and softball. Creating mountain bike specific trails serves a similar purpose, allowing people to use trails in a different way and engage in an activity in the way it is designed.

Nora Masters lives on Hart Lane and is a long time Bainbridge Island resident and supportive of the Park District. She is an avid trail walker, runner, and meditator. The mountain bike trails proposal has addressed risks as they relate to other user groups, but she was disappointed that the concerns of the private road Hart Lane were not addressed. She is also disappointed that she and the neighbors just heard about this yesterday. She is glad to hear there will be additional time for input and she hopes it is not too late, as she feels like there is a wave headed in a certain direction. She asked whether we really need mountain bike trails on the island and if this is the best location for them. As an avid user of all the trails, she believes other trails do not have as much horse traffic as Grand Forest North, such as Gazzam Lake Nature Preserve where she has never seen a horse. They already have trailheads on Hart Lane which they are not supposed to have as it is a private road and the neighbors have to spend time and money to maintain the it, whereas Gazzam Lake Nature Preserve is not on a private road. Even if it looks like it is not being used, the Grand Forest North is special for wildlife such as deer, racoons, coyotes, and voles. She would like to see the Park District consider how to get more diversity using the parks including more girls and women. It is important to look at diversity and the other users and address the risks for the neighborhood and other users. She believes mountain bike trails would totally destroy what is there.

Pam Walker said she moved to the island in 1995 from Bellevue for the slow pace of life, wildlife, trees, forest, and the solitude she feels on the island. She is concerned that no one on Hart Lane knows anything about the proposal and they are the ones who are most impacted by it. She believes that the Park District has taken a small piece of property and already decided what they are going to do and moved forth and spent money. She is appalled that no one was notified and does not want a bike park across from her house. She came here to get away from Seattle and does not want to be a part of Seattle. She wants people to learn and to think about what the forest holds now in terms of nature and solitude and quiet and says that once again humans are going to tear down trees and wreck another part of the island. She is very upset about not knowing about this. She said she has ridden horses her entire life and that you cannot have mixed uses together. She is against the mountain bike trails proposal and thinks it is a horrible use of the land.

Jason Campbell lives on Madison Avenue near Ted Olson Nature Preserve and said there is clearly a lot of passion about this. He said his first concern is the environmental impact and if this were to go through a permitting process what kind of investigation would go on as far as animal movements, as that forest has a lot of animals that would be impacted by this encroachment. As responsible stewards of the land we should all be cognizant that whatever we do will have some impact, likely negative, on the animals in the area. In reference to the use case for this public land he said it is not equal distribution of access to this land. Having trails dedicated to mountain bikes serves the interests of the mountain bike community not the people who use it who are walkers and people riding horses. He said if this land use was evaluated it would not be found to be very equitable as far as serving everyone who wants to use the land. He asked why not expand the existing mountain bike trails at Battle Point Park and elsewhere in the county if there is such interest from the community, rather than encroaching on this natural reserve. He said we do not get the land back and that has been seen as Seattle spreads ever further into our communities. He asked if the Park District is a steward of the forest or an organization that simply follows what the people want. If it is simply what the people want the loudest voices will win and the cyclists will get their biking park. If it is a steward of the land, then people need to think a little bit more about what they are doing to the land and the long-term ramifications. He wants everyone to enjoy the parks and even if there is a single voice that says that something is damaging to them or the land, those voices need to be heeded and work needs to be done to come to a more equitable distribution of this land for all users.

Stacy Austin said she lives on Hart Lane and chose that location for the privacy and proximity to the forest. Her concern is what this proposal means to the forest in terms of trees being removed and dirt being brought in. She said there is limited parking and Hart Lane is a private road maintained mainly by Mike Jones. She is concerned about the maintenance impact on Hart Lane, as not everyone can ride their bikes to this location.

Mike Jones said that he and those on Hart Lane just heard about this which is highly irregular, and they are very upset about hearing about this through the rumor mill yesterday. They have been here since 1968 and own Jones Quarter Horses and what he does not understand is why they were not contacted directly, as a lot of the horse use comes from their farm and they would have been happy to work with mountain bikers. They have safety concerns regarding mountain bikers including rider noise and road noise from the multiuse loop trail being moved closer to the road, as they have a lot of young horseback riders that come through the Grand Forest North. This is the smallest piece of the Grand Forest and at least the second most impacted by horses. While the Park District may have reopened it, to correct the record it was his father and Lori Russell and her father that cut that trail back in the 1970's and have maintained it. He said one of the problems with the Park District is that the horse community used to be able to ride horses from the Saddle Club to Winslow without touching traffic except for in one short spot, and there were proposals to the Park District to secure those easements and the Park District did not. He said the Hart Lane trailheads are on their private property and it is not public access. They are concerned for security and parking impacts when more people are attracted to the area.

Asaph Glosser extended his appreciation to the board, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance, and the Gear Grinders for this proposal. He is super excited about this as they currently drive to Port Gamble almost weekly to do mountain bike specific riding. He said this would be a huge improvement on the existing infrastructure. His children are learning to be independent and exist in the outdoors and this represents an opportunity to do that in a safe, social way. He said he has heard people talk about the positive effects of horse riding for kids and he thinks those also apply to kids being able to participate in mountain bike riding, whether it is done by organized groups or just kids hanging out in a positive way. He said even the act of building this would be a community building endeavor as it creates an attachment to the land which is critical. He understands that there are a lot of concerns but at the same time this is a very small investment on a very large island, and we would be remiss if we did not take on this opportunity.

John Grinter said that the representative with Squeaky Wheels talked about the importance of getting kids on bikes and that this has been a community goal for as long as he has lived on the island which is 21 years. He said it is a success story to have 600 kids participating in programming and suggested that we celebrate getting kids out riding bikes. With good trail design you can mitigate negative social interaction and promote trail sustainability. The trail system on the island is so popular that it is coming to this point where you have more interactions than you would like. The idea of trying to find a separated place for a specific use makes sense. It is a beautiful piece of land and building trails is a sacred responsibility that is not taken lightly. He knows Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance has done a good job scouting and he has seen their work in the past. The idea is not to create a full mountain bike park but to create a mellow intermediate step for mountain bike riders. If you want to reduce the interactions between horse riders and mountain bikers, this is a good starting point. Maybe there are other parks on the island to further spread out this use, so people do not have to drive to the park to ride their bikes. The proposal is encouraging, and he believes some multiuse trails could even be added to the middle section. The proposed mountain bike trails will be mellow, easy to maintain, easy to build, are great for the bike community and he supports the proposal.

Spencer Nicholas said he is a 2019 Bainbridge High School graduate and a mountain bike coach through the Park District. He said he hears a lot of people bring up that it is inequitable trail designations. He thinks that is a valid point but taken out of context. Looking at the whole island this is a very small portion proposed to be designated for mountain bikes. He said the pump track at Battle Point Park is something kids enjoy but it's not a trail. Singling out mountain bikers as the problem user group on trails is inaccurate, people in other user groups cause negative interactions as well. This is not going to be driving more mountain bikers to ride trails, but rather it will allow them to ride in a small specific place, decreasing traffic and conflict. Mountain bikers already use the outer multiuse loop trail, and the addition of the inner trails means that nothing will be taken away from other users. He said there will always be multiuse trails and conflict can be addressed through education. Mountain bikes are inherently faster and designating them their own spot will decrease conflict for every user.

Kyle and Kristin Lobisser, who live off Fieldstone Lane, said they regularly use the Grand Forest and Kristin was a coach for the Gear Grinders. He wants to address parking which he believes will not be a concern as people will ride their bikes to the trails. They ride their bikes all the time on the loop trail designated for multiuse in the Grand Forest North and have never seen a horse and have never had a conflict. As far as environmental impact, bikes are the least impactful to trails compared to horses and walkers. The concerns are understandable but Kristin has coached the Gear Grinders and believes there is nothing more important than teaching etiquette to make sure that everyone is trying to experience and protect nature together the same way when they are out on the trails, regardless of how they choose to use them. She hopes there are more places where we can continue to enrich future generations and safely experience nature in an environmentally responsible way. It would be great to leverage Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance to do some education regarding how trail building is done in a very respectful way regarding environmental impact.

Commissioner Janow said to those who are concerned that they had not yet heard about this project, that this is the first time the commissioners are hearing about it as well in a formal presentation. Executive Director Terry Lande said the next steps will be for the board to direct staff to gather more information and answer specific questions. Typically, there would then be a public hearing where the community is notified including the people who have expressed interest so far, neighbors and the entire community via a newspaper ad and a posting on the Park District website. Then the topic would be on the agenda again at a regular board meeting for discussion before being placed on yet another regular board meeting agenda at which time the commissioners would vote on whether or not to move forward with a project. Even though the topic was on the agenda tonight, no decision has been made, the first step is simply sharing information. Commissioner Kinney said this topic tonight is information only and nothing has been fast tracked without community notice. Terry Lande said there must be some method for moving forward on items or nothing would ever happen, and the board's job is to listen and respond to the community. Commissioner Janow thanked everyone for attending the meeting and sharing their thoughts, which have been heard by the commissioners.

**MEETING ADJOURNED** to a five-minute recess at 8:13 pm with announced time to reconvene at 8:18 pm. **MEETING RECONVENED** at 8:18 pm.

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE GRANT FOR BAINBRIDGE ISLAND JAPANESE AMERICAN EXCLUSION MEMORIAL**

**ASSOCIATION:** Senior Planner Perry Barrett introduced Val Tollefson who has been instrumental to the work of the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial in Pritchard Park. The Park District is being asked to administer a grant on behalf of BIJAEMA. Val Tollefson said in the early 2000's the idea for a memorial was conceived. In 2011 the story wall was dedicated and BIJAEMA began working on a long-range plan including a dock and a visitor's center. The idea for a dock was abandoned as financially and environmentally unfeasible, but a grant was received to build a deck to evoke the sense of the departure from Bainbridge Island. Construction of the deck structure is almost complete. In 2019 BIJAEMA applied for a grant from the state for interpretative elements on the deck. In June of 2019 BIJAEMA received a grant award for \$155,000 and they are still trying to get access to the funds. The Washington State Department of Commerce has requirements for safe control of the funds that must be satisfied before funds can be distributed. The grant will be transferred from BIJAEMA to the Park District as owner of the property, then BIJAEMA will be able to invoice for reimbursement of funds through the Park District. It is time sensitive as BIJAEMA has already received proposals from artists for interpretive elements. This arrangement has no financial impact and minimal administrative impact on the Park District. Executive Director Terry Lande asked if the board has any issues with moving forward to assist BIJAEMA with gaining access to the grant funds and no board members indicated opposition. Commissioner Janow asked if the Department of Commerce does not come through with the money if the Park District would still have to reimburse BIJAEMA. Val Tollefson said that BIJAEMA will not incur any financial obligations until this grant is approved.

**INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT FOR TRAILS WITH THE CITY OF BAINBRIDGE ISLAND:** Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin asked if the board has any questions on the final interlocal agreement for trails that has been approved by the City of Bainbridge Island. Executive Director Barb Trafton with the Bainbridge Island Parks Foundation thanked the board for all the listening they have done tonight and thanked Dan Hamlin and Senior Planner Perry Barrett for all their work on the interlocal agreement for trails and encouraged the board to vote in support. **MSC: DeWitt/Swolgaard: Approve the interlocal agreement for trails with the City of Bainbridge Island.** Commissioner Swolgaard said the interlocal agreement for trails is great and that it has been a long time since the Park District had a good working relationship with the City. Commissioner DeWitt said it shows how good the working relationship has gotten, as this has been tried several times before and that this is a good formal structure to work from. Commissioner Janow echoed that sentiment and said it is exciting and opens a lot of possibility; she is appreciative of the hard work that went into it.



**BOARD RETREAT:** Commissioner Janow said that the board retreat will be held virtually due to COVID-19 restrictions and that she would like the board retreat agenda to be kept as focused as possible. Executive Director Terry Lande said the agenda will include: 1) introductions and public comment, 2) the last 13 years, 3) issues of today, 4) the next 3-7 years, 6) initiatives, 7) what is next, and 8) public comment. Commissioner Janow encouraged board members to reach out to Terry Lande with any requests for information from staff and to think about what their aspirations are for the Park District. Commissioner Kinney asked if there are any topics that are sure to be discussed at the board retreat. Commissioner Janow replied that bond issues, a levy lid lift, and staffing levels will be discussed. Commissioner Kinney said that in many respects he still feels like a rookie board member and said that it's a lot to get your head around the budget, bonds, and the levy lid lift. He advised Commissioner Janow and Commissioner Cox to have a good foundational understanding of bonds, the levy lid lift, and how they fit into the budget and encouraged them to not think they must already know everything. Commissioner DeWitt said that the board needs to have a solid list of what the deferred maintenance issues are. Terry Lande said staff is working to prepare that information for the board.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**Administrative Division:** Administrative Division Director Amy Swenson said that the 2018-2019 audit is going very well. The financial statement audit is done and satisfactory. The accountability audit is still underway.

**Recreation Division:** Recreation Division Director Mark Benishek said staff has been busy working to adjust recreation programming to accommodate for new guidelines with the movement of our region into Phase II of the Healthy Washington Plan. Cody Ogren was recently hired as a Head Guard for the Aquatic Center. Bainbridge Island Swim Club will be hosting another time trial. Aquatic Program Administrator Megan Pleli recently held a lifeguard class from which she hopes to gain some lifeguard candidates for the Aquatic Center. Active Adult Program Manager Sue Barrington is working on summer programming. Marketing Coordinator Allie Smith has been posting updates for the recent snow closure as well as for the movement of our region to Phase II. Community Outreach Coordinator Emily Swift is working to fine tune summer programs. Youth & Teen Program Manager Shannon Buxton's All-Day Explorer Camp is being held this week and going well. Eagledale Pottery Studio programming is being adjusted for Phase II and staff has heard from a lot of the older adults that participate that they have had their COVID-19 vaccinations and are excited to get back in the studio. Winter soccer programs start soon, and registration has been very popular. Gymnastics is now allowed to have more people in their facilities with movement of our region to Phase II and they are developing a new schedule. Outdoor Program Manager Nick Prevo is working on summer programming and staffing. Two new puppy training classes have been added due to demand from the community.

**Park Services Division:** Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin said that he and Senior Planner Perry Barrett have been working on the memorandum of understanding with Kitsap Public Utility District regarding work to be done in their easement in the Gazzam Lake Nature Preserve. Contracts with Earth Corps are being put in place for both trail work and restoration. The new vehicle lift in the shop has been installed. The Schel Chelb Park restroom is under construction. Perry Barrett said that trail mapping efforts are underway. The archeology requirement for the Sakai Park grant is being worked on, after which the remaining documents can be filed with the Recreation and Conservation Office for the grant. He alerted people to the possibility of a state trail map for which funding is available from the state.

### **BOARD MEMBER ITEMS:**

- Commissioner DeWitt said there has been a lot of chatter about the Battle Point Park north pond. Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin said the engineering work has been initiated and the Park District's insurance company has agreed to cover part if not all the damage.

- Commissioner Kinney said he participated in a question and answer podcast with Bainbridge Island Parks Foundation Executive Director Barb Trafton and some other people this week regarding the Park District's forest management plan and it went well.
- Commissioner Kinney said that what strikes him about tonight's meeting is that whenever you want to change something on one hand you have the neighborhood and an established group of users that do not want to share and on the other hand there is a group with a need. There is a balancing act between not only the various interest groups but with the forest health. He said the Grand Forest North is an isolated parcel and seems like a great fit for mountain bike trails but one of the questions the Park District is being asked is if the mountain bike trails can be built somewhere else. It will be important to have information regarding possible alternate locations for mountain bike trails, the current level of use in the Grand Forest North by horse riders, and if there is a perceived loss to horse riders if that can be offset by additional trails somewhere else. It's going to be a tough issue and the board is going to get a lot of pressure. People are already dug in; the board is not going to be able to make everyone happy and it is not going to be easy. It will take at least a few more meetings and the board will need to allow time to make sure everyone feels heard. Executive Director Terry Lande said staff will provide information on why other parks were not selected for the proposed mountain bike trails, to show how the proposal got narrowed down to the Grand Forest North. Staff can put up a game camera in Grand Forest North to monitor how many users ride horses there. Commissioner DeWitt said he walked the Grand Forest North today and saw a set of horse tracks, old horse manure, a bicycle track, and one person walking a dog. Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin said that even if consistent use of the park by people riding horses is observed, their ability to ride there is not being taken away by the proposal. Commissioner Swolgaard said his concern is the environmental issue and disruption of the natural area. Dan Hamlin said that is something that Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance can speak to, as there are sustainable mountain bike trail standards. Commissioner Kinney said he remembers when Gazzam Lake Nature Preserve was bought that there could be active use on part of the property for ballfields, and questioned whether a mountain bike trail is an active use or not; he also asked at what point the density of trails displaces enough nature to be a real issue. Commissioner Kinney wants to know how much of Gazzam Lake Nature Preserve is covered with a conservation easement that is as strong as the one on the Grand Forest, would Gazzam Lake Nature Preserve be a better spot for the proposal, if the Grand Forest is supposed to be passive use is a mountain bike trail system a passive use, and how is a passive use defined. Trails Advisory Committee member Kirk Robinson said Gazzam Lake Nature Preserve has an active use area of about 25 acres that is relatively flat and therefore not conducive to mountain bike trails, however the Park District could look at the west Gazzam Lake Nature Preserve properties which include steep terrain. There is no conservation easement on the Grand Forest and all three parcels of the Grand Forest are restriction free. In his opinion it is likely that adding the mountain bike component in the middle of the multiuse loop trail in Grand Forest North would drive the horse riders and the walkers away. There is a lot that has been said historically about multiuse in parks and forests nationally and what he sees is that multiple uses such as recreation and wildlife are actually mutually exclusive, if you want to protect wildlife you have to keep people out for the most part. Commissioner Swolgaard said that the Trails Advisory Committee basically looked at every parcel that the Park District has for the proposed mountain bike trails and the Grand Forest North was highly recommended but that maybe it should be reexamined. Commissioner Kinney said that will all need to be explained to the public at some point because whatever the board decides they will need a good rationalization. Commissioner Janow asked for a visual on how much buffer will be between both the new routing of the multiuse loop trail and the proposed mountain bike trails in Grand Forest North and the residents on Hart Lane. Terry Lande suggested that Dan Hamlin take two commissioners at a time over to walk the property. Commissioner Janow brought up the idea of making it clear that the inner mountain bike trails would basically be a mountain bike facility,

so that there is a designation to help people understand that it is something separate that does not currently exist on the island. Commissioner Kinney said that addressing parking on Hart Lane will also be important. Dan Hamlin said some groundwork would need to be laid with the neighborhood, potentially a maintenance agreement if there was parking on Hart Lane; however currently it appears that there is adequate parking on Koura Road especially if road shoulder improvements are addressed with the City of Bainbridge Island.

- Commissioner Janow said at the Trails Advisory Committee meeting they heard about the trail connection from Marshall Suites to Sakai Park.
- Commissioner Janow attended a City of Bainbridge Island workshop on sustainable transportation.
- Commissioner Janow asked about the roller hockey fence work and Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin said it is underway.
- Commissioner Janow asked about the status of the Schel Chelb Park fence. Senior Planner Perry Barrett said there has been no word from the City of Bainbridge Island regarding the permit, but they have a meeting tomorrow.
- Commissioner DeWitt asked that five minutes be added to tonight's executive session for discussion of potential litigation.

**MEETING ADJOURNED TO EXECUTIVE SESSION** at 9:18 pm for discussion of real estate and potential litigation with announced time to reconvene at 9:33 pm.

**MEETING RECONVENED** at 9:34 pm and **ADJOURNED** at 9:35 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

*Commissioner Cox's signature not included due to her resignation.*