BAINBRIDGE ISLAND METROPOLITAN PARK & RECREATION DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING November 3, 2022
BAINBRIDGE ISLAND RECREATION CENTER

CALL TO ORDER: A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm by Chair DeWitt.

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

ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA: Add an Executive Session for personnel for fifteen minutes.

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

Robert Weschler said he is here because he is concerned about Bainbridge Island Recreation Center only being accessible to people with cars on Bainbridge Island. He is wondering if anything can be done via public transportation to offer people without vehicles access to the facility. He suggested that someone attend a Kitsap Transit meeting to discuss opportunities.

Denise Stoughton said she discovered that on Bird Island in North Carolina there is a somewhat famous mailbox called the Kindred Spirit mailbox. She said the mailbox contains journals to encourage people to write their thoughts, feelings, hopes, and dreams to share the human experience. She asked if there is a spot in a park on Bainbridge Island to place this kind of project. Commissioner DeWitt suggested that she get in touch with Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin since this is a facility question.

BOARD CONSENT

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Upon making the following revisions to the minutes of the September 15, 2022 regular board meeting, Chair DeWitt stated the minutes stand approved as corrected: On page 4 under the Director’s Report, Park Services Division, starting with the second sentence, the minutes can be changed to read: 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.

Upon hearing there were no corrections to the minutes of the October 20, 2022 regular board meeting, Chair DeWitt stated the minutes stand approved as submitted.

Upon making the following revisions to the minutes of the October 20, 2022 work session, Chair DeWitt stated the minutes stand approved as corrected: On page 1, end of the first paragraph, change $300,00 to $300,000.

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

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GENERAL BUSINESS

FORT WARD PLAYGROUND UPDATE: Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin reviewed that it is in the Park District’s comprehensive plan to have a playground in the Fort Ward area. Per the transfer agreement and the plat restrictions a playground is an allowed use on the Fort Ward Parade Grounds based on the request received from the Fort Ward Neighborhood Association. The request for a playground in Fort Ward was first brought to the board at the July 21 regular board meeting. The goal is to provide neighborhood access to a play area that neighbors can walk to. Possible locations have been presented to the board, and many comments have been received from community members. At the July 21 meeting the board asked the neighborhood to have a meeting to talk about the playground idea and a preferred location. The neighborhood had a meeting and conducted a survey. The survey showed support for a playground and Fort Ward Parade Grounds was the preferred location identified by the survey. The neighborhood meeting had support for a playground, and some believed that there was agreement about locating it in the upper Fort Ward Park area. The scope of the play area project is about 758 square feet. It will not be a draw for other people in the region or even on the island. Dan Hamlin shared pictures of a play structure that the Park District already owns that could be utilized in Fort Ward. A size comparison for the playground would be the footprint of the playground at Cave Family Heritage Park or the one at Schel Chelb Park. The opposition is worried about increased traffic, limited parking, increased noise, crime, loitering, decreased property values, and having a playground in their backyard. The proponents feel it will provide a place to take neighborhood children and grandchildren, a place to socialize with neighbors, a recreation option that does not require driving, and it could make the area more welcoming to families and children. Site one is the area across Fort Ward Hill Road and the pros include that it seems to be the most neutral site, is near the Fort Ward trail system, there would be less impact to residences, and the space is large enough. Cons include the proximity to the street, concerns about crossing the street, the need for traffic calming measures, and that fencing would be recommended. Site two is the Fort Ward Parade Grounds and the pros are that it is close to residences and children, it is large enough, it is protected from roads, and that it is already established as a children’s play area. The cons include that it is close to residences and there are concerns regarding historical significance. Site three is the two lots next to the Fort Ward Parade Grounds and the pros are that there are no restrictions or conditions and that it is large enough. The cons are that there is inequitable impact to one residence and with the proximity to the road fencing would be recommended. Staff recommends removing site three from consideration. Site four was proposed by neighborhood residents and is in the upper area of Fort Ward Park. The pros include that there are no restrictions or conditions, restroom and parking area is available, and there would be little to no impact on residences. The cons include the same concerns regarding the road as listed for site one, a wetland buffer to the east, a steep slope to the west, it is further from kids and potential users, falling tree limbs pose a potential hazard, and there are security concerns. The next step is to decide on a location. Once a site is selected staff will work on a project agreement with Bainbridge Island Parks & Trails Foundation, form a committee to determine the type of play area to be built, and bring a proposal to the board for approval.

Commissioner Goodlin asked if for site two staff is looking to place the playground equidistant from the residences or if staff is considering the area on the north end by the benches. Dan Hamlin said placing it in the more southerly area of the Fort Ward Parade Grounds leaves a big open space to the north for other activities. Commissioner Janow asked what staff will need from the board if the neighborhood decides to use a different playground with a larger footprint than the one shared tonight. Dan Hamlin suggested that the board limit the size of the play area. Commissioner Goodlin asked if there are any proposed restroom facilities. Dan Hamlin confirmed that no restroom or parking facilities are planned, the playground is meant to serve the neighborhood. Commissioner Kinney asked about the potential for traffic calming
measures on Fort Ward Hill Road. Dan Hamlin said that speed bumps and speed tables were discussed with City of Bainbridge Island staff as well as narrowing the road in certain areas. The neighborhood has already been pushing the City for traffic calming measures in that area. Commissioner Janow asked if there would be the potential for falling tree limbs on site one and Dan Hamlin said no.

Thomas Dildine lives next to site three. He said that sites one through three are all part of a National Historic District. He said that the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial is also a National Historic District and asked if it would be appropriate to put a playground on it or next to it. He urges the board to look at other locations outside of the National Historic District.

Mary Dombrowski said four years ago she put a sign on her fence encouraging the idea of building a playground in Fort Ward. She thinks the specific playground the Park District has and shared pictures of tonight looks very generic and said it does not fit with the National Historic District. She said when her kids were young they enjoyed playing on relics from World War I, World War II, and the Spanish American War such as a tower, a reservoir, and bunkers and she thinks they could be reflected in the structure of the playground to show the history. She is glad that the project is moving forward.

Grant Morgan said that there has been a lot of process and he does not want paralysis by analysis. He said that based on the survey there is overwhelming support for a playground but discussion about the location is ongoing. He said any site is better than nothing but site two is the most accessible, most visible, closest to the neighborhood, and has the fewest traffic issues. He respects the concerns about noise and heritage but at the same time most the houses in the area were not there when Fort Ward was a military base. In his opinion the issue with site one is traffic calming and that while site four is an acceptable compromise it is the least accessible.

Alisha Arter said the footprint of and the age group for the playground users has never been defined. She said according to the Fort Ward neighborhood comprehensive plan no goals or policies should be enacted in the Fort Ward neighborhood. She believes the neighborhood must wait until the Fort Ward neighborhood comprehensive plan is reevaluated in 2024 to make any decisions. She said the current Bainbridge Island comprehensive plan says open spaces should be maintained.

Bonnie Harris said that she is against having a playground on the Fort Ward Parade Grounds. She asked for facilitation of an inclusive neighborhood process. She said it is one thing to have kids play and make noise on the Fort Ward Parade Grounds and another to have a playground where noise is concentrated. She is concerned about parking and said the Fort Ward Parade Grounds is not the most equidistant location. She said while there is no urgency for a playground, there is urgency for the neighborhood to have fair and full public involvement. She said it almost seems like there is a bias from the Park District to put the playground on the Fort Ward Parade Grounds.

Holly Paige said that she lives in Fort Ward, and her family must drive to visit playgrounds. She said kids want to be outside, and they need recreation opportunities in the neighborhood. She said Fort Ward Parade Grounds is currently an off-leash dog park and a private extended backyard for the immediate neighbors. She thinks the Fort Ward Parade Grounds is the best location for a playground.

Cindy Verderver said this process has created fractures in the neighborhood and there have been unpleasantries exchanged. She said the rush for what looks like a McDonalds play yard is not appropriate. She hopes that it will be given more thought, the playground should be created as a community for the community.

Siena Sumsky read a note to the board asking for a playground in the neighborhood for her and the other kids.

JD Sumsky said it feels like there are a lot of delay tactics. She said the kids need a playground, and it is dire. She stated that the Fort Ward Parade Grounds is the heart and soul of the neighborhood, and it is where they have neighborhood events. She said neighbors have gone out of their way to be inclusive and respectful during this process. She stated that a big
expensive structure could cost $600,000 and she thinks that the available structure is fine and if it gets put in the neighborhood will calm down and move on to the next controversy.

Mike Sumsky said that while they do not want a fractured neighborhood, kids have been playing on the Fort Ward Parade Grounds for years. He said they have tried to be inclusive in the neighborhood playground process. He stated that site two was chosen by most of the people who participated in the neighborhood playground survey and that kids need a safe place to play.

Jessica Malouf said that she supports the playground on the Fort Ward Parade Grounds because it is the safest and the most accessible for the neighborhood. She would like the board to vote tonight on the playground since all the information has already been presented.

David Stettler said that he thinks a playground is a good idea but not on the Fort Ward Parade Grounds due to the role it played in the second world war. He does not know why Fort Ward is not recognized more for its role in World War II. He stated that to put a playground on the Fort Ward Parade Grounds would diminish what it was meant to do for veterans, Fort Ward, and Bainbridge Island. What he would like to see is for there to be appropriate enhancements to the memorial that it was dedicated as. He said this memorial means a lot to the people who performed during the second world war.

Nicole Pond said this is an argument about a playground for young children. She said the Fort Ward Parade Grounds location is a no-brainer as it is the safest option with clear sight lines and no need to clear trees. She said they need someplace they can go play without getting in the car. She stated that the veterans in her family can think of nothing better than children playing on an old training ground.

After a brief conversation the board selected the December 1 regular board meeting to decide on a location for the Fort Ward playground. Commissioner Janow suggested that site three be removed from consideration as was recommended by staff. Commissioner Kinney said site three should be taken off the table and he thinks site four is a non-starter. Commissioner DeWitt said that it needs to be considered whether the location selected allows for expansion in case that is ever desired by the neighborhood. He clarified that there are currently no plans to expand the playground, but as time goes on the neighborhood could change. He thinks that the Park District needs to work with the City and the neighborhood to have traffic calming in the area. Commissioner Goodlin said he would like to visit the sites before the December 1 meeting. Commissioner Janow asked how long it would take to install the existing structure versus a different structure. Executive Director Terry Lande said the existing structure only needs groundwork preparation. If the neighborhood wants something else there would have to be fundraising. Dan Hamlin said that installing the existing structure would cost about $15,000 for ground preparation versus up to $100,000-$200,000 for a custom structure. Commissioner Janow asked if the existing structure is used now if the community could choose to replace it down the road with a custom structure. Dan Hamlin replied yes. Commissioner DeWitt said site one has historically been an active use area therefore he does not think a playground would be a violation of the National Historic District. At the bottom of Fort Ward there used to be a dance hall, swimming pool, and a recreation center. All the homes that are sitting there are not consistent with what Fort Ward historically was. He has not really worked through site two in his mind regarding historical uses but mentioned that use of the whole area has changed. Terry Lande clarified that the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial is a National Park site. Commissioner Swolgaard said the Fort Ward Parade Grounds used to be a lot bigger than it is now and a developer bought the land and built homes. He clarified that no parking is planned for the playground because it is for neighbors to walk to, not as a destination for other people on the island.

**MEETING ADJOURNED** to a five-minute recess at 7:15 pm with announced time to reconvene at 7:20 pm. **MEETING RECONVENE** at 7:21 pm.
2023 BUDGETS: Administrative Division Director Amy Swenson said this is the first reading of the 2023 budgets. The General Fund is proposed to have a deficit at the end of the year while maintaining a healthy reserve. Commissioner DeWitt said the reason the reserve is the current size is to give the Park District flexibility. Amy Swenson said that one of the reasons the Park District is projected to have 3.6 million dollars in the General Fund at the end of 2022 is because of the one-million-dollar grant received from the Recreation and Conservation Office for Sakai Park which has not yet been spent. Key changes for the 2023 General Fund budget are a 7% cost of living adjustment, increased contributions to dependent healthcare benefits, professional fees for records management, and major software purchases. Commissioner Goodlin asked what percent increase that is for healthcare benefits. Amy Swenson said that currently the Park District offers $150 towards spouse and dependent premiums, but in 2023 staff proposes offering $600 towards spouse and dependent premiums to make healthcare more affordable. The estimate is that the increased contributions towards premiums will cost the Park District an additional $100,000 but the exact number cannot be determined until staff sees who will take advantage of the benefit. The Park District will also be offering two additional less expensive health insurance plans to give employees more options. Since there is a surplus coming in for the Bainbridge Island Recreation Center, staff has budgeted for upgrades to the facility.

The bottom line for the proposed 2023 Capital Improvement Fund projects is $2.7 million dollars, necessitating an additional transfer from the General Fund of $1.6 million dollars, which causes the deficit in the General Fund. However, for the General Fund the projected amount in reserves at the end of 2023 is $2.8 million dollars. In 2024 staff projects that additional money would again need to be transferred from the General Fund to the Capital Improvement Fund although reserves would not be reduced in 2024 as an added $800,000 in surplus is projected. Assumptions for the Capital Improvement Fund budget are: 1) that tax increases will cover the COLA for staff and health insurance increases; 2) there will be an $800,000 surplus in the General Fund each year before additional Capital Improvement Fund spending; 3) there will be a 2% increase each year in the transfer from the General Fund to the Capital Improvement Fund; 4) 2026 is when the $780,000 principal payment for BIRC begins; 5) a minimum of $2.5 million dollars is needed in reserves. Executive Director Terry Lande said for 2022 BIRC is bringing in a $400,000 surplus and that is coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic and there has been a recession. BIRC needs to pick up an additional 300 members in the next three years to make the principal payment. Commissioner Goodlin said he is ok with approving the 2023 budget but asked if anyone else has concerns about spending two million dollars on the artificial turf field at Strawberry Hill Park when there are other future projects that will cost a lot of money like the replacement pool at the Aquatic Center. Commissioner Kinney said that it is always concerning when you are spending 2 million dollars, but he likes how staff has laid out the plan to knock out some big-ticket items. Kids on the island need another artificial turf field to play on, and while the Battle Point Park artificial turf fields will need to be replaced in the future, they are still serviceable. A replacement pool will require a bond, it is not possible to save enough money in this budget to build one. Commissioner Swolgaard said that during 2023 the budget can be modified. Commissioner Janow said she is a huge proponent of making sure kids have a place to play and they need additional space. She likes that the Sakai Park grant is going towards another recreation project near downtown. Commissioner Goodlin said those are all good points, he just wanted to have a discussion as it is a lot of money. Commissioner DeWitt said it is a tremendous amount of money and it is going to require some private fundraising to accomplish. Commissioner Janow mentioned that the replacement of the artificial turf field carpet at Battle Point Park can be broken up into two parts. Terry Lande said that when the Battle Point Park artificial turf field is replaced it will be the entire carpet that is replaced, however the two fields can be replaced independently.

There is no transfer proposed for 2023 to the Land Acquisition Fund, however staff proposes spending up to $50,000 on trail easements in 2023 from the funds available. The Turf Field Replacement Fund is projected to end 2023 with $22,240. The final reading of the 2023 budgets will be at the November 17 regular board meeting and the due date to get the tax levy certifications to Kitsap County is November 30. Commissioner Kinney brought up the proposed 7% COLA for discussion,
which he thinks that the board must do. Commissioner Swolgaard said it is needed to retain staff. Commissioner Kinney asked if the COLA is sufficient. Terry Lande said staff is grateful that the board is considering a 7% COLA. Amy Swenson said for the next four years the regular levy is tied to the consumer price index. Commissioner Swolgaard asked if staff feels that the Teen Center is adequately funded. Recreation Superintendent Bryan Garoute said at this point yes, as staff is currently working to rebuild the Teen Center after the COVID-19 pandemic. Amy Swenson said a lot of teens come to BIRC after school as well. Commissioner Swolgaard said the reason he brought it up is because of the young lady on the island who recently committed suicide. He said he feels that youth is what the Park District is about; kids need a safe place, and the Teen Center helps provide that. Bryan Garoute said Teen Center staff members are taking mental health training. Commissioner Goodlin asked what teens do at BIRC after school. Bryan Garoute said they work out or play basketball. Commissioner Janow thanked Commissioner Swolgaard for recognizing the young lady who committed suicide. She said playgrounds and artificial turf fields give kids an opportunity to play with their parents and peers and it is vital to what the Park District does. She said we need to support the youth and families on the island because they are being marginalized and there has been too much loss on this island in the last couple of years.

**LIFT COVID-19 STATE OF EMERGENCY:** Executive Director Terry Lande said that Governor Inslee allowed the state’s COVID-19 state of emergency declaration to run out on October 31. The purpose of the Park District’s emergency declaration was to allow the Park District to bypass procedural requirements as well as to have access to state and federal emergency funds. Terry Lande said it seems that since the emergency declaration has been lifted by the state that the Park District would be out of line to continue with it, although policies put in place regarding COVID-19 will remain in effect. **MSC:** Janow/Swolgaard: Motion to lift the state of emergency declared 3/19/20 regarding COVID-19.

**DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

**Recreation Division:** Recreation Division Director Mark Benishek said on the recent conference days All-Day Explorer Camp had 120 kids that participated in the program. The Eagledale Pottery Studio will be holding a sale the first weekend in December. Bainbridge Island Swim Club is hosting a swim meet this weekend. The second session of fall swim lessons are full. Bainbridge Aquatic Masters Head Coach April Ceadle will be returning to work next week. Staff is working on the winter/spring recreation catalog. Recreation Superintendent Bryan Garoute said that the winter/spring recreation catalog will be viewable online on December 5 and registration will be on Saturday, January 7. Bainbridge Island Recreation Center will be offering a winter break student membership. The new Pilates reformer is expected to arrive this week. Staff will begin working on marketing testimonials for BIRC soon. There will be a large tennis tournament at BIRC the last week of December. BIRC thriller dance workshop participants also danced at the Haunted Hayride. Basketball league is starting November 28. The gymnastics department recently hired a second instructor. The mountain bike program has a new instructor.

**Park Services Division:** Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin said staff is dealing with leaves, drains, and winterizing. Staff is fixing potholes in parking lots and working on cabin 5 at Fay Bainbridge Park. Engineering Project Manager Mark Epstein is leaving the City of Bainbridge Island and he will be missed. Senior Planner Perry Barrett said a Williams-Olson Park community meeting will be held November 16 regarding updates on the planning process. Commissioner Goodlin asked about the status of withdrawing the Sakai Park plan from the City of Bainbridge Island. Dan Hamlin said the City has been notified that the Park District is withdrawing the plan. Commissioner Swolgaard asked about the sail float replacement project. Executive Director Terry Lande said it is budgeted to be replaced in 2024 and it will probably take that long to get the permits.

Executive Director Terry Lande said the Haunted Hayride was a great success with about 2,000 participants.

**BOARD MEMBER ITEMS:**
• Commissioner Kinney said that when he was a softball dad he remembers a lot of tree debris coming down on the fields at Strawberry Hill Park. He said that might be an issue that involves removing trees around the perimeter of the artificial turf field. Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin said the field may require more frequent sweeping. The trees on the east and north sides of the field are not on Park District property. He will talk to the Field Turf representatives about it.

• Commissioner Kinney said that according to Clay Roberts the pickleball group wants exclusive use of the tennis courts at Battle Point Park and they want to build a roof over them so they can play in the winter. He read a statement he wrote in response to the request by the pickleball group including: advising that pickleball have a formalized group to represent it; stating that before the Park District will turn the use of those courts over to pickleball two tennis courts need to be built elsewhere; the pickleball group will need to present architectural engineering plans, fundraising plans, plans for operations and programming of the facility, and a revenue plan to cover the annual operational budget. He said he would also attach the policy regarding Capital Project Proposals from Outside Groups. Commissioner Goodlin said they might need to discuss whether Battle Point Park makes sense as a location since he has heard traffic concerns from the neighborhood regarding increasing night use of the park. Commissioner Janow said the statement gives pickleball a starting point. Terry Lande suggested adding that the proposal would have to go through the public process. Terry Lande said that he met with Clay Roberts and Heidi Zwicker a week ago and he had a very honest conversation with them about it. He said what Commissioner Kinney put together gives the pickleball group good direction and is an appropriate next step. Commissioner Janow agreed and emphasized that the pickleball group needs to have a formalized group of leaders. It is important to keep in mind that the Park District is a recreational organization, not a professional one that's mission is to provide world class facilities. Commissioner Kinney said he wanted to get the point across that the Park District is extremely busy for the next few years, so if they want something done they need to do the leg work. Also, something needs to be done for tennis. Commissioner Janow said that the pickleball group should be made aware that they need to follow the policy for any facility changes that are proposed. Commissioner Kinney said that he assumes tennis will be happy with one or two tennis courts at Strawberry Hill Park in addition to the one that is there. Terry Lande said that he had a conversation with Loanne Harmeling with the tennis group regarding the plan to build two additional tennis courts at Strawberry Hill Park.

• Commissioner Goodlin said he had a conversation with Paul Curtis, an architect at ARC Architects. The conversation was about the 2019 report to the board regarding a replacement pool. In general, Paul Curtis thought that the costs in the report may have been a little high, but it is hard to know where costs are now. When the Park District embarks on a replacement pool, determinations will be made that will lead to the cost of the facility. He said there is a way through the state to hire a general contractor who then hires the sub-contractors to save money. He said construction costs right now are $650-$750 a square foot for an aquatic facility. They talked about optimization of the design. There was no optimization for energy efficiency in the 2019 report. He made a contact with someone in Port Angeles where they recently spent 17 million to remodel a pool.

• Commissioner Janow said that she went to the Haunted Hayride, and it was fantastic.

• Commissioner Janow said that she recently attended a Bainbridge Island Parks & Trails Foundation meeting.

• Commissioner Janow said she is excited to hear more about the Kindred Spirit mailbox.

• Commissioner Janow said she had a conversation with Inez Maubane Jones with Arts & Humanities Bainbridge about the troll project and they seem to be on board.

• Commissioner DeWitt said that the staff and volunteers did a phenomenal job on the Haunted Hayride.
Commissioner DeWitt asked about the status of the easement on the old Hayashida property. Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin said the property owner has declined to make any changes to the easement.

MEETING ADJOURNED to a five-minute recess at 8:45 pm with announced time to reconvene at 8:50 pm. MEETING RECONVENCED at 8:52 pm.

MEETING ADJOURNED TO EXECUTIVE SESSION at 8:52 pm for discussion of personnel with announced time to reconvene at 9:07 pm.

MEETING RECONVENCED at 9:07 pm. MSC: Kinney/Janow: Approve increase in Executive Director Lande’s 2023 salary by 7%, consistent with the COLA approved for all District employees and increase Executive Director’s vacation allowance by one week.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 9:08 pm.

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

BY: __________________________
    Kenneth R. DeWitt

BY: __________________________
    Jay C. Kinney

BY: __________________________
    Tom Goodin

BY: __________________________
    Dawn Janow

ATTEST: ________________________
         John Thomas Swolgaard