

**BAINBRIDGE ISLAND METROPOLITAN PARK & RECREATION DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MAY 6, 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: Ken DeWitt, Dawn Janow, Jay Kinney, Tom Swolgaard.

ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA: Add item 10.3, the reading of the Park District mission statement and an executive session for real estate for 30 minutes. Public comments on the agenda items regarding mountain biking trails in the Grand Forest North will be held until after both presentations.

MISSION STATEMENT: Commissioner Janow read the Park District's mission statement: The mission of the Bainbridge Island Metropolitan Park & Recreation District is to build a healthy community through effective, sustainable stewardship of the District's parks and open space, and through the development and delivery of innovative cultural and recreation opportunities.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Betsy Daniels is member of the Battle Point Night Skies Alliance. She highlighted some of the concerns noted in the letter the BPNSA sent to the Park District board including protecting the character of the neighborhood and the operation of the Ritchie Observatory. The proposal for lighting of the artificial turf fields runs counter to their priorities and they do not believe it is the right location. There are specific concerns reading the Battle Point Park septic system failing due to exacerbated use and impacting the water source and wells in the surrounding neighborhood.

Michele Bombardier has lived by Battle Point Park for over 30 years and opposes the proposal for artificial turf field lighting at Battle Point Park. There are concerns about an increase in noise and traffic around the park. Her family, along with other neighbors and members of the Battle Point Astronomical Association recall that when the artificial turf fields with lighting were proposed in the mid 2000's that allowing the artificial turf fields to be installed was a compromise in exchange for no lights. She understands that there are people in the Park District with a different recollection and said there is a discrepancy of memory and history. The park is already busting at its seams.

Ken Bennett has lived near Battle Point Park for almost 30 years, is a member of the Battle Point Night Skies Alliance and is opposed to the artificial turf field lighting proposal at Battle Point Park. Battle Point is a rural, residential neighborhood and the addition of other amenities has already resulted in greatly increased traffic. He questioned the safety of bringing more people into the neighborhood during nighttime hours. He requests that the board meet with BPNSA members.

James Forsher lives in Battle Point and agrees with everything Ken Bennett just said. He is also concerned about an increased burden on the police caused by people parking in unlit parking lots at night.

Mary Dombrowski said she is trying to get on the radar with the Park District about possibilities for a small playground for kids in the Fort Ward neighborhood. The Fort Ward Neighborhood Association has been fundraising since the 1990's for projects like this; one thing they have been able to achieve is to have the Parade Grounds preserved. Kids need a place where they can gather, and it will help build community unity. Commissioner Janow recommended that she email Executive Director Terry Lande to get on an agenda and make a presentation.

BOARD CONSENT

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Upon hearing there were no corrections to the minutes of the April 15, 2021 regular board meeting, Chair Janow stated the minutes stand approved as submitted.

GENERAL BUSINESS

PROPOSED MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS IN GRAND FOREST NORTH: Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin presented a staff report regarding the proposed mountain bike trails in Grand Forest North. The Park District's Trails Vision Plan was updated for the Park District's 2020 Comprehensive Plan with enhanced focus on trail connections and solutions for user conflicts through use of specialized trail systems or areas as community needs arise. Trails within parks has been a priority in the TVP since 2011. The proposal tonight will include a lowered density of trails and no skills zone, although the wildlife report and critical areas report were conducted based on the proposal for five trails. The Grand Forest North is about 38 acres, is located on the corner of Koura Road and Miller Road and does not connect to the rest of the Grand Forest. The proposal is being considered due to need spurred by increased user conflicts on trails with all user groups, increased bike use on trails, the COVID-19 pandemic which has led to more trail use in general, and the fact that this type of project has been identified in the TVP. Further pressure comes from the City of Bainbridge Island's Sustainable Transportation Task Force working to encourage more non-motorized use including proposals for running transportation corridors through parks. The Bainbridge Island Land Trust suggested in 2019 that the Park District find a suitable location for mountain biking due to the activity happening in Gazzam Lake Nature Preserve. The Trails Advisory Committee process for site selection was based on amount of established use, extent and type of critical areas, habitat value, slope and terrain, location, and existing restrictions or limitations on properties. Other possible sites reviewed by the TAC were Gazzam Lake Nature Preserve, Grand Forest East, Grand Forest West, Sakai Park, Fort Ward Park, and Manzanita Park. Grand Forest North was selected by the TAC for multiple reasons including that it has relatively no critical areas with just one small seasonal wetland, no steep slopes, and no streams. Wildlife impacts are limited due to the park being surrounded by roads on three sides and existing dog use on the site. Usage information for Grand Forest North and Grand Forest West was compiled from the weekend of April 17-18 using trail cameras. Grand Forest North averaged 17 people per day versus 162 people per day in the Grand Forest West. In the proposal the outer loop trail would remain multi-use, and the inner trails would be for bikers and hikers. Biking is a passive use and is currently allowed on trails. Barriers would be installed on the inner loop trails and bikes would have the right-of-way. Trails would be built to International Mountain Biking Association and Forest Service standards in compliance with Park District management standards. A section of Grand Forest West was compared to the proposal for the Grand Forest North to assess trail density. In the Grand Forest West trail density was measured at one mile per 21 acres, and the proposal for the Grand Forest North was measured at one mile per 17 acres. The proposal for a skills zone was removed, as it is not considered passive use. The vision for purchasing the Grand Forest was to save it from residential development and to preserve it for passive use including trails and trail facilities.

John Benjes, the President of the Bainbridge Island Mountain Biking Club which proposed the mountain bike trails, shared a video expressing support from Bainbridge Island families. BIMBC promotes mountain biking, supports the Gear Grinders mountain bike team, works to help maintain and build trails, and encourages youth to get out and appreciate nature. Mountain biking is a growing sport. The proposal expands the existing multi-use loop trail while the inner trails would be designed for mountain biking, but hikers would be allowed on them as well. Mountain bike trails would not be designed for speed or advanced riding. Mountain bikers like to ride on multi-use trails, but mountain bike trails are unique for the sport. There are already numerous facilities in the Park District's system that support allowance for specific uses, such as the pickleball courts. The mountain bike community is proposing a similar accommodation for the unique needs of their sport. The mountain bike trails would not be built for speed, they would be designed to control speed. The Grand Forest North was chosen as the proposed location because the gentle slope of the land is ideal for beginner and intermediate level trails, it is centrally located, no significant wetland or wildlife concerns were identified, and it is a beautiful forest ideal for nurturing development of a love of nature and the outdoors. BIMBC believes the island should address the needs of mountain bikers rather than just telling them to go somewhere else off the island, the community does not do that to other user groups. The proposed mountain bike trails would be relatively short and therefore would not attract off-island

mountain bikers. There will be no cost to the taxpayers for the proposed mountain bike trails. BIMBC will raise the money and pursue grants as well as volunteer to build and maintain the trails. The proposal was revised in response to community concerns regarding the five trails originally proposed, the proposal now has three trails that total about .9 miles and the skills zone has been removed. The proposal takes away nothing from existing users, the multi-use outer loop trail will even be expanded. The inner trails would be for mountain biking and hiking, but the right-of-way would be for the bikers. It would be a terrific addition to have trails designed for mountain biking in the Grand Forest North and BIMBC hopes the board will move forward. The trails would not be exclusive to mountain bikers, are consistent with the established uses and purposes of the Grand Forest North, are designed to be fun and build skills for mountain bikers of all ages and abilities, are close by, are not designed for high speed, and would be sustainably built.

August Maron Chao is a fifth grader at Montessori Country School and supports the proposal. She said it is fun to ride with her family and friends and it is good exercise. People on the island would like to have trails that they can easily bike to and have fun at instead of having to drive to Port Gamble.

Piper Henderson is fourteen, on the Gear Grinders team, and she supports the proposal. It would be great to have a place to mountain bike that she could ride to from her house. She always tries to be respectful on the trails and sees this as a positive addition to the trails on the island.

Oliver Gutsche-Smith is a freshman at Bainbridge High School, and he supports the proposal. He likes to mountain bike because it is a fun way to get out into nature and get exercise. He is excited about the possibility of mountain bike trails on Bainbridge Island, it would be a great addition to the trail system and help people improve their skills and get into the sport.

Shannon Wodnik lives near the Grand Forest, has been mountain biking the trails on the island since her son was a toddler, and supports the proposal. She is excited to have an option on the island, so they do not have to drive so far for access to mountain bike trails. The trails on Bainbridge Island have been a lifeline for her son during the pandemic.

Jameson Bregar is an eighth grader and he supports the proposal. A mountain bike trail system in the Grand Forest North would be incredible for people of all ages. It is great to see people out on trails, although sometimes they are respectful and sometimes, they are not. He hopes the community can come together and make something great happen.

Kenley Knoebel is thirteen, grew up on the island, and supports the proposal. While she does enjoy mountain biking off the island, when she heard about the proposed mountain bike trails, she got excited to work on her skills.

Will Siebert is a junior at Bainbridge High School and supports the proposal. He loves mountain biking and being outdoors with his friends. At times he has needed mountain biking as an escape and as an outlet for hyper energy. He knows other people his age who would not get outside much or off screens without access to mountain biking. He believes the mountain bike trails would be the next level and that users would make it safe for other people. A dedicated area would help get a lot of kids and adults outside and having fun in the woods.

Andrew Herten and his family live near the middle school and they support the proposal. They ride on all the trails on the island together as a family, as it is a particularly family-friendly activity. The trails are almost always multi-use so when he heard about the proposed mountain bike trails where bicycles would have the right-of-way, he thought that would be perfect. They would not have to drive anywhere as they could ride to Grand Forest North from their house. While he can understand and empathize with some of the variety of opinions about it, he thinks it would be more of a benefit than a detriment.

Morgan Herten mountain bikes as much as he can and supports the proposal. Sometimes it is annoying that he must always stop for people.

John Benjes encouraged the mountain bike community to always show courtesy to everyone on the trails as the more courteous they are the more support they will have.

OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS IN GRAND FOREST NORTH: Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin introduced Don Rooks who began the presentation for those in opposition to mountain bike trails in the Grand Forest North. Don Rooks has been an islander since 1990 and lives on Eagle Harbor Drive. The opposition understands there is passion in the community for mountain bike trails and that other Park District owned properties have been discussed. Properties owned by the City of Bainbridge Island may not have been discussed, including the Vincent Road site. Grand Forest North is not the right place for mountain bike trails and the proposal has been ill conceived from the start. The proposal for mountain bike trails has changed but they believe that mountain bike trails are inappropriate in just about any form. The Grand Forest North is not appropriate because the bond levy approved by voters in 1991 designated the land for passive multi-use trails only. The mountain bike trails are prohibited by the legal definition of passive use, and state law requires bikes to give right-of-way to pedestrians. The public wants protection of the Grand Forest North for quiet and peace and no additional trails. Mountain bike preferred trails are not consistent with the Park District's mission of trails and there are environmental and ecological impact concerns as well as concerns about the Park District's process. The bond levy for the Grand Forest purchase was passed by voters. Chuck Field, who was the Park District's executive director at the time, has said that the proposal violates the intention of the bond and that promises were made for protection of the land and that only passive use would be allowed as well as that the proposal may put the Park District in political and legal jeopardy. The Park District agrees that the Grand Forest North is only for passive use. The definition of passive use is defined by the Environmental Protection Agency as being compatible with other passive uses and users and does not permit prepared facilities or specialized trails and should be non-competitive. The fact that the mountain bike trails would be tailored for things like speed moves them from passive to active use. State law requires mountain bikers to give right-of-way to pedestrians. City of Bainbridge Island and Park District rules require speeds no greater than 10 mph on all trails for all vehicles. There is a spectrum of mountain bikers, the beginners such as moms with children, intermediate riders, advanced riders and then Antifa mountain bikers who do not care about the rules. If mountain bike trails are put in people will come from Seattle to use them and there is not any plan for extra parking. The plan calls for the mountain bike trails to be constructed two to three feet wide and the handles of a mountain bike are about two feet wide, it will be difficult to pass walkers on the trails and the trails will eventually end up getting expanded on the sides. The Heart of the Forest is a piece of property that was purchased by the Bainbridge Island Land Trust to connect the Grand Forest West to the Grand Forest North. There is a conservation easement on that property that will make it for hiking only when it opens.

Kent Salisbury said he has been a mountain biker, a road biker, and is a physician trained in cardiology and in acute care. The Grand Forest North has seasonal wetlands and streams that run in the wintertime. The opposition group became aware of the first public meeting regarding proposed mountain bike trails two days before the meeting. They were told at the time that they would have three minutes to make public comment. They discovered the Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance had been working on the design for the mountain bike trails. The problem with mountain bike preferred trails in the Grand Forest North is that it conflicts with the Park District's Trails Vision Plan in relation to the Grand Forest North. Some sports enthusiasts would naturally be inclined to venture outside of the designated area which would mean similar aggressive cycling in the rest of the Grand Forest, creating a danger to themselves and other trail users. The location of this proposal poses parking problems, possible miss-use of a private road as well as noise and traffic challenges. The opposition group contacted Bainbridge Island Review Editor Steve Powell to write an article, put together an online petition, established a website, published messages on Facebook groups and Nextdoor, developed a public sign campaign, and wrote letters and emails to raise awareness and amplify their message. The petition in opposition to mountain bike trails in the Grand Forest North has over 1,020 signatures so far from Bainbridge Island residents. Social media commenters on Facebook groups and Nextdoor were approximately 35% for and 65% against the proposal. The yard sign campaign amplified signatures on the

petition despite having over 100 of the signs stolen. Public comments regarding opposition to mountain bike trails include: 1) significant safety concerns for all users, 2) perception that Grand Forest North is inappropriate for any new trails, 3) the intent of the voter approved bond, 4) it would be an attraction for non-residents, 5) parking concerns, 6) unrealistic expectations for general use, and 7) that the proposal ignores the published Trails Vision Plan for the Park District.

Bill Glasser said he lives west of the Grand Forest North across Miller Road. He worked for the for the United States Environmental Protection Agency as both an environmental scientist and a program manager for almost 30 years. He has degrees in biology, pharmacology, and public health with an emphasis in environmental science. The corner of Koura Road and Miller Road is one of the most dangerous intersections on the island. It would be problematic from a public safety perspective to have traffic drawn to the Grand Forest North, which is an accident waiting to happen. There is incredible biodiversity of wildlife that resides in or transits through the Grand Forest North. There are coyotes, bears, herons, owls, and he has seen eagles, hawks, ospreys, nesting doves, and a river otter. Likely impacts from any new trails in the Grand Forest North would be on wildlife, water quality, and carbon storage. Any new trail construction is going to cause overall degradation of ecosystem functions and values. Grand Forest North is part of the island's largest intact wildlife corridor which is used for migration, habitat, feeding, and breeding. There are confirmed sightings of pygmy owls in the Grand Forest North and certain species of pygmy owls were on the endangered species list from the mid 1990's to 2006. Water quality impacts include impacts to stormwater and surface water, downstream watersheds, and potentially drinking water. Any new trail construction will result in alteration of natural stormwater drainage patterns which is likely to increase erosion, cause sedimentation in streams, and impact the wetland area. There are two watersheds downstream from the site, the Manzanita and Fletcher Bay watersheds. The headwaters of Issei Creek were reported by Junkoh Harui, who was the original owner of Bainbridge Gardens, to possibly be in the southern portion of the Grand Forest North. The park is on top of Bainbridge Island's sole source aquifer and it is not unreasonable to expect that the Grand Forest North is an aquifer recharge area. There are carbon capacity concerns related to any large trees being removed for building the mountain bike trails. They want to know how much carbon carrying capacity will be lost by large tree removal, the amount of carbon emissions that will be related to deforestation activity, and how much of the Park District's plan is consistent with environmental goals and visions in the City of Bainbridge Island's Comprehensive Plan and any compatible plans for a sustainable Bainbridge Island.

Rosemary Hollinger lives on Hart Lane and moved to Bainbridge Island shortly before the pandemic began. She has spent a lot of time in the Grand Forest North and her experience is that there is a delicate equilibrium between trail users. Before she came to Bainbridge Island she worked as a lawyer and manager for a financial regulator in the federal government. She understands that people who work for the government care about serving the public and thinks the Park District staff is well intentioned and attempting to serve the public interest. The problem is that the public is not of one mind regarding this proposal. The Park District followed its standard operating procedure with this proposal, but it was not a standard proposal, it was an extraordinary proposal that would dramatically alter the use of the Grand Forest North. It deserved a process that was open to the public, transparent, inclusive, and fair, and that is not what happened. The Park District worked with the mountain bike group and did not give the community a seat at the table. When the community found out about the proposal, they felt the process was not fair and that they had been excluded. She does not believe tonight's meeting is helping matters because the agenda did not indicate the mountain bike group would be speaking. The Park District expended public funds to contract for environmental studies and pay for staff time without ever consulting the public. The opposition group is not sure who the trails are intended for or if it is a need or a desire. There are forty miles of trails on Bainbridge Island that mountain bikers can ride today. One trail in the Grand Forest North apparently is not enough, they want more. She asked where else they are going to want more trails and how many more trails they will want. The proposal will dramatically change the usage of the Grand Forest North today, and she asked about what will happen next year or the year after. It needs to be clear what the community wants and if there will be mountain bike preferred

trails in all the parks and forests on the island. It is not clear to her where this is leading and the whole community should be involved in it but has not been included. Right now, what is at stake is sacrificing serenity and peace for the desire of the mountain bike community to have more trails. The public should be consulted as to whether they are willing to pay the cost of staff time spent supervising the project and any additional insurance costs, and she asked what happens if the mountain bike community cannot raise the money to build the trails. There are other intangible costs to the community including the costs to the people who currently walk there, caused by the plan to expand the multi-use loop trail by pushing it to the perimeter of the forest. Many of the people she encountered when she was walking in the Grand Forest North were older and it will be hard for them to get out of the way with increased trail use by mountain bikers. There is a delicate balance and the literature seems to indicate that when mountain bikers prevail it drives out other users. The walkers and horseback riders are in the forest for peace, quiet, and serenity while the mountain bikers are there for challenge, thrill, and speed and these uses are not compatible. If mountain bikers start to predominate, other users will be driven out. The cost to nature needs to be thought about because alders will have to be chopped down, the soil will be changed, and there will be impact on the roots of the trees. What the board should do going forward is have a more transparent and fair public process to find out how the public feels generally about meeting the desires of the mountain bike community. If the community wants to provide a solution, the users need to be identified such as whether it is for children, families, or advanced mountain bikers. If the community chooses to provide opportunities for mountain biking, criteria need to be developed for where mountain bike trails should be. Alternate sites for mountain bike trails should be explored. Safety issues need to be considered, the corner of Miller Road and Koura Road is not an appropriate place for people to send their children. She knows from her experience with skiing that mixing the speed of fast-moving sports enthusiasts with trees makes it just a matter of time until somebody gets hurt. The Park District should make sure it is covered for liability, as the cost will fall on the community. In her experience liability waivers are worth about the paper they are written on. There are both public and legal constraints making the Grand Forest North unusable for the construction of the proposed mountain bike trails. There are more appropriate sites that were not considered. When the time comes the board should direct staff to work with the community as well as the Trail Advisory Committee to identify the needs, if the community is willing to support those needs, and propose a transparent site selection process. The opposition group recommends the board remove the Grand Forest North from consideration for mountain bike trails.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

Steven Johnson lives on Lytle Road and spoke in support of the proposal. He used to volunteer to help Gear Grinders, whose wholesome family-fun activities won him over. Despite hundreds of grumpy Facebook posts by people on both sides of the issue, this is not that big of a deal. The Grand Forest is safe and there will be no impact in the majority of the Grand Forest. This is for the kids and young people and he wants to live in a place with space for kids, as the community is increasingly made up of retired people. These new trails will increase interest in biking among kids and be good for families on the island.

Ed Campbell has property on Koura Road and other places on Bainbridge Island and spoke in opposition to the proposal. He does not have anything against mountain biking which he believes is a healthy activity. A lot of the safety aspect has to do with the design and the supervision of the mountain biking areas. It is important that any mountain bike trails comply with standards. His takeaway is that mountain biking is a great sport and the kids and adults deserve a place to do this but need a much larger, better place than the Grand Forest North. Maybe it is time to take a step back to find a larger and safer place where there would not be the environmental impact being looked at here just to build three trails.

Pam Walker has lived on Hart Lane for about 25 years and spoke in opposition to the proposal. She understands wanting to have the great outdoors be part of children's lives. She does not think the dialogue needs to be disrespectful as the community looks for a solution. She supports that the mountain bike group needs a great place to do their sport. Without

considering the signs, politics, and money, Grand Forest North is not the right place because it is too small. There are deer, racoons, opossums, and bunnies that come into her yard and she does not want them to be scared off.

Scott Morton is a long-time mountain biker and supports the proposal. Mountain bikers respect the forest and will treat it with the care and stewardship it deserves. Regarding the environmental aspect of this proposal he would argue the greatest threat to the Grand Forest North is climate change which threatens the park with laminated root rot. Recreating closer to home will curb the burning of fossil fuels caused by driving.

Penny Jones has been on Bainbridge Island since 1968 and spoke in opposition to the proposal. Liability needs to be investigated. She is a professional horseman and once she puts up an artificial element like a jump, she is liable and negligent if a qualified instructor is not present. She has also judged horse shows and taught school and she would have been negligent if proper protocols were not followed. The Park District needs to look at the standard and duty of care that is required for building mountain bike trails.

Babette Gazarian-Cherne and her family moved to Bainbridge Island in 1995 and she spoke in opposition to the proposal. She rejects that screaming along on an adrenaline rush at up to 15 miles per hour is enjoying nature. Science based facts articulate the fragmenting of a healthy forest resulting from mountain biking and that wildlife will be driven away. This proposal seeks to hijack this last remaining pristine forest which was never intended as a racetrack for a minority. She invites Gear Grinders to procure and fund their own land for the needs of their sport. The Grand Forest North must not be compromised for an activity it cannot sustain.

Jim Hegtvedt is a 30-year resident of Bainbridge Island and opposes the proposal. He disagrees that the Grand Forest North is a good site. His real disappointment is that he was not notified by the Park District when the proposal was first brought to the agency. It makes it hard to trust an agency when you do not know what to believe. He sympathizes with those who want mountain bike trails, but Grand Forest North is the only place on the island you can sit down and have a little bit of serenity.

Lisa and Chris Neal live in Island Center and oppose the proposal. It is unfair to grant exclusive use to one group or to say one group has more rights than other groups.

Nora Masters lives on Hart Lane, has lived on Bainbridge Island for just under 30 years and opposes the proposal. She has a career of over 20 years as a public sector auditor including auditing the City of Seattle's programs and processes. A bond levy in 1991 was approved to fund the purchase of the Grand Forest. As elected officials, one of the roles of the board is to make sure that what was promised to the taxpayers is carried out. While she does not think an oversight committee is necessary, proper internal controls should be built into administrative processes to ensure the intent of the voters is carried out so that public trust is not put at risk. There have been comments from the public, including Chuck Field who was the executive director of the Park District at the time of the purchase, that the proposed trails are in direct conflict with the intent of the bond levy.

Craig Juckniess lives off Olympic Terrace and opposes the proposal. The Grand Forest North may seem an attractive location, but it is not landlocked or ecologically isolated as was suggested. It is more centrally located than most other areas of the Grand Forest that he is aware of and it is not underutilized. The Heart of the Forest will eventually connect the Grand Forest North to the Grand Forest West. Giving the mountain bikers right-of-way on the trails is tantamount to exclusive use and will harm a pristine area.

Dorothy Minter spoke in opposition to the proposal. The policy has been flawed in getting to this point, as the community at large was not included. There are three things to think about including preserving the forest for wildlife and posterity, the original intent of the bond, and public safety. She does not think the kids who may be on the trails will be intentionally

malicious, but she knows that neurologically the part of the brain that holds people back from making rash decisions is not developed until a person is in their 20's and that they will want to take the skills they learn on the mountain bike trails into the rest of the Grand Forest. One thing that has been suggested is that if this goes through then there must be a light at the corner of Koura Road and Miller Road.

MEETING ADJOURNED to a five-minute recess at 9:05 pm with announced time to reconvene at 9:10 pm. **MEETING RECONVENED** at 9:10 pm.

Mike Jones spoke in opposition to the proposal. This is about setting precedents. He could have paraded 45 kids who ride horses through the Grand Forest North. This is an adult discussion about trail usage and setting an example for children and the law says that bikes must yield right-of-way. There are exceptions to the law that give you limited liability and the Park District will be legally liable if it has known dangerous artificial latent conditions. The speed limit in parks is 10 miles per hour. Going twice the speed limit is by definition reckless driving and Executive Director Terry Lande needs to enforce the law because that is how problem children can be dealt with.

Scott Johnston who lives on Eakin Drive spoke in support of the proposal. The biggest issue is how to manage growth on the island, as there is real tension in the community between the older folks and the people with kids. Mountain biking has been described as a destructive activity and he believes that is not true. He hopes the Park District will choose to manage growth in a way that benefits everyone. The reality is that things change, population increases, demographics change, and smart growth is needed, this proposal satisfies those requirements. The reality is that mountain bikes are already in the Grand Forest North. Mountain biking has been demonized tonight and he does not believe that is an accurate representation, it is a healthy activity and is not destructive as has been said.

Barrett Adams-Simmons spoke in opposition to the proposal. She asked why mountain bike clubs are being given a special privilege. This is not an underprivileged community, what is underprivileged is the sustainment of the forest when we have actively tried to preserve it. She walks in the forest and she saw an off-leash dog and there was a mountain bike parked off to the side of the trail. Children are being taught it is okay to go out and steal signs they disagree with and ignore basic manners on the road. You cannot have it both ways, if there are 800 people coming through the park there is a need for facilities and parking.

Shaun Baseman lives in Battle Point and is in support of the proposal. She supports expanding the Park District's program for learning safe and healthy mountain biking skills with instructors who are also mentors and have helped her son through the pandemic. This space would allow for slow, controlled, separate use to minimize impacts with other users. She thinks having a dedicated place to learn mountain biking skills will help with safety and the overall community experience on the multi-use trails. She has a degree in environmental resource finance with an emphasis in land and water management and said impacts on the environment from three trails is not going to be significant. It is just a few trails and gives kids an opportunity to appreciate nature.

Scott Lindquist is a resident of Bainbridge Island, a pediatrician, a public health officer, a coach for the Gear Grinders and spoke in support of the proposal. As a physician he believes the overall benefits of mountain biking for health and wellness significantly outweigh the risks. Mountain biking is being vilified as a dangerous sport which is not supported by the science. He said the intent of these trails has been misrepresented, they are for low speeds without jumps or built environments. The Environmental Protection Agency's definition of passive use includes mountain biking. He urged the board to do their homework and check the facts.

Connor LaCroix is a firefighter and emergency medical technician in his second year at Washington State University, he used to be on the Gear Grinders team, and he supports the proposal. Mountain biking with Gear Grinders trail etiquette was

drilled into him and has put him where he is with wanting to be outside and enjoying nature. There are currently no mountain bike trails on the island and they would not negatively impact the environment.

Darlene Kordonowy spoke in support of the proposal. She said that she trusts the Park District which listens, always has the best interest of the whole community in mind and is not biased. She trusts that the Park District will continue to do what it has done throughout this process by listening to both sides and that the agency will do the right thing. The Gear Grinders team focuses on more than mountain biking, they teach community service, leadership skills, comradery, and skills and confidence for working with the public, and she acknowledged their contribution to the community.

Matt Albee lives in Sakai Village, is a coach for the Gear Grinders and supports the proposal. The proposal is for short, low speed trails for kids to learn mountain biking on. Opportunities to get kids out in nature and exercising should be supported. Less than a mile of trail is not going to attract people from other places or advanced mountain bikers. The perimeter loop trail will remain multi-use. The park is lightly used, he does not think that would change as mountain biking would be constrained to after school and on weekends and other users could avoid those times if they wanted to. The opposition seems to be driven by Hart Lane residents and neighbors of the park who have essentially enjoyed private use of a public park and trails which were built by mountain bikers. The environmental concerns seem somewhat exaggerated.

Isabel Davis grew up on Bainbridge Island, moved back to the island for access to the outdoors and is in opposition to the proposal. Her issue with the proposal is the effect on the environment, if the proposal moves forward it is a one-way decision and cannot be undone. While everyone loves seeing kids on bikes, we cannot choose smiling faces over green spaces. Choosing one group's desires over the environment is why this planet is in its current state. She asked what precedent this sets if people think about the Grand Forest 10 years from now and asked if people will want to accommodate for an additional sport that becomes popular. She loves the outdoor industry and mountain biking, but we cannot keep making decisions that are tailored towards one group at the expense of green space. People should instead be focusing on education and teaching people to share trails. If she is understanding the timeline of the project correctly, the people in favor have been working on this for a long time and she would challenge the Park District on that. There is a reason why we are in this moment and it is because of the way this project unfolded.

Stacey Taylor is an island resident and spoke in opposition to the proposal. From her perspective there is no question that there is a need for mountain bike trails. The question is if the location chosen is an appropriate one, as the Grand Forest is unique in being subject to the bond levy parameters. She is a lawyer and encourages the Park District to get a legal opinion on whether mountain biking is a passive use. A passive use is not one that is devoted to any group nor does it require alteration to the land. By definition, and as a matter of law, these trails would not be passive use. If you make an exception to a rule for one group, you set a precedent.

Mike Vandeman grew up in Olympia, is probably the world expert on mountain biking impacts which he has been studying for 30 years and is in opposition to the proposal. He does not think there is any good reason to allow bicycles on any unpaved trails. Mountain biking teaches children that the rough treatment of nature is okay, and it is not. Trail construction and use destroys habitat. He has created a list on his website of almost 1,000 serious accidents caused by mountain biking. He opposes mountain biking here and everywhere.

Doctor Terry Douglas said she has been a registered nurse for about 50 years and spoke in opposition to the proposal. When she worked at Children's Hospital and Medical Center as an intensive care unit nurse 50% of the kids in the intensive care unit were there because of trauma related accidents. It is a real thing that injuries happen, it is not a matter of if but when. She is not risk adverse and thinks the idea of mountain bike trails is fantastic if it is designed by experts. On a personal and human level there are reasons to be cautious about the liability risks when a severe accident happens. There is a huge amount of trauma to ecology in this particular location. It is a good activity for kids and can be designed by experts.

Johnny Bregar spoke in support of the proposal. To the folks that want to tell him what to do with his own body regarding risk he said he wants to keep that his decision not someone else's. The Grand Forest North has a lot of traffic noise and does not feel remote to him. Parks are for everyone and he views Grand Forest North as a park and when he goes to the park, he sees different areas for different uses. To say the mountain bikers are being treated specially is not the case, they are being treated like every other group. A few trails are not going to cause much of a problem for the environment.

Commissioner Janow thanked everyone and said it is great to hear the passion from people and the various points of view. Commissioner Kinney thanked everyone for the information presented tonight which will be considered before a decision is made. One argument that came up several times is that people did not like the process. Whenever a group brings a proposal to the Park District they will always be involved first. BI Barks has proposed that the Grand Forest North be turned into an off-leash dog area and put in the Comprehensive Plan as a potential off-leash dog area site, yet a letter has not been sent to everyone in the community that this is a consideration. If it ever does come up it will be handled the same way as this was, there will be an informational meeting for the community and people who oppose it will have a chance to come together and present their views as well. The board is sorry that people feel like they were out of the loop on this, but that is the way things go because mailings are not sent to the community every time an idea comes up. Before the commissioners vote they will think about all the comments made, they want everyone to feel heard and to have a chance to share information. It is important for the board to let the public know that this will not be rushed and that both sides of the issue will have their concerns heard and considered. Commissioner Swolgaard said those are his sentiments as well. Commissioner DeWitt said his purpose tonight was to listen to what people had to say and he agrees with Commissioner Kinney and Commissioner Swolgaard. The board is at the beginning of this process and there will be a lot more public involvement.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH KITSAP PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT FOR EASEMENT IN GAZZAM LAKE NATURE

PRESERVE: Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin said that the proposed agreement is just for phase one of the work Kitsap Public Utility District wants to do in their easement, which includes drilling a well and improving their storage tanks. The Park District's connection to the well could be under 30 pounds per square inch and a pressure system may be needed. The Bainbridge Island Land Trust has reviewed the document and their suggested edits were incorporated. Staff and attorneys recommend moving forward. Commissioner DeWitt said he was under the impression that there would be some language in the agreement about removing the trail that went down the waterline easement and revegetating it. Dan Hamlin said that will be part of phase two, which will include a proposal from BILT for a path forward to expand the size of the KPUD easement and amend the conservation easement. Executive Director Jane Stone with BILT said that while there are still some details to work out, she is confident that they have a good path forward for an important public water use issue while upholding the terms of the conservation easement.

VACANCY ON BOARD OF POSITION FIVE: Commissioner Janow said that Kristine Cox resigned from the board and the board is now in the position of needing to appoint a new commissioner within 90 days. The Park District will hold a special board meeting the week of May 24 to discuss the appointment process, the final date to be determined.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Recreation Division: Recreation Superintendent Bryan Garoutte said that within 24 hours of opening summer registration there were 111 full camps and classes, 3,419 registrations, and over half a million dollars in revenue collected. He would like to recognize the recreation staff for their creative programming and hard work and say thank you to the community for their support and trust. Recreation Division Director Mark Benishek gave kudos to the recreation staff and highlighted the work Marketing Coordinator Allie Smith has done to publicize summer registration. The ability to accommodate those people who are currently on waitlists for summer programming will depend on the ability to hire part-time staff.

Park Services Division: Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin said there is a Trails Advisory Committee meeting on Monday. Senior Planner Perry Barrett said staff met today with City of Bainbridge Island staff regarding prospective permits for proposals that are under discussion and consideration by the board. Work needs to be finished up with the deed to Sakai Park to qualify for the Recreation and Conservation Office grant that was awarded.

BOARD MEMBER ITEMS:

- Commissioner DeWitt asked how the liner in the Nakata pool is holding up. Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin said staff is still waiting for answers on the insurance question and he will follow up with that.
- Commissioner DeWitt attended a Bainbridge Island Parks Foundation meeting that was held outdoors and in person. Barb Trafton has officially stepped down as executive director and Mary Meier has taken that position. The Parks Foundation did an amazing job fundraising over \$540,000 for the KidsUp! Playground renovation. He understands that Park District staff stepped in to do some work at the Moritani Preserve when a contractor did not show up. Construction of the Koura Road to Yukio Lane trail was supposed to start yesterday and it will be an important trail.
- Commissioner Janow recommended to anyone who has not been to Battle Point Park to see the KidsUp! Playground renovation to get out there.
- Commissioner Janow said she is participating in the Passport to Parks & Trails program which has been fun, and she recommends it to see the breadth and scope of everything the Park District does.
- Commissioner Janow wished all the moms a happy Mother's Day.
- Commissioner DeWitt said he and his wife were in Maui and the condo complex they stay at had recently refinished their tennis courts. There is interest in putting pickleball on the tennis courts and it is a major topic there.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

MEETING ADJOURNED to an eighteen-minute recess at 10:37 pm with announced time to reconvene at 10:55 pm. **MEETING RECONVENED** at 10:55 pm.

MEETING ADJOURNED TO EXECUTIVE SESSION at 10:55 pm for discussion of real estate with announced time to reconvene at 11:25 pm.


MEETING RECONVENED at 11:25 pm and **ADJOURNED TO EXECUTIVE SESSION** at 11:25 pm for continued discussion of the above item, with announced time to reconvene at 11:30 pm.

MEETING RECONVENED at 11:30 pm and **ADJOURNED** at 11:30 pm.

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

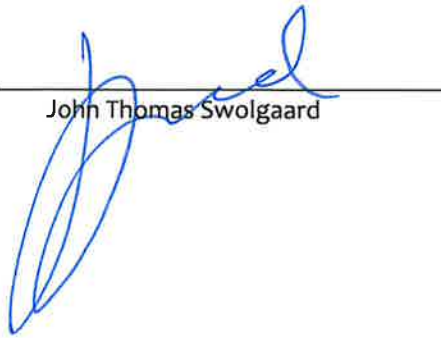
BY: 
Dawn Janow

BY: _____
Board Vacancy

BY: 
Kenneth R. DeWitt

BY:

John Thomas Swolgaard



ATTEST:

Jay C. Kinney

