

**BAINBRIDGE ISLAND METROPOLITAN PARK & RECREATION DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING May 18, 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: Move agenda item 40.1 Accounting Software to the end of General Business.

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

Adam Hunt said that recall charges were filed against four of the five commissioners and that they have lost the public's confidence.

Kathleen Dassel spoke in support of maintaining the arrangement for the shared tennis courts at Battle Point Park.

Marina Worsley spoke in support of maintaining the arrangement for the shared tennis courts at Battle Point Park.

Walt Hannon said he is not in favor of the recall effort of four commissioners and said that he supports the commissioners, the administration, and the staff.

David Knight said that he takes issue with the Park District purchasing the operating assets of the Bainbridge Athletic Club and he supports the recall effort for four of the five commissioners.

Commissioner Kinney said the Park District had attorneys look at the claim that the Park District could not buy the operating assets of the Bainbridge Athletic Club. It was quite clear to the Park District's attorneys that the operating assets could be bought. Park District attorneys corresponded with David Knight's group which did not move for a temporary restraining order. So, the Park District bought the operating assets, and the board was certainly within their rights to do that. Developing Sakai Park is on a parallel track with the Ray Williamson replacement pool. The cost to do both projects would be about 90 million dollars. The Capital Improvement Fund budget is about 1.1 million dollars a year. Therefore, it would require the Park District to pass a bond. He has suggested doing a public opinion poll to ask people if they are willing to raise their taxes to pay for a bond for a fieldhouse and a new pool. Commissioner Janow said the Park District just completed an audit by the Washington State Auditor's Office covering 2021, the year the Bainbridge Athletic Club was purchased, which came back completely clean with absolutely no issues.

BOARD CONSENT

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Upon making the following revisions to the minutes of the May 4, 2023 regular board meeting, Chair Kinney stated the minutes stand approved as corrected: On page two, second paragraph, line two, change spelling of "gage" to "gauge" and on page three, third line from the bottom, change the second time noted in the sentence to 7:43 pm.

GENERAL BUSINESS

STRAWBERRY HILL PARK SYNTHETIC TURF FIELD UPDATE: Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin said the last time this topic was discussed was to say the estimate had come in higher than expected at 3.5 million dollars. Staff have since talked to user groups and the Bainbridge Island School District to make sure efforts are not being duplicated. User groups are in

support of moving forward with the synthetic turf field at Strawberry Hill Park. There may be a grant available to help subsidize some of the cost. The next step would be board approval to move forward with submittal of permit drawings, work with the contractors, and continued work with the Year-Round Fields Coalition and the School District. Commissioner DeWitt clarified that this would not be the final approval for the project. Dan Hamlin said that is correct, but the permits will take a while and there are funding solutions to pursue. Commissioner Goodlin asked what the Year-Round Fields Coalition is. Dan Hamlin said it is a collection of user groups and Battle Point Park neighbors that started discussions with the School District. **MSC: Janow/DeWitt: Move forward with the artificial turf field.** Commissioner Janow said she is glad this project is back on the table as the board has been looking for ways to support youth sports in the winter months. The field area at Strawberry Hill Park where synthetic turf is being considered already has lights. Commissioner Kinney said he was a baseball and softball coach for Little League for six or eight years and that having a synthetic turf field for the kids to play on would be wonderful. Commissioner DeWitt said that he remembers when his kids were involved in youth sports, and he volunteered to work on sports fields. It will be great to see more kids be able to play on solid fields during the wet season.

SAKAI PARK PLANNING EFFORTS TO DATE: Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin said that while it has been said that nothing has happened to plan for Sakai Park, that is not true. The top ten recommendations from the public process in 2016 were trails, picnic shelters, multi-use outdoor complex with lighting, community recreation center, multi-use indoor complex, 50-meter pool, mountain bike trails, tennis courts, playground, and passive uses. All the recommendations are taken seriously. Staff have looked for solutions that could happen sooner at another location or even be better located. Trails were built at Sakai Park and picnic shelters are a future amenity that the Park District plans to install. A multi-use outdoor complex with lighting is planned for Strawberry Hill Park. A community recreation center opportunity came up and the Park District bought the Bainbridge Island Recreation Center which serves many of the needs identified in the Sakai Park concept plan and was a fiscally responsible solution. A multi-use indoor complex was a recommendation and the BIRC has provided a gymnasium and indoor tennis courts. The board decided that any new pool would have to be built adjacent to the Aquatic Center. The mountain bike trails have been accommodated for at Strawberry Hill Park. The process for finding a site for tennis courts has been ongoing, and the best available site appears to be Sakai Park. A natural playground area is planned for Sakai Park near the orchard. Passive uses abound on the site, even with development, most of the site will be left natural.

Commissioner Kinney, at the request of Adam Hunt, allowed the youth to go ahead and make their public comments at this time so they could go home.

Youth Mason Maxwell goes to Sakai Intermediate School, and he spoke in support of an indoor sports facility.

Youth Eddie Mauck goes to Sakai Intermediate School, and he spoke in support of an indoor sports facility.

Youth Oliver Maughan spoke in support of an indoor sports facility and said Sound Baseball must go to Tacoma to practice.

Youth Izzy Rufo-Hill said she plays on Sound, a select team on the island, and she spoke in support of an indoor sports facility.

Youth Quinn Scheer spoke in support of a larger gym for gymnastics.

Youth Christian Maughan goes to Blakely Elementary and spoke in support of a synthetic turf field.

A youth who goes to Sakai Intermediate School spoke in support of an indoor sports facility at Sakai Park.

Youth Harrison Hardy goes to Sakai Intermediate School, and he spoke in support of improving Sands Avenue Ballfield.

Youth Landon spoke in support of sports facilities.

Youth Brennan Hardy goes to Sakai Intermediate School and spoke to ask for better sports facilities for every sport.

Youth Nicky Johnson spoke in support of sports facilities at Sakai Park.

Dan Hamlin said that in 2014 a purchase and sale agreement was entered into with the former owners of Sakai Park that was dependent on a bond passing. In 2015 the bond passed, and Sakai Park was purchased. In 2016 the Sakai Park community planning process happened resulting in the top ten recommendations and the original Recreation and Conservation Office grant was applied for. In 2017 the top ten recommendations were looked at and the board made the decision that any new pool would be built at the Aquatic Center. There was a study of the Ray Williamson pool, and the costs of renovation were high. In 2018 Jones & Jones Architects did a feasibility study for the Sakai Park concept plan and there was a pool options study by Coates Design to launch into the two planning efforts. In 2019 the studies wrapped up mid-year and the costs were quite high. The RCO acquisition reimbursement grant for Sakai Park was resubmitted for one million dollars and staff received word that it would be awarded, although funds were not received until 2021. Staff pursued a grant for a new pool from the Kitsap Public Utilities District and did not receive any award. In 2020 advisory committees for the pool replacement and Sakai Park were advertised for but never formed or implemented due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Permits for trail construction at Sakai Park were applied for in 2018, construction started in 2020, and trails were completed by the end of 2021. In 2021 the BIRC was purchased which impacts what is needed at Sakai Park. The board made a conscious decision to not pursue any bonds in connection with the pool replacement or Sakai Park due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022 the board voted to move forward with a Ray Williamson pool renovation study and then made the decision to move forward with renovation of the Ray Williamson pool in 2023. Tonight, staff will present a proposal for tennis courts at Sakai Park. Currently staff are working with the School District regarding options for lighted synthetic turf fields for the community. In June of 2019 the feasibility study that was conducted for the Sakai Park concept plan came to a total of 52 million dollars. The fieldhouse component of that plan was 22 million dollars and site work came in at 4.4 million dollars. Many of the needs identified in the Sakai Park planning process have been addressed at other sites.

Commissioner DeWitt said the current concept plan for Sakai Park includes plans for offices and meeting rooms which are no longer needed because those needs have been fulfilled at BIRC. The City of Bainbridge Island in planning for Madison Avenue improvements is eliminating the street parking that had been proposed, so parking will have to be redesigned. Therefore, the concept plan is no longer current and needs to be updated. COBI is paying to realign the entrance to Sakai Park as part of the Madison Avenue project and is installing a sewer tap, saving the Park District tens of thousands of dollars. Once plans that reflect updated needs are completed hopefully the costs will be less than expected with the original concept plan feasibility study. Commissioner Goodlin said the concept plan was withdrawn from COBI last fall. Commissioner Kinney said the most important reason to withdraw that plan was because to build anything with that plan would have required all the infrastructure. Withdrawing that plan gives the Park District the ability to do things piecemeal at a more affordable rate. Dan Hamlin said that while COBI was aware of the concept plan for Sakai Park it was never officially submitted.

SAKAI PARK TENNIS COURT PROPOSAL: Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin said the one-million-dollar grant for Sakai Park from the Recreation and Conservation Office was an acquisition reimbursement grant, however an area of the park was exempted from the grant. The grant requires both active and passive outdoor recreation components be made available at Sakai Park. The Park District has five years to complete the park elements to remain in compliance starting from when the funds were received in 2021 or an extension must be requested. RCO has been consulted regarding whether the changes to the exempted area that are being proposed tonight are acceptable and compliant with the RCO conditions. A letter was received on May 16 letting staff know that the Park District is compliant with the terms of the grant. RCO does not require the Park District to fully develop the site per the concept plan and recognizes that changes are expected. The

proposed amendment to the site is moving the exempted area that went east/west along the southern border of the upland portion of the park to the west property line going north/south along Madison Avenue. The elements in the current project proposal are tennis courts, parking, play area, and restroom. They are all approved and expected by the terms of the grant and when completed would make the Park District fully compliant. The impact to vegetation would be minimal, however it will impact alders which will have to be removed for the tennis courts and to provide good light exposure for the courts. The reason for reorienting the indoor facility space is so that any buildings would be built along the road frontage and the park area would be tucked inside the park making it safer for kids and quieter. Executive Director Terry Lande said the proposed change to the exempted area saves space for the potential of a building in the southwest corner of the park. The tennis courts would be outside the exempted area and would not encumber a future indoor facility from moving forward. There is also less impact on higher value vegetation and the proposed parking lot site uses an already disturbed area. Commissioner Janow asked Dan Hamlin to explain the difference between the vegetation at Strawberry Hill Park that would need to be disturbed for tennis courts versus the vegetation at Sakai Park which would be disturbed for tennis courts. Dan Hamlin said that at Strawberry Hill Park more than a dozen very large douglas fir trees would need to be removed as opposed to alders at Sakai Park.

Loanne Harmeling said she is delighted that tennis courts are going in at Sakai Park.

Dawn Snider said she is thrilled that tennis courts are going in at Sakai Park.

Edith Cobourn said that she is excited about tennis courts going in at Sakai Park.

Lisa Macchio said that she does not support tennis courts at Sakai Park.

Debbie Wolf said that sharing the tennis/pickleball courts at Battle Point Park is a valuable lesson for adults and children.

Commissioner Goodlin said he and Commissioner Swolgaard, as the Sakai Site Planning Ad Hoc Committee, have met twice with Dan Hamlin and Senior Planner Matthew Keough in recent weeks to discuss this approach. It has been planned in such a way that in the future two more tennis courts could be added if that decision were to be made. For the last five years he has been a vocal advocate for trails, courts, picnic shelters, and a playground at Sakai Park. He is all for this as it was what he was hoping to see as a first phase.

Joe Edgell spoke in support of preserving the Sakai Park uplands.

Ron Peltier urged the board to consider minimizing development at Sakai Park.

MSC: Janow/Goodlin: Motion to construct two tennis courts at Sakai Park. Commissioner Janow said this was a hard decision, but the Park District has been looking for a location for tennis courts since 2018 and is committed to active and passive recreation at Sakai Park. Community needs are fluid and things change over time. The amenities that the Park District has now are very different than in 2016 when Sakai Park was designated for active and passive use. It is a nice opportunity for tennis and the Park District will work to mitigate as much environmental impact as possible. Commissioner Swolgaard said the proposed plan for the tennis court placement is too close to the area for the potential recreation facility. He also said there is not room for additional tennis courts in the future. He is not against the tennis courts, but he is wondering if there is another location on the property. Dan Hamlin said the potential fieldhouse could go anywhere in the exempt area along Madison Avenue and not just the southwest corner of the park. Commissioner Kinney said he has spent a lot of time trying to figure out where to put tennis courts. If tennis has their hearts set on four courts together then Strawberry Hill Park would be the place. Commissioner DeWitt said the project proposal is a concept plan and not a design that permits are submitted on.

FUTURE PLANNING FOR SAKAI PARK: Park Services Division Director Dan Hamlin said there is unfinished business with Sakai Park and the replacement of the Ray Williamson pool. Staff are looking for direction regarding what the board would like to do next. Commissioner Kinney said the cost of replacing the Ray Williamson pool would be 50-60 million dollars. If both projects are going to be done, the replacement pool and the fieldhouse need to be done together so they do not compete against each other. There are people in the community that want a bond to do both projects. It is not free to run a bond election, there is a fee. His analysis of the situation is that taxes are high, inflation is going up, and the Bainbridge Island School District is going to go out for a bond for Commodore, Ordway Elementary, and adding synthetic turf fields soon. He thinks with all that in mind the community is not going to want to build anything else right now for 90 million dollars. Since he does not know that for sure, he has suggested that there be a public opinion poll on the topic of whether people are willing to raise their taxes for these two projects. The Park District would have to get approval from 60% of the voters to pass a bond. The lynch pin is to do a public opinion poll. He certainly understands having to travel for kids to play sports, having two daughters that played softball. Commissioner Janow said that parks and trails are fluid and things are changing all the time. The surveys the Park District has are from 2016 and 2019. It is important to hear from the current community about what they want and what they are and are not willing to pay for. Commissioner Goodlin said that the Park District will need to be thoughtful about what is presented in the survey and careful that accurate costs are presented and not just an estimated cost of 90 million dollars. Commissioner Janow said that she would like to see staff directed to hire a company to do a comprehensive survey. Executive Director Terry Lande said the survey is critical to find out where the whole community is at, and the board could be involved in the process of designing the survey. Commissioner Swolgaard said that it took five tries to get the Don Nakata pool bond approved and the plan had to be whittled down with each try. He wishes they would have done a survey then and he does not want to go through that again. That is why he wants to know what the public wants and what they would support. Times are tough and most of the people on the island, per the census, are over 55 years old. They do not have kids at home, so the board wants to know if they will support the projects. Carolyn Goad spoke in support of preserving Sakai Park as it is.

Nick Schnee said that he thinks the survey is a bad idea and said that the community wants action.

Doug Rauh spoke in support of conserving Sakai Park as it is and supports doing a survey.

Ed Labanara said he is opposed to the recall and said that the energy could be better spent collaborating.

Anya Harris said that gymnastics needs new facilities.

George Rohrbacher spoke in support of an indoor sports facility at Sakai Park.

Erin Gardner spoke in support of an indoor sports facility at Sakai Park.

Trea Coleman spoke in support of new gymnastics facilities.

Hillary Scheer spoke in support of a larger space for gymnastics.

Tony Gaspich said please be careful about how taxpayer dollars are being spent and that he hopes the recall effort instituted to try to get the board to reach certain decisions does not affect the process or decisions.

Jeramie Maxwell spoke against doing a survey and would prefer a subcommittee.

MSC: Janow/Swolgaard: Motion to direct staff to do an island-wide survey regarding Sakai Park and other capital projects and to gauge the island's desire for additional bond measures and which projects they may be likely to increase their taxes for. Commissioner DeWitt said he thinks the survey is needed to get the pulse of where the entire community is today related to Sakai Park. Commissioner Kinney said the Aquatic Center needs to be a part of the discussion to find out

what the public appetite is for big ticket items. Commissioner Goodlin said that he would like to have some participation in the survey creation process.

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

ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE: Administrative Division Director Amy Swenson said \$40,000 was approved in the 2022 budget discussions for new accounting software in 2023. Since then, the staff have investigated accounting systems and have recommended software from Tyler Technologies. Currently the Park District has separate electronic timesheet software, online invoice approval software, and accounting software. Tyler Technologies can integrate the three software systems into one which will make staff more efficient while reducing error. There will be cost savings every year in annual maintenance fees. It will cost \$64,000 to implement the Tyler Technologies software. **MSC: DeWitt/Swolgaard: Move to approve the updated accounting software.**

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

Special board meeting tomorrow, May 19 at 11:30 am at Bainbridge Island Recreation Center. **MSC: DeWitt/Janow: Move to cancel the July 6 regular board meeting.**

BOARD MEMBER REMARKS:

- Commissioner DeWitt said that his son was involved in baseball, varsity football, and diving and he spent a lot of time on bleachers. His daughter was a rope skipper, gymnast, and participated in softball. He has a good understanding of youth sports on the island.
- Commissioner DeWitt said that it has been mentioned that the Park District is not accommodating families with regular board meetings starting at 6:00 pm. Several years ago, the meeting start time was moved from 7:00 pm to 6:00 pm at the request of families. The board has tried to accommodate families as best they can.
- Commissioner DeWitt said today he was thanked for the bench at Gazzam Lake Nature Preserve.
- Commissioner DeWitt said he was recently walking with his family through the west Grand Forest, and they appreciated the new restroom.
- Commissioner Goodlin said that there has been a request for Zoom board meetings. Commissioner DeWitt said that it would be good to put it into the budget process.
- Commissioner Goodlin said that he would like to have an agenda item in the near future about committees in relation to how public input is gathered.
- Commissioner Janow said a session of the Walks with Commissioners program was held recently.
- Commissioner Janow said the Kindred Spirit mailbox has been installed.
- Commissioner Janow read her thoughts on community and said she will continue to strive to serve to the best of her ability.


MEETING ADJOURNED at 9:04 pm.

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

BY: 
Jay C. Kinney

BY: 
John Thomas Swolgaard

BY: 
Dawn Jarow

BY: 
Kenneth R. DeWitt

ATTEST: 
Tom Goodlin