

**BAINBRIDGE ISLAND METROPOLITAN PARK & RECREATION DISTRICT  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING JANUARY 6, 2022  
ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

**CALL TO ORDER:** A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 6:03 pm by Chair Janow.

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

**ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA:** Add item 50.5 for Hybrid Meeting Update.

**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**

Caty Kehs said she understands the predicament and challenges related to staffing shortages but there is a critical need for kids to have swim lessons. She has noticed that since many of the COVID-19 restrictions were lifted at the beginning of the summer that the Aquatic Center has not returned to offering even half of the swim classes it used to offer. With so few lessons being offered, many kids are going without swim lessons for a long period of time. It is a health and safety issue that kids are not learning basic water safety skills, especially on an island which makes it seem that much more critical. She is concerned and said that whatever we can do as a community to find ways to make some of the critical instructor positions more attractive and retain staff is in the best interest of the kids. It seems to her that more pool time has been pulled away from swim lessons during the pandemic for other activities such as club teams. This was understandable for a time, however there will be no one to fill these teams in the future if kids do not learn swimming skills today. She thinks parents on the island are desperate and frustrated with how fast swim lessons fill up. Parents must sign up for swim lessons through May not even knowing what level their child will be in at that time. The current system has issues and has not been sustainable, and the pandemic has made it worse. As a community surrounded by water there needs to be a way to mitigate this situation. It may mean a different pay structure for some critical swim instructor positions to attract and retain staff that are willing and capable. She knows finding staff is even harder than it was pre-pandemic. Out of the box thinking is needed.

**BOARD CONSENT**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Upon hearing there were no corrections to the minutes of the December 16, 2021 regular board meeting, Chair Janow stated the minutes stand approved as submitted.

**APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS: MSC: DeWitt/Kinney: 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
	001 General Fund (Dec. Payroll)	EFT & 2902-2921	456,215.93	

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**OATH OF OFFICE:** Accounting Coordinator and Park District Notary Terry Bugas administered the oath of office for Commissioner Goodlin. (Commissioner Goodlin was elected in November of 2021 to fulfill the remaining two years of the term to which Michael Pollock was originally elected in November of 2017 to serve from 2018-2023. Michael Pollock resigned

in December of 2019 and Kristine Cox was appointed in March of 2020. Kristine Cox resigned in April of 2021 and Asaph Glosser was appointed to serve for the remainder of 2021 in July of 2021.)

**PARK BOARD OFFICERS:**

**MSC: Kinney/Swolgaard: That Commissioner DeWitt be appointed as Chair.**

**MSC: Swolgaard/DeWitt: That Commissioner Kinney be appointed as Vice Chair.**

**MSC: DeWitt/Swolgaard: That Commissioner Goodlin be appointed as Treasurer.**

**MSC: Kinney/DeWitt: That Commissioner Swolgaard be appointed as Secretary.**

**MSC: Kinney/DeWitt: That Commissioner Janow be appointed as Member at Large.**

Commissioner DeWitt said he has asked Commissioner Janow to run the entire meeting tonight for continuity. The officer positions will begin at midnight.

**PARK BOARD COMMITTEES AND LIAISONS:**

2022 Board Committee Assignments:

Governance:	DeWitt/Kinney	<i>(incoming Chair and Vice-Chair)</i>
Capital Facilities:	Janow/Kinney	
Program:	Janow	
Budget & Finance:	DeWitt/Goodlin	<i>(current and past Treasurer serve on this committee)</i>
Personnel:	Janow/DeWitt	<i>(outgoing and incoming Chairs)</i>
Forest Management:	Swolgaard/DeWitt	<i>(ad hoc committee established at 9/17/20 board meeting)</i>
Sakai Site Planning:	Goodlin/Swolgaard	<i>(ad hoc committee established at 11/3/16 board meeting)</i>

**MSC: DeWitt/Kinney: Approve board committee representatives as shown on the screen.**

2022 Board Liaison Positions:

Park District Trails Advisory Committee:	Swolgaard/DeWitt	
Park District Dog Advisory Committee:	Kinney/Janow	
Bainbridge Island Parks Foundation:	Janow/Kinney	
Intergovernmental Work Group (IGWG):	DeWitt/Kinney	<i>(incoming Chair and Vice-Chair)</i>
Bainbridge Island School District:	Kinney/Goodlin	
City of Bainbridge Island:	Janow/DeWitt	

**MSC: Kinney/DeWitt: Move that the board approves the following board liaison positions for 2022: Park District Trails Advisory Committee with Commissioner DeWitt and Commissioner Swolgaard; Park District Dog Advisory Committee with Commissioner Kinney and Commissioner Janow; Bainbridge Island Parks Foundation with Commissioner Janow and Commissioner Kinney; IGWG with Commissioner DeWitt and Commissioner Kinney; Bainbridge Island School District with Commissioner Kinney and Commissioner Goodlin; City of Bainbridge Island with Commissioner Janow and Commissioner DeWitt.**

**EMERGENCY EXCEPTION TO SICK LEAVE POLICY:** Administrative Division Director Amy Swenson said the Emergency Exception to Sick Leave policy is being proposed to help deal with a few different problems. The recent rise in COVID-19 cases has meant that more people are having exposures to or contracting COVID-19. With the recent addition of the Bainbridge Island Recreation Center, some of the newer employees do not have much sick leave accrued. Management wants to encourage employees to be honest about COVID-19 diagnosis and exposure without having to worry about their finances. In the policy, if an employee's accrued sick leave is under 40 hours there would be an emergency exception to give them additional sick leave during quarantine or while they get tested. In the proposed policy included in the board packet

the policy stated it would be effective until 12/31/22; at this time staff would like to add, “or rescinded by the board” in case the situation changes. In the proposed policy, section 1, subsection A, staff would like to revise it to say, “Employees with over 40 hours of accrued sick leave are not eligible to use this leave.” Staff has proposed that the policy be retroactive to 12/16/21, as the current pay period is 12/16/21-1/15/22. There are currently a couple of employees who have disclosed a COVID-19 exposure and do not have enough sick leave to cover their absence and management would like to be able to help them out retroactively. Commissioner Goodlin said he understands the concept in general and asked why it is a benefit only for those employees who do not have enough accrued sick leave. Amy Swenson clarified that sick leave and vacation leave are different categories for Park District staff and that only an employee’s sick leave is being looked at to determine if this policy applies. Commissioner Goodlin asked how the Executive Director issuing up to two additional weeks of leave is managed and asked if an employee must take a COVID-19 test before returning to work. Amy Swenson said if someone is exposed to COVID-19 they must quarantine and get a negative test result before returning to work. The allowance for up to two weeks of emergency sick leave was determined so that it would be enough to cover an employee who contracts COVID-19. An employee would not automatically receive the entire two weeks of emergency sick leave, the amount they receive will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Commissioner Janow asked if someone has been a long-term employee with a larger amount of accrued sick leave why they would not be granted the same consideration as a new hire. Amy Swenson gave an example that if she leaves employment with the Park District tomorrow, she will not get paid out for her sick leave, she will only get 173 hours or 25%, whichever is less. There is a point at which accruing sick leave does not benefit an employee, and there is a sick leave share program available if an employee becomes severely ill. Commissioner Janow said this becomes important with the employees onboarded recently and she appreciates the attention to meeting the needs of these folks. After some discussion the board decided to remove the effective until date from the policy. **MSC: Kinney/Swolgaard: Move to amend the Employee Sick Leave Exception policy as printed and distributed by staff with the amendment that effective until 12/31/22 is stricken and that in section 1, subsection A, the policy read, “Employees with over 40 hours of sick leave are not eligible to use this leave.”**

**HYBRID BOARD MEETING UPDATE:** Executive Director Terry Lande said that he recommends continuing with virtual board meetings into February with the recent increase in COVID-19 cases caused by the Omicron variant and that the situation be evaluated as it unfolds. Commissioner Swolgaard said virtual meetings should continue through February. Commissioner Janow said she is in support of delaying hybrid board meetings and that the Omicron variant is everywhere. She agrees that the Park District board should continue with virtual board meetings through February at least and until it is safe to meet in person.

Recreation Division Director Mark Benishek said that the primary location for the in-person component of hybrid board meetings when the board does decide to move forward is going to be the large group exercise room at Bainbridge Island Recreation Center. The seating capacity includes space for up to 35 members of the public in addition to staff and commissioners. When larger crowds are expected, meetings can be moved to the BIRC gymnasium. For the in-person component of hybrid board meetings commissioners and staff would each have a computer in front of them, but external microphones would be used. Commissioner Goodlin said he is wondering if there is an option for commissioners to attend hybrid board meetings remotely if there is a need to isolate or travel. Mark Benishek said the hybrid model does permit commissioners and staff to attend remotely whether they need to isolate or are traveling.

**MEETING ADJOURNED** to a seven-minute recess at 7:17 pm with announced time to reconvene at 7:24 pm. **MEETING RECONVENED** at 7:24 pm

### **DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

**Park Services Division:** Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin said last week during the snow staff kept Bainbridge Island Recreation Center and the Aquatic Center operational as much as possible. Meadowmeer Golf & Country Club

cleared the BIRC parking lot of snow. Staff will research getting snowplows for trucks. Staff met with the City of Bainbridge Island's planning department today. The mountain bike trail committee is working to revamp their request for qualifications by the end of January and hopes to be reviewing vendors by the end of February. The skate park committee has selected a subcommittee and that subcommittee will be holding interviews of the top two consultant firms the week of January 17<sup>th</sup>, then meeting with the entire committee the week of January 24<sup>th</sup> to share which one is selected. Bainbridge Island School District staff is going to share their gymnasium maintenance vendors with Park District staff. A staff report regarding tennis court options and the pros and cons of each option is being planned for the second regular board meeting in February. Senior Planner Perry Barrett said the Park District's attorney and the City's attorney are discussing the aquatic lease for the sail float replacement.

Recreation Division: Recreation Division Director Mark Benishek said yesterday was the first day of winter/spring registration. The number of registrations received during the first hour of registration was historic, with numbers doubling from 2019 levels. Staff appreciates the support and trust from the community and has a large task ahead of them to expand programs and recruit additional staff in order to try to meet the demand. An email will go out tomorrow to let the public know about the historic numbers and how staff is addressing the issue. Every department is doing their best to rebuild staffing to pre-pandemic levels and staff is monitoring for changes in COVID-19 operating regulations. Most winter programs will begin after Martin Luther King Jr Day and registrants will be notified if there are adjustments to programs due to changes in COVID-19 operating regulations. Park District staff want to provide the highest level of service while keeping staff and participants safe. The Bainbridge Island Senior Center has postponed all programming leading to an influx of seniors participating at Bainbridge Island Recreation Center and staff is working to meet the growing demand. Announcement of the recipients of the Washington Recreation & Parks Association grant, which the Park District applied for, has been postponed until January 28. Aquatic Program Administrator Megan Pleli is wrapping up a lifeguard certification class and hopes that 3-4 of the participants will be joining the Aquatic Center staff. Bainbridge Aquatic Masters returned to practice this week after a break. Bainbridge Island Swim Club continued to practice over the winter holiday and additional athletes have qualified for the Junior Nationals. Commissioner Goodlin asked how many open positions staff is trying to fill. Mark Benishek said he does not have a specific number, but every single department is looking for additional staff right now. Recreation Superintendent Bryan Garoutte thanked Park Services for their help keeping BIRC open throughout the recent snowy weather. BIRC now has 1,275 monthly users, not including employees. The senior population accounts for 467 of the BIRC monthly user accounts. The Winter Classic tennis tournament held at BIRC last week went well despite the snowy weather. Pilates and pickleball have started at BIRC. Basketball leagues kicked off this past week, but games are delayed until February due to COVID-19 concerns. Ski bus is starting this weekend. Outdoor Program Manager Nick Prevo is applying for 2022 hiking permits for programming. The Eagledale Pottery Studio was closed for reorganizing and cleaning. Hyla Middle School is interested in holding a winter elective class at the Eagledale Pottery Studio. The girls' gymnastics team is going to Bellevue for a competition next weekend and the boys' team will be going to Vancouver. The Teen Center is open, and a new Teen Center Coordinator has been hired.

Executive Director Terry Lande said the historic registration numbers are what success looks like in recreation. It is a wonderful problem to have, and staff is working to expand programming and fit various programming needs into existing facilities. It was a yeoman effort to get the facilities open in one of the more difficult holiday periods he has seen due to the snow. Commissioner Janow asked how the board can continue to support staff with the incredible growth in demand. Terry Lande said this success did not happen just because of staff; the board's leadership has been incredibly supportive. He asked that the board continue to support staff and continue to allow staff to think outside the box and be creative.

#### **UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS:**

Commissioner Janow said she would like to see a board retreat scheduled for this year.

## **BOARD MEMBER ITEMS:**

- Commissioner Kinney said he will miss the February 3 board meeting for the happy occasion of his dad's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday party.
- Commissioner Kinney recently spoke with Executive Director Terry Lande and said it was encouraging to hear how well Bainbridge Island Recreation Center is running. The tennis program is full, the place is being well run, and people are happy and that is good to hear.
- Commissioner Swolgaard said this morning he saw the bridge at Blakely Harbor Park which looked like it was floating due to the king tide rising over the jetty.
- Commissioner Swolgaard asked if the Trails Advisory Committee will be meeting Monday night. Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin replied that it will.
- Commissioner Goodlin said he is excited to begin his service to the community. He never wanted to campaign but in doing so he met a lot of community members and got a deeper understanding of Park District issues on the island and new ones were brought to his attention. He met with his opponent, David Maron, and got his insights. He said people really like the Park District for the most part but the one issue he heard a lot is concern over a lack of transparency for new projects under development. There is a feeling in the community that projects are sprung upon the public after being well baked. One example is the proposed lighting of the artificial turf fields at Battle Point Park and another one is the formerly proposed mountain bike trails in the Grand Forest North. He knows that these are public meetings, and the information is brought to the board and discussed but he thinks there is something more the Park District needs to do to involve the public in these discussions. He proposed that an opportunity for the public to voice concerns, including having early input on some of these issues, would lead to better outcomes. He does not have answers but has a few ideas. He does not know what the current staff situation is, but he would encourage a dedicated staff member to do outreach and communications including pamphlets, announcements, website, social media, emails, and advertising. That staff member could be in the position to broadcast potential developments being considered. He knows staff considers a lot of projects that never come to fruition. However, he suggested looking at the timing of when issues are brought forward to the public and said that maybe some of that should happen sooner than it currently does. The Park District could have public scoping sessions for the development of ideas. One example for the proposed artificial turf field lighting might be including a presentation of all the possible locations. He thinks an increased awareness regarding if there is something of great interest would be beneficial so that the Park District could reach out to community partners and community members. He does not have answers but thinks how the Park District can improve should be discussed and figured out.
- Commissioner DeWitt said he sat through the Washington State Ferries' virtual town hall last night. One thing that was interesting is the number of employees they have that are eligible to retire in the next five years, including 74% of captains. It makes him appreciate what the Park District is dealing with in terms of staffing issues. He gets a bit concerned about what the transportation system is going to look like in the next five years.
- Commissioner DeWitt said that Issei Creek has an amazing amount of water flowing through it. He was surprised that there was not more standing water on the trails in the Grand Forest West and said the trails are in amazingly good shape for the amount of rain and snow there has been lately.
- Commissioner DeWitt said he read in the Battle Point Astronomical Association newsletter that they have an agreement with the Bainbridge Amateur Radio Club to put an antenna on the observatory building and asked if it has been run by the Park District. Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin said staff is aware and that it is being done as part of the emergency response team effort by the City of Bainbridge Island and Bainbridge Prepares.

Commissioner DeWitt said the thing that concerned him was that BPAA mentioned that they have a corroded oil tank. Dan Hamlin said it has been removed and that they are putting in a new tank outside. Commissioner DeWitt said he is glad staff is on top of it and said to keep up the good work.

- Commissioner Janow said that there is currently a concerted effort to bring a media/public relations staff person into the agency. There is recognition and awareness that the Park District's media presence needs to be addressed.
- Commissioner Janow said she has been exploring the trails around the Port Blakely Cemetery and that they are beautiful. She is in awe of how the Park District has made that area accessible to the community. Everywhere she goes she is continually in awe of what the island has to offer.
- Commissioner DeWitt thanked Commissioner Janow for her work as chair of the board and said Commissioner Janow had six major issues to deal with during her term as chair.
- Commissioner DeWitt said that Noxious Weed Control Coordinator Dana Coggon is leaving her position with Kitsap County. He really appreciates all the work she has done over the years; she has been an amazing help to the Park District.
- Commissioner Swolgaard thanked Commissioner Janow for the great job she did as chair of the board in 2021.
- Commissioner Kinney said that Commissioner Janow did an extraordinary job as chair of the board and everyone from fellow commissioners to staff and the public are in awe of what she was able to pull off in 2021. She put in a lot of work for a volunteer position and should get citizen of the year.
- Commissioner Kinney said that Commissioner Goodlin brought up that people who were involved with the proposed mountain bike trails in the Grand Forest North, and people who are involved with the proposed lighting of the artificial turf fields at Battle Point Park, say the Park District is not acting transparently. He said if someone says something and you do not respond then sometimes people will take that as agreement, and he could not disagree more. There is always going to be user groups bringing proposals to staff. The board heard about the proposed mountain bike trails in the Grand Forest North at the same time the public did. The board has always had as many hearings as it had to have to make sure everyone is fully heard. Then there is a public discussion and public vote in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. If people say the commissioners are meeting illegally in violation of the OPMA that could not be further from the truth. If they want to imply that decisions are being made behind closed doors or before the meetings that is not what is happening, and it has never happened. If they want to argue that the Park District does not give people a chance to be heard that cannot be further from the truth. It sounds like people are aggrieved that they do not hear about issues until they come to a public meeting, and he does not know how to solve that. He would not call that transparency, there are a lot of ideas that come to the board that never go anywhere. A lot of times it is how you define the issue, and he really dislikes the charge that somehow the Park District is not transparent. While he is sure that Commissioner Goodlin did hear about transparency from some people, his comment is not directed at Commissioner Goodlin. Some people said that the three proposed mountain bike trails in the Grand Forest North were going to destroy the aquifer when there is a golf course and housing developments in that area. He heard some pretty remarkable things during that discussion. As far as the proposed lighting of the artificial turf fields at Battle Point Park, he heard about that the same time everyone else did and a real proposal has not even been heard yet. There is no basis to someone saying the Park District is not transparent, there has not even been a public meeting yet on that topic, let alone a decision. At the last meeting some ideas were kicked around, in public, about alternate locations for lighted artificial turf fields. Everything is done above board and is transparent. Nothing is being done behind closed doors. He is sensitive to this because during the four-hour board meeting where the public commented on the proposed mountain bike trails in the Grand Forest North some people made outrageous comments and the board did not

respond. He decided that when something like that comes up, he is not going to be quiet because he thinks if you are somehow people think you are agreeing with them.

*JK*

- Commissioner Goodlin said it is easy to get defensive about this but that is not his point. Nobody is saying anything is illegal or below the table. The idea that there is a lack of transparency is not limited to the two examples he brought up. It is a widespread feeling, and he does not know why that is. His point is the Park District needs to do better at making people aware of things that are coming up. The Park District needs to reach out to community groups and pull them in when appropriate. He thinks that will lead to better outcomes and less arguments. The four-hour meeting about the proposed mountain bike trails in the Grand Forest North might have been avoided.
- Commissioner Janow said if Commissioner Goodlin spends a little bit of time learning about the culture of what goes on at the Park District and if he had come to some of those board meetings, he might not necessarily be listening to people who did not attend those board meetings. If one is paying attention to the communications and reading the minutes, there can be no doubt that the Park District is as transparent as it can possibly be. She is sorry that he has not participated in a way the board might have looked forward to someone participating but she is hoping that moving forward he will learn and see how the Park District operates.
- Commissioner Goodlin said that he is not complaining about the process of the board meetings or minutes. There are certain topics that come up, which might be recognizable, that the public might react to. The Park District could do better at foreshadowing what is being discussed, so people feel more involved, and input is received sooner to avoid some of these conflicts. He brought this up because the issue with transparency did not just come from people involved in hot button issues, it was widespread.
- Commissioner Janow said she is hoping that Commissioner Goodlin has come to the board with an open mind. She hopes he understands that the Park District is a completely transparent agency and everything one wants to learn they can learn if they engage themselves. The Park District is looking at ways to continue to engage with the public and provide the public as much information as possible. The idea that the Park District is not transparent, or forthcoming is just untrue.
- Commissioner Janow welcomed Commissioner Goodlin and said she thinks there will be some spirited discussion and that will be great.
- Commissioner Janow said she is thankful for the last year and looking forward to 2022. 2021 saw exponential growth in the Park District and she is thankful for that. The Bainbridge Island Recreation Center transition has exceeded her expectations and staff has done a remarkable job of not only integrating the existing staff but making them feel welcome and proud to be part of the Park District.

*JK*

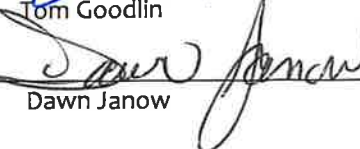
**MEETING ADJOURNED** at 8:20 pm.

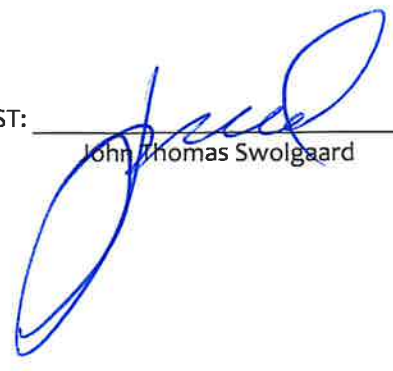
Helen M. Stone  
Terry M. Lande  
BAINBRIDGE ISLAND METROPOLITAN  
PARK & RECREATION DISTRICT

BY: *Kenneth R. DeWitt*  
Kenneth R. DeWitt

BY: *Jay C. Kinney*  
Jay C. Kinney

BY:   
Tom Goodlin

BY:   
Dawn Janow

ATTEST:   
John Thomas Swolgaard