

**BAINBRIDGE ISLAND METROPOLITAN PARK & RECREATION DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING September 15, 2022
BAINBRIDGE ISLAND RECREATION CENTER**

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

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

ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA: Items 40.3 and 40.4 regarding the amended 2022 General Fund and Capital Improvement Fund budgets were removed from the agenda.

MISSION STATEMENT: Commissioner DeWitt 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

Mary Dombrowski said the Fort Ward Neighborhood Association paid for three benches on Park District property in the Fort Ward area. Two of those benches have shrubbery growing close to them and she requested that it be trimmed back. Commissioner DeWitt suggested that Mary Dombrowski contact Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin as that is an operational issue.

Mary Meier, Executive Director of the Bainbridge Island Parks & Trails Foundation, thanked the Park District for support on two recent events BIPTF hosted.

BOARD CONSENT

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Upon hearing there were no corrections to the minutes of the September 1, 2022 regular board meeting, Chair DeWitt stated the minutes stand approved as submitted.

APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS: MSC: Goodlin/Janow: 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
09/09/22	001 General Fund 300 Capital Improvement Fund	23601-23659	192,620.14	09/09/22

GENERAL BUSINESS

FORT WARD PLAYGROUND: Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin said the last time this topic was on a board meeting agenda the board asked the Fort Ward community to get together to discuss what they wanted. The Fort Ward community has done so, and community members are going to speak tonight regarding results of a survey and a community meeting.

Caitlin Lombardi spoke about how word was spread around the community via flyers on doors and on the Fort Ward community Facebook page for the neighborhood survey. 140 responses were received from 108 households. When asked if they support the idea of a community playground in Fort Ward, 76.5% of respondents answered positively and 12.1% of respondents answered negatively. When respondents were asked if they would use a community playground in Fort Ward, 60.7% of responses were positive and 28.6% were negative. There are more people who agree with the idea to have a playground than there are people who would use it. Regarding location preference, the survey responses indicated the Fort Ward Parade Grounds as the preferred location for a playground. The point of the survey was to let everyone have a voice,

and she hopes the survey results convey those voices. As a person who lives directly on the Fort Ward Parade Grounds, Caitlin Lombardi pushed back against the idea that it is anyone's backyard, it is public land.

JD Sumsky said the Fort Ward neighborhood held a meeting to discuss the potential playground on September 11 and approximately 30 neighbors were in attendance. The consensus at the meeting was that there is broad support in the neighborhood for a playground but there was no consensus on a location.

Commissioner Janow thanked the Fort Ward community members for being engaging and said it is the best first step.

Mary Dombrowski said she is in favor of a playground on the Fort Ward Parade Grounds. She is against the idea of a playground in the upper area of Fort Ward Park due to danger from wild animals.

Jessica Malouf said she is passionate about having a playground in Fort Ward where meaningful connections with neighbors could be made. She thinks the Fort Ward Parade Grounds is the ideal location for the playground.

Jim Brumley said at the Fort Ward community meeting that most people wanted the playground to be built in upper Fort Ward Park. He said that wild animals are everywhere in the neighborhood, not just in the upper Fort Ward Park area.

Karen Brumley said she thinks there is a civic responsibility to both provide play places for children and to protect and preserve history. The Fort Ward Parade Grounds is historical, and she would like it to be preserved. The noise from a playground on or adjacent to the Fort Ward Parade Grounds would be very impactful on those who live nearby to the playground. She said no playground is worth breaking a community.

Heather Berse said it hurts her heart that the unanimous support for a playground at the upper Fort Ward Park site at the Fort Ward community meeting is not being conveyed. She proposed two additional potential playground sites in Fort Ward Park. She said if there is anyway to reduce the feeling that the community is being split she is in favor of that.

John Ley said he was informed after the Fort Ward community meeting, that he did not attend, that there was a consensus on the upper Fort Ward Park site. He said to put a playground on or adjacent to the Fort Ward Parade Grounds will degrade the area, which is historical. He said this issue is not about children, it is about the convenience of adults. He said that a playground will devalue the adjacent properties. He is in support of the upper Fort Ward Park site.

Thomas Dildine said he was at the Fort Ward community meeting and echoed the comments that there was a consensus at the meeting for the upper Fort Ward Park site. He has heard concerns about wildlife at the upper Fort Ward Park site but asserts that wild animals are all over the neighborhood, including the Fort Ward Parade Grounds. He is concerned about the historical value of the area which he says will complicate permitting. He works from home and is concerned that a playground near his home will compromise both his and his wife's ability to make a living.

Grant Morgan said conversations around playgrounds should be positive. There was close to a consensus at the Fort Ward community meeting for the upper Fort Ward Park site. If that site was chosen he would encourage traffic calming measures for safety. He is concerned about keeping the playground project moving forward quickly and preserving community harmony.

Mike Sumsky is in support of a playground but does not want it to divide the community. He has concerns with traffic for the upper Fort Ward Park site.

Charlie Olson said he is in support of a playground on the Fort Ward Parade Grounds. He thinks the upper Fort Ward Park site is a dangerous spot to put a playground due to the amount of people, wildlife, and falling trees. In the last year he happened upon a potential homeless camp in Fort Ward Park, and he does not want to put kids in an area like that.

Jess Morgan said it is important to be clear that there was a lot of support for the upper Fort Ward Park site at the Fort Ward community meeting. She emphasized that there were only 20-30 people at the meeting which represents about 1/5 of the people who responded to the survey. She said consensus does not mean that everyone is going to be happy, and that should not stop the process from moving forward. They are willing to accept a decision from the board for the safest, most visible, and most respectful location.

Laura Hemphill said the upper Fort Ward Park site should be added to an additional survey. In terms of the upper Fort Ward Park site, she thinks it is very dangerous. She supports a playground on the Fort Ward Parade Grounds. She said the lots in the Fort Ward neighborhood are very small and that if you moved into the community expecting a quite life that is unrealistic.

Caitlin Lombardi said that she would encourage the people who are concerned about noise or traffic to visit the other tot lots on the island. Her kids are already on the Fort Ward Parade Grounds every day screaming. Right now, the Fort Ward Parade Grounds are being used as an off-leash dog park and a place where kids share and leave toys; she thinks if there was a vote today no one would say this is what they wanted for the space. The Fort Ward Parade Grounds does not only have military history, but it also has indigenous history.

JD Sumsy said that there was not a consensus at the Fort Ward community meeting on the upper Fort Ward Park site. From her perspective the decision should be made on serving the whole community and the greater good. She hopes the board will conclude that the Fort Ward Parade Grounds is the best location.

Thomas Dildine said there would be disproportionate impacts to himself, and other people close by if a playground were to be built on the parcel adjacent to the Fort Ward Parade Grounds. He does not mind current use of the Fort Ward Parade Grounds but putting a playground ten feet from his home would concentrate the noise.

Loanne Harmeling said she lives right next to the Madison Tot Lot, and she enjoys hearing kids playing. While she is sympathetic, she thinks that having kids playing next door is a non-issue.

Commissioner DeWitt thanked everyone for their comments and said there will be further deliberation on the subject and that no decision will be made tonight.

MEETING ADJOURNED to a five-minute recess at 7:11 pm with announced time to reconvene at 7:16 pm. **MEETING RECONVENED** at 7:16 pm.

Commissioner DeWitt suggested the board direct staff to come back to a future board meeting with updates and a possible recommendation for a location. Commissioner Goodlin said that his priority to the staff would be to avoid being too close or too far away from houses. Commissioner Janow said that staff should come back to the board with a list of pros and cons for the different site options. Commissioner Kinney suggested that the next time this topic is on the agenda that it be an action item rather than for discussion only.

WASHINGTON RECREATION & PARK ASSOCIATION SEEK GRANT PRESENTATION: Active Adult Program Manager Sue Barrington said she is here to talk about the SEEK grant for 2022 received by the Park District. The SEEK grant is a reimbursable grant for agencies providing summer experiences and enrichment for kids. Due to the diversity of programming at the Park District there were three separate requests for funding. The first request was for teen programming including Student Conservation Corps and Trails Crew. The second request was for outdoor programming and included funding for special events. The third request was to support youth programming. Three videos about the three request areas were shared at the meeting. Sue Barrington said the funding that initiated the SEEK program was from COVID-19 relief funds from federal sources. The SEEK grant program facilitators are going to try to secure ongoing funding for the program through the Washington State legislature. To help their cause, they requested all agencies receiving funds

this year document where the funds are going, which is why the videos were created. Through Work Ready Bainbridge, a Bainbridge High School student was able to work on these videos with the help of a professional videographer hired by the Park District. Commissioner Janow thanked them for making the videos which reflect the agency in such a positive, warm, and loving way. Sue Barrington said the final reports are due September 30 and once those are submitted and accepted the \$500,000 grant will be received by the end of October. It has been a real honor to champion the work of the Park District and the work of her colleagues who do amazing things every day and are unsung heroes. Commissioner DeWitt thanked Sue Barrington for her work on this and her dedication and service to the Park District. Recreation Division Director Mark Benishek thanked Sue Barrington for her dedication to this project.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Park Services Division: Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin said that the Hillside Shelter was reroofed, and work continues on cabin 5 at Fay Bainbridge Park. There was a meeting for the user groups regarding the artificial turf field proposal at Strawberry Hill Park. Football, soccer, little league softball, and ultimate frisbee representatives were in attendance; boys and girls lacrosse were invited but did not attend. Work to remove weeds from the ballfields will begin soon, permission was received from the board to spray this fall. Senior Planner Perry Barrett said the permitting has been submitted to the City of Bainbridge Island for Williams-Olson Park. He had a walk through with the consultants doing the Department of Ecology site clean-up at Blakely Harbor Park.

Recreation Division: Recreation Division Director Mark Benishek said that the Aquatic Center is busy with fall programming launching. Staff is continuing to develop the winter/spring catalog. Recreation Superintendent Bryan Garoutte said this month is the first anniversary of the opening of Bainbridge Island Recreation Center. There is an open house coming up with opportunities for the public to engage and tour BIRC. Almost all fall gymnastics classes are full. Post summer camp clean-up and organization is underway. The Teen Center is experiencing solid participation.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS:

September 29 there will be a special board meeting. There will be a board work session on October 20.

BOARD MEMBER ITEMS:

- Commissioner Janow said she attended the recent Bainbridge Island Parks & Trails Foundation meeting.
- Commissioner Janow attended a Bainbridge Island Parks & Trails Foundation fundraiser last Saturday.
- Commissioner Goodlin asked fellow board members to approve an agenda item for the next board meeting regarding the board considering making a project for Aquatic Center improvements. His aspiration is to have a replacement pool built for the competition pool, and while there is no specific project yet, it would be a general improvements fund including for a new pool. He said if a project is created the Bainbridge Island Parks & Trails Foundation could start to accept donations for it. Commissioner Kinney asked how far along a project must be before that can be done. Commissioner Janow said without a location or any viable situation for a new pool to be built she thinks it is unfair to start accepting money. Commissioner Goodlin said in 2017 or 2018 the board decided to investigate replacing the Ray Williamson pool and had a study done, this has been a long process. He has had several people approach him about how to donate. He thinks this would be a quiet start for something that will need a lot of fundraising. There are people willing to start contributing and he thinks it would just need to be made clear to the donors that donations are for future improvements or a new pool. Executive Director Terry Lande said one of the things that would have to happen would be a conversation with the BIPTF to see if it is a project they want to take on. Commissioner Janow said it sounds more like a fund with a use to be determined rather than a project on which there is board consensus. Terry Lande said he thinks the question becomes whether the board

will accept a new project to be fundraised for. Commissioner DeWitt said if there is a general fund for the Aquatic Center and the donors' money does not get used for a new pool, donors could potentially get upset. He thinks it would have to be made very clear that the money could go to something other than a new pool. Commissioner Goodlin said there would have to be clarity, so the donors are aware of the parameters of the fund. Because it is a big lift to fundraise that much, and people are willing to donate, there is a benefit to beginning. BIPTF Executive Director Mary Meier said generally BIPTF does not like to start fundraising until there is a clear scope of work and budget established. She asked that the Park District come to BIPTF with a defined ask so a decision can be made. Commissioner Kinney said there is pool maintenance, pool improvements, and the possibility for a future new pool. How much money should go towards improvements will depend on how long the Ray Williamson pool is going to last, which is being evaluated currently. He thinks that the board should wait until the Park District has that report. Commissioner Janow said fundraising does not have to go through the BIPTF, another non-profit could fundraise. Commissioner Goodlin said the process for a replacement pool has stagnated and he does not know how to get it started unless first steps are taken. Terry Lande said that three project choices were developed, 25-meter, 33-meter, and 50-meter pools and the board decided they did not want to go out for a bond for the next several years. The project has not stagnated, it was deliberately tabled by the board until the board decides to go out for a bond measure or there are donors willing to fund it. Commissioner DeWitt said that the Bainbridge School District has told the Park District that they will not consider a new pool until their master plan is complete. Commissioner Goodlin said there is need for a competition pool and if it cannot happen at the Aquatic Center then it is time to start looking at other options. Terry Lande said not only is there the cost to build a new pool, but the cost to operate it that must be addressed before a new pool is built. Commissioner DeWitt said another thing to keep in mind is the appetite of Bainbridge Island citizens for a bond measure. Commissioner Goodlin said this is a good initial discussion.

- Commissioner Goodlin said that there is a handicapped person who uses the Don Nakata pool frequently. When the Don Nakata pool was closed for maintenance this individual came to use the pool at Bainbridge Island Recreation Center and he was not satisfied with the facilities. Recreation Division Director Mark Benishek said staff has followed up with the individual.
- Commissioner Goodlin said that an email was received from Paul Bang-Knudsen about his public records request. He thinks Paul Bang-Knudsen had a good point that the Park District needs to respect that someone has good intentions when they place a public records request with the agency. He thinks the Park District should advocate for scaling back requests which is appropriate and should be done as often as possible. Executive Director Terry Lande said he does not think that anybody has disrespected the process. Terry Lande said he thinks Paul Bang-Knudsen was offended by something he said at a board meeting, which he stands by, which is that there are several reasons that people will place a public records request. Some people have sincere and rational requests, the other extreme is irrational requests aimed at getting even with the agency. He has had requestors tell him orally that they will punish the agency by placing a public records request. He never said that is what Paul Bang-Knudsen was doing. Commissioner Goodlin said that sounds right, all he wants to do is point out that the agency should be respectful. Commissioner DeWitt said he did not see anything disrespectful in the email that was sent to Paul Bang-Knudsen.
- Commissioner Goodlin said he spoke with Bainbridge Island Parks & Trails Foundation Board President Sara Tiff.
- Commissioner DeWitt said that while he was not able to attend the dedication ceremony for the new artwork at the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial, he did go down and look at it. He encourages


everyone to go see it if they have not already. What impressed him the most was the transition piece onto the deck.

- Commissioner DeWitt said he attended the Bainbridge Island City Council meeting this week. The City Council voted to prepare a resolution to rename the Waterfront Trail the Charles Schmid Waterfront Trail.
- Commissioner Kinney asked if the Fort Ward Parade Grounds is a more complicated site to build a playground than the other site options. Park services Division Director Dan Hamlin said not in his opinion.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 8:43 pm.

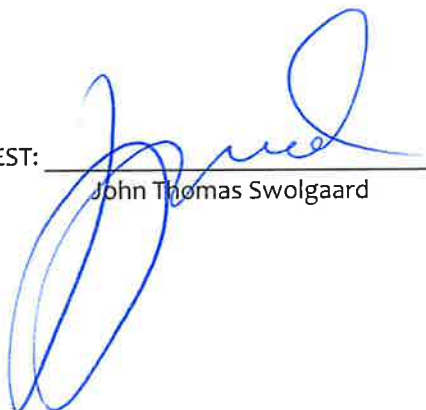
Helen M. Stone
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BY: 
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ATTEST: 
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