

**BAINBRIDGE ISLAND METROPOLITAN PARK & RECREATION DISTRICT  
 REGULAR BOARD MEETING March 2, 2023  
 BAINBRIDGE ISLAND RECREATION CENTER**

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

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

**ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA:** Combine agenda items 40.1-40.3 which are all regarding Strawberry Hill Park.

**MISSION STATEMENT:** Chair Kinney 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**

Sri Malladi spoke to ask it is possible for parents to attend the Kids Club at Bainbridge Island Recreation Center with their child, rather than leaving the child there with staff.

**BOARD CONSENT**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Upon making the following revisions to the minutes of the February 16, 2023 regular board meeting, Chair Kinney stated the minutes stand approved as corrected: On page 2, second paragraph, before last sentence, insert sentence: Commissioner Goodlin asked if there are any conditions considered to present an emergency situation that require immediate repair. On page 4, edit first full sentence to read: Commissioner Goodlin said that would be a challenge, but the Coates Design Architects worked to maintain or increase parking places in their 2019 schematic design.

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

Batch Date	Fund Number & Name	Warrant Numbers	Total Batch Amt	Pre-Approved
02/15/23	001 General Fund 300 Capital Improvement Fund 310 Land Acquisition Fund	24675-24866	220,649.72	02/15/23
02/21/23	001 General Fund 300 Capital Improvement Fund	24867-24959	33,363.31	02/21/23
02/27/23	001 General Fund 310 Land Acquisition Fund	24960-25019	108,261.28	02/27/23
	001 General Fund (Feb. Payroll)	EFT & 3081-3092	603,341.88	

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**DOG PARK PLAN REPORT, FIRST LOOK AT STRAWBERRY HILL PARK CONCEPT PLAN, AND STRAWBERRY HILL PARK**

**ARTIFICIAL TURF FIELD PRESENTATION:** Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin said design input for Strawberry Hill Park has been gathered from user groups and the board. Staff has been working with the consultant firm Asakura Robinson on the Strawberry Hill Park concept plan. The concept plan incorporates use of the current park land, the possible McKeon easement on the north end of the park, and the Comcast property. Natural Resources Manager Lydia Roush said the proposal from the Dog Advisory Committee for the expanded dog park includes expansion of both the large and small dog areas and the creation of two training bays. Tonight, staff is looking to the board for a motion to approve the dog park plan

so that the bid process can be initiated to secure a contractor. Staff had a preapplication meeting with the City of Bainbridge Island regarding the 60% design of the artificial turf field and looked at storm water management specifically. The footprint of the artificial turf field was enlarged to meet accessibility standards. Next steps will include the construction estimate, permitting, and user group meetings. A meeting was held with the neighbors and there was no major opposition, and nothing has been heard since, but they will be reengaged with the concept plan process. The conditional use permit will need to be amended in order to utilize the lights for the artificial turf field. The skate park and bike park are being developed with input from user groups and project agreements are in place with Bainbridge Island Parks & Trails Foundation for these two elements. Senior Planner Perry Barrett spoke to existing and possible trail connections to Strawberry Hill Park including the existing High School Road trail easement, the trail easement connection to Walden Lane, and the Cherry Orchard Lane tax title strip which would cost a significant amount of money to purchase from the City of Bainbridge Island. Negotiations regarding the McKeon easement for use as a skills area for the bike park are underway. Park improvement concepts include improving sports fields, creating a central community park space, consideration of racket sport courts, safety for moving people through the park, and adequate parking. The sports fields conversation includes reorienting the upper field for improved access, the potential for indoor field space, an artificial turf field with accessible access, and improved concession and restroom area with user group storage. Community park space ideas include relocating the playground, an additional picnic shelter, maintaining open space, and preserving trees. Public safety in the park is a priority and ideas to increase safety include a four-way stop, painted cross walks, speed bumps, and signage. Strawberry Hill Park currently has 135 parking spaces and Asakura Robinson is anticipating that 200+ may be needed. Options for where racket sport courts could be placed were shared. Commissioner Goodlin asked if there will be a new park entrance. Dan Hamlin said the current design utilizes the existing entrance and imagines an additional entrance on the Comcast property. Next steps are to continue to work on the design with Asakura Robinson and obtain guidance regarding both community park space and racket sport courts from the public, neighbors, and the board.

Scott Daniels of the Battle Point Alliance thanked the Park District for the comprehensive analysis of options and the decision to pursue a lighted artificial turf field at Strawberry Hill Park.

Frank Petrie of the Battle Point Astronomical Association thanked the Park District and Bainbridge Island Football Club for finding an alternative to Battle Point Park for the lighted artificial turf field and preserving the dark at Battle Point Park.

Mary Meier with the Bainbridge Island Parks & Trails Foundation said they are excited to be part of the skate park and bike park projects and the trail connections at Strawberry Hill Park and she advocated for a perimeter trail around the park.

**MSC: Janow/Swolgaard: Motion to proceed with the dog park plan so estimates can be obtained and the project can move forward.** Commissioner Janow said the Dog Advisory Committee has been working hard on the design for the expanded dog park and she feels confident in and supports the plan that has been presented.

Heather Adkins-Narte asked what the artificial turf field is made from and if it is cancer causing. Commissioner Janow responded that it would be similar to the artificial turf fields at Battle Point Park. Executive Director Terry Lande said a cork infield mix is also being explored.

Dan Hamlin said that a perimeter trail around Strawberry Hill Park is being considered. Commissioner Goodlin asked if making the perimeter trail eight feet wide could be considered. Dan Hamlin said that would trigger storm water management, but it will be investigated. Commissioner DeWitt said that he likes the option of siting the racket sport courts closer to the park road and entrance. Commissioner Kinney said there needs to be a meeting soon to talk about the various racket sport courts that need to be built both for tennis and pickleball. There is a great opportunity here to put either tennis or pickleball at Strawberry Hill Park. While both sports want to stay at Battle Point Park, the board will need to decide what can fit there. If pickleball wants up to 12 or 15 courts and eventually a building, he is not sure that will fit at Battle Point Park.

He thinks pickleball will outgrow Battle Point Park, but a conversation needs to be had with both the pickleball and tennis user groups. Commissioner Janow agreed that she likes the placement of racket sport courts at Strawberry Hill Park closer to the road and the entrance and said that the current foliage that is there is not high quality. Dan Hamlin said that while siting the racket sport courts closer to the park road will require tree removal, the whole forest on the Comcast property needs serious restoration as it is unhealthy.

Dana Thompson asked if racquetball courts have been considered. Staff replied no to that question.

Commissioner Swolgaard said he knows that the parking is being increased but said he would like to keep asphalt to a minimum. Commissioner DeWitt said the more nonmotorized connections there are into the park the higher the likelihood that people will not drive to the park. Commissioner Janow said that a loop trail around at least some part of the park would be nice to see.

**PROPOSED PLAN TO RENOVATE RAY WILLIAMSON POOL AND CEASE PLANNING FOR LARGER REPLACEMENT POOL:**

Commissioner Kinney said in 2017 the Aquatic Design Group presented a study of the Ray Williamson pool. They created the idea that Ray Williamson had gotten to the end of its life and could not be effectively repaired, also that a replacement pool would be an affordable option estimated at 10-15 million dollars. In 2018 Coates Design Architects were hired to develop a better idea of the likely cost of a new pool. In 2019 Coates Design Architects presented cost estimates, including an estimated 37 million dollars for a 33-meter pool and 42 million dollars for a 52-meter pool, at this time Commissioner Kinney's thinking about a new pool changed. In 2019 the School District rebuilt Blakely Elementary School for \$39 million dollars. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit most things stalled and decisions were made to repair Ray Williamson to keep it operational. The Stemper Architecture Collaborative was then hired to evaluate the current condition of the pool. Stemper has experience renovating 12 pools in the area, and they showed the Park District that the pool could be renovated to last 15-20 more years for about 5 million dollars. The renovation would replace the main components of the pool and the price tag is affordable without passing a bond. In 2017 Commissioner Kinney did not think it was feasible to renovate a pool, but Stemper has shown that it is possible and has experience doing it. He said it is reasonable to have Stemper work on renovating the pool and cease planning for a new pool at this time. The staff has limited time and resources, and the focus should be on the renovation. He does not believe the island will pass a bond to build a new larger pool, which would probably cost over 50 million dollars with construction inflation. To pass a bond 60% of island voters would have to vote yes. A 33-meter pool will only make room for 4 extra lanes at a cost of 50 million dollars, and only about 2% of island residents use the pool. A Trust for Public Lands report says that in 2022 the national median average was one pool for 50,000 residents, Bainbridge Island has two pools for 25,000 residents. Furthermore, the Aquatic Center subsidy is \$868,000 this year. There is no other recreational group that comes close to being subsidized by that much. In 2006 there was a 45-million-dollar bond to replace parts of the High School. In 2009 there was a 42-million-dollar bond to replace Wilkes Elementary School and do capital improvement projects. In 2016 there was an 81-million-dollar bond to replace Blakely Elementary School, a section of the High School, and to do other capital improvement projects. In 2019 the School District had to pass a 15-million-dollar levy for the shortfall from 2016 due to construction inflation. In 2025 the School District is looking for a possible bond for 100 million dollars to replace Ordway Elementary School and the Commodore building. The Fire District also passed a 16-million-dollar bond in 2016, the Park District passed a 6-million-dollar bond for Sakai Park, and the City of Bainbridge Island had two bonds on the ballot that failed. Bond fatigue will have to be faced, there are a lot of taxes people are currently paying. Commissioner Kinney said there is nothing more fun than saying yes to people, the board loves to build things. However, it appears to him that if the Ray Williamson pool can be renovated that it is too heavy of a lift to pass a bond for 50 million dollars to replace the Ray Williamson pool. Hopefully by the time the Ray Williamson pool needs to be replaced some of the School District bonds will have come off people's taxes. At that point the Park District will be able to tell voters that the life of the Ray Williamson pool was extended as far as possible.

Dennis Sawyer is a member of Bainbridge Aquatic Masters and asked how long the renovation would be good for and spoke about the benefits of a 50-meter pool.

Commissioner Kinney said that no matter what the Ray Williamson pool will have to be renovated to keep it from failing as passing a bond and building a new pool would take years.

Bill Galvani is a member of Bainbridge Aquatic Masters, and he would be glad to see the Ray Williamson pool's life extended his main concern is closures during the renovation process and so he would like the board to continue to consider a new pool.

Heather Adkins-Narte said it is time and it would be nice for the public to vote on a new pool.

Ken Bennett is a Bainbridge Aquatic Masters member and said that the current Ray Williamson pool barely meets the needs of the island, the island should be looking forward and putting energy and resources towards a new facility.

Linda Sohlberg is a Bainbridge Aquatic Masters member, and her suspicion is that in the supposed future life span of Ray Williamson the same amount of money will be poured into the renovation as it would cost to build a new pool.

Jim Boulgarides is a regular user of the Aquatic Center and advised against pouring money into Ray Williamson pool which he said is substandard.

Jonathan Borovsky said that many people rely on the Aquatic Center and whatever the solution is that eliminates extended closures can be a big win for the community.

Jim Stretch is a member of Bainbridge Aquatic Masters and recommended only devoting enough funds to keep the Ray Williamson pool safe and operational and to pursue a new pool.

Nick Schnee is a Bainbridge Aquatic Masters member and said while Bainbridge Island residents may statistically have more access to pool space than much of the nation that it is an exceptional community and he recommended building something for the future.

Adam Hunt said that he has four kids that need these facilities now not a decade from now and advised the board to let the community vote on a bond and decide.

Dana Thompson said she has been a swimmer all her life and that pool accessibility is important as the pool accommodates everybody and challenged the board to think about future generations.

Rod Stevens is a Bainbridge Aquatic Masters member and is concerned about pool service being interrupted, he said a complete analysis of options should be done before a vote is made.

Commissioner Janow said that community engagement is important and believes that renovations can get started this year on Ray Williamson. She said the \$868,000 current subsidy for the Aquatic Center is much more than for any other facility, which would only increase with a larger pool. Based on Aquatic Center user data generated by staff; usage is down from roughly 77,831 uses in 2016 to about 43,115 uses in 2022. The COVID-19 pandemic put a damper on the ability to staff the Aquatic Center. She said this is hard, Bainbridge Island is an amazing place to live but competing interest groups preferences must be managed. There already is a facility that can be fixed without taking a bond to the taxpayers. It is important to her to mitigate closures during the renovation. In terms of equity for all programs being managed by the Park District she believes the prudent thing to do is proceed with renovation. Commissioner DeWitt said that according to his calculations for a 33-meter pool accounting for construction inflation and interest payments and based on median home value, the bond would add over \$900 a year to a homeowner's property taxes. The School District told the Park District that the facility's overall footprint could not expand, and that they would take back the area where Ray Williamson is for their

parking needs. The need for parking is an issue, and the lost onsite parking would have to be replaced with parking elsewhere. The 2018 estimates did not include the costs for special pilings or mitigation for unsuitable soils. There is anecdotal evidence that for the Ray Williamson pool construction that the soil was not suitable and there were unbudgeted costs associated. The same problem occurred with the Don Nakata pool and a change order added almost a million dollars to the cost of the pool. The 2018 estimate also did not include relocating, updating, and increasing the size of the storm water facility which will have to be designed and permitted under current guidelines. Upgrading the offsite utilities and infrastructure to accommodate the new pool was also not included. The bottom line is that he doubts a 33-meter pool could be built for 56 million dollars. Beyond the capital costs, operational costs must be considered, and staff estimates a 33-meter pool would increase the subsidy by an estimated \$200,000 a year which must be made up for in a decrease of other services and/or increased user fees. The board must think about how willing taxpayers will be to pay additional taxes and how willing patrons will be to pay higher user fees. The 5-million-dollar bond to build the Don Nakata pool only passed after being on the ballot five times and after the scope of the project was significantly reduced. The promoters of that bond promised to raise one million dollars, yet once the bond passed, they were unwilling to help raise the money. A new group of citizens stepped forward to fundraise yet fell short by \$500,000, and the Park District ended up borrowing funds from the State of Washington to finish the project. Realistically a bond measure, if it were to pass on the first try, would put the start of construction in 2024 at the earliest. The possibility of the Ray Williamson pool having a failure during construction must be considered as well as that a bond measure may not pass.

Commissioner Goodlin said he does not think that a decision should be made tonight. He is in favor of spending the currently budgeted 1.1 million dollars on the immediate concerns for the Ray Williamson pool. He does not think the community is ready to put the planning of a new pool to rest or to spend the 5 million dollars it was estimated to cost to completely renovate the pool. What affects him is the size not the state of the Ray Williamson pool. There has been a lot of discussion about the size of the Ray Williamson pool limiting use. The problem is that there has been no action since people began to rally for a new pool during the Sakai Park planning process. The reason he objects to putting so much money into the Ray Williamson pool is that it is way undersized for the community. He has concerns about the costs of a new pool but believes the Coates Design Architects estimated costs were a little high. Beyond just the pool construction there was a 5-million-dollar base cost in every design for site preparation. Programs and uses are being limited that would be realized if the pool was bigger. He said that the current Aquatic Center deficit is high because usage is down due to a latent effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. For a stand-alone aquatic facility 65% is considered a good cost recovery percentage. He does not want to make a decision that says in his lifetime a new pool will not be considered.

Commissioner Kinney said that regardless of which way the vote goes tonight, it does not mean the option for a new pool is gone forever. His advice would be for pool user groups to get together and come up with a plan for a new pool. It is a reasonable request to have the community come together and do the groundwork. In the meantime, the Ray Williamson pool can be fixed up so that it does not fail. The atmosphere for passing a bond measure may improve. Commissioner Janow said that the most common way user groups are bringing capital projects to the Park District is with a significant amount of funding and planning already in place. Commissioner Goodlin said he has been told for many years that the way to do this is to get the Park District to create a project then form a committee and yet he was always held back. He thinks it is unfair to ask the public to do their own design. Commissioner Janow said the reason is that there is a viable plan to renovate the current pool without asking taxpayers for money for a facility that is heavily subsidized. Commissioner DeWitt said the point is not to never consider a new pool, the point is to make sure that the Ray Williamson pool does not fail. Commissioner Swolgaard said he supports fixing the Ray Williamson pool to the point where there will not be a failure. The Park District has got to work with the School District to resolve the Aquatic Center lease envelope issue and needs the community to help with that. He agreed that the community can help resolve the issue by working on funding and design.

Commissioner Goodlin said Stemper was asked to give the Park District a prioritization of the critical items in need of renovation. Commissioner Kinney said he does not think there is an option, the Ray Williamson pool needs to be fixed so that it does not fail. Commissioner Goodlin said that one thing he has been told for a number of years is that a big obstacle is the School District, but he has been meeting with School District Board President Mark Emerson who said the School District would not be opposed to the Park District building a new pool in the north parking lot while keeping the Ray Williamson pool open. There is not an agreement, but there is an opening that has not been pursued. Commissioner Kinney said the obstacle is 50 million dollars for which a bond is not possible politically right now. Commissioner DeWitt said another issue is that when the Ray Williamson footprint is returned to the School District as would be required, the Aquatic Center loses space.

Executive Director Terry Lande said that staff received a draft this afternoon from Stemper of the critical things that need to be done to keep the Ray Williamson pool functional. The critical list of items has an estimated cost of 2.8 million dollars. He said from his perspective taking care of Ray Williamson so there is not a failure is the most important thing in the agency right now. Approval for moving forward with renovating the Ray Williamson pool is critical.

Commissioner Janow said there is no doubt that the board wants to see the aquatic community swimming in as good a facility as possible as quickly as possible. **MSC: Janow/DeWitt: Motion to direct staff to focus their energy and time on renovating the Ray Williamson pool and upon completion of that renovation look at pool replacement.** Commissioner Goodlin opposed the motion.

**MEETING ADJOURNED** to a five-minute recess at 8:20 pm with announced time to reconvene at 8:25 pm. **MEETING RECONVENED** at 8:25 pm.

**2022 YEAR END BUDGET VS ACTUAL:** Administrative Division Director Amy Swenson said in the General Fund for 2022 revenue was down about \$197,000, a big portion of that was because the SEEK grant money did not come in until 2023. Expenses were down by 2 million dollars due to interfund transfers not being needed for large capital improvement projects because projects took longer than was anticipated. Cash was at about 5.8 million dollars at end of 2022. Bainbridge Island Recreation Center revenue was on target and expenses were down substantially due to unspent part-time wages. Park Services Division revenue was down on expenses due to trouble filling full-time positions. In the Recreation Division, not accounting for BIRC, revenue was down because the SEEK grant did not come in and due to trouble hiring part-time staff.


**BOARD MEMBER REMARKS:**

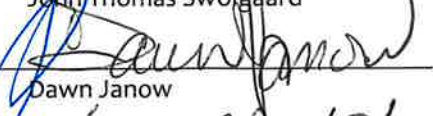
- Commissioner Janow said that she and Commissioner DeWitt met with City of Bainbridge Island Council Members Joe Deets, Clarence Moriwaki, and Jon Quitslund to begin the process for requesting a park zone in COBI permitting, to move forward with programmatic planning, and to have a designated planning staff member for the Park District to work with. It was a nice conversation and a nice segway to share ideas.
- Commissioner Goodlin said meeting with the School District Board President Mark Emerson has been productive. Mark Emerson mentioned that the School District will be forming some sort of planning group for their central campus, and he would welcome participation from the Park District.

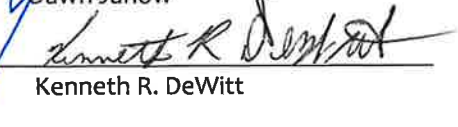
**MEETING ADJOURNED** at 8:44 pm.

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

BY:   
Jay C. Kinney

BY:   
John Thomas Swolgaard

BY:   
Dawn Janow

BY:   
Kenneth R. DeWitt

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tom Goodlin