

**BAINBRIDGE ISLAND METROPOLITAN PARK & RECREATION DISTRICT
PUBLIC MEETING-STATE PARKS, JULY 7, 2009
BAINBRIDGE COMMONS**

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 6:40 pm by Commissioner Robinson.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ken DeWitt, Kirk Robinson, Dave Shorett. Absent: Lee Cross, Tom Swolgaard.

INTRODUCTION

Commissioner Robinson said the purpose of this evening's meeting is to hear the community's thoughts on whether the Park District should assume ownership of the island's two state parks, Fay Bainbridge and Fort Ward. He said the WA State Parks Commission has by resolution formally offered the two parks to the Park District. He said the Board has not made a decision on whether to accept the parks because it wants to hear whether the community is supportive of this. He said Commissioner Shorett has passed out information tonight which represents his perspective as well as the perspective of Commissioner Cross. Commissioner Robinson said there is a wide spectrum of other views in addition to this. Commissioner DeWitt said he wants to hear what people have to say, and that no presentation by staff will be done this evening.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Douglas Rauh, north end island resident on Kenneth Place, bikes regularly, says campsites at Fay Bainbridge are usually full and that the park is an economic generator. He thinks it would lose exposure if taken off the State's website.

Maradel Gale, lives downtown Winslow, said "no" to taking on the state parks saying the fiscal implications are huge, the State hasn't completed its process, the state parks provide the island with an economic base, passage of a resolution doesn't mean the Park District should take them on, and the District has enough on its plate.

Curt Winston, south end island resident, said 25% of tax bill goes to the State and that the island doesn't use many State services. He thinks we're being shortchanged and doesn't think the state parks should be dumped on us.

Lynn Pippard lives near Fort Ward, said the two state parks are wonderful places on the island and encouraged local ownership. She said the community would feel more closely aligned to them under local control and sees many volunteers becoming involved.

Jim Pippard lives near Fort Ward, said he doesn't see the State dumping the parks on us. He sees the transfer as a collaborative arrangement, and it is our choice to accept it or not. He said he believes the Board will make a competent decision, and he believes in local control. He asked that the esthetic value of the parks be considered, and asked the Board to rise above the dollars and cents, and see the parks as wonderful gifts.

Deb DeVlieger, island resident for 30 years, said the public is committed to the preservation of open space on the island as evidenced through the passage of both the City's open space bond and Park District lid lift. She said that if islanders are willing to spend money to purchase park acquisitions, it makes sense to accept a gift of property, especially with such unbelievable shoreline. She suggested positioning the District so it is in first place to discuss the property transfer if the State decides to close the parks. She said she is fully supportive of going ahead with these discussions with the State, and hopefully one day having the gift of these two parks on the island.

Ed Cannard island resident on Parfitt Way, said the State should keep the parks, saying they are public land, and that the State is in no position to give them away. He said no one has talked to the rest of Washington about this, and he is offended by the whole presentation. He said Waterfront Park is in severe need of attention, and that the Park District has a lot on its plate to deal with. He asked why the work isn't being done, and said the District doesn't have

the money, resources, or manpower to take on the state parks. He said he is extremely disappointed, and that the District must get grounded.

Ms. Ginkna, island resident on 15399 Sunrise Drive, said she is a trained beach naturalist, goes to Fay Bainbridge daily, and doesn't believe the State is taking good care of the park. She said scotch broom and ivy is rampant, and that better signage is needed to educate the public about the tidelands, etc. She said the State seems to lack interest, and that if there is local control, civic groups would come together to deal with issues like banning ivy.

Jette Hammen, Port Madison resident for 37 years, said she is very concerned. She sees current parks in disrepair (like no stairs to beach in West Port Madison) and said taking on the state parks is too big a bite. She said the City has run itself into the ground, and doesn't want this to happen to the Park District. She said if the whole state can't support these two parks, how on earth will the Bainbridge community afford to do this. She feels very strongly that we must maintain what we have.

Alice Shorett, wife of Commissioner Shorett and 30 year island resident, said "just say no" to taking on Fay Bainbridge and Fort Ward. She said there is no reason these parks can't stay with the State, and that the public thought this discussion was over when the State indicated it would not have to close state parks after all. She said 22 City parks are coming to the District which will require a lot of planning. She asked that lid lift funds be spent wisely, saying there is much work needed on property the District already has. She said if the license tab fees are not enough to keep Fay Bainbridge and Fort Ward open, this would be the time to come back to the State and talk.

Patty Elms, wife of Park Services Director Arlan Elms and island resident, said she walks regularly at Fort Ward and encouraged local control of the island's state parks. She said that when a tree is down she can contract the Park District and ask to have taken care of.

Gary Axling, island resident since 1972, said he is not certain how he feels. He said he has always supported the community's schools, libraries and parks and would love to have the state parks owned by the island, but is concerned. He cited the City as an example of what could happen saying the City Council also wished for many things.

Donna Martin, island resident on NE Kitsap, said she is for the transfer of the state parks to the Park District. She said they are two crown jewels on the island, which hold many possibilities for the community. She encouraged the Board to think with vision for the community.

Keith Fetterman island resident on Old Mill Road, said he is concerned about tax increases and absorbing the burden of maintaining Fay Bainbridge and Fort Ward, each substantial parks. He said if the Park District does not take on the parks, it is not like the island will be losing them. Even if they are closed, they can always be re-opened, and services reduced.

David Cordaro, island resident for 19 years, said he lives near Fay Bainbridge and is concerned with that portion of the public that stays there as transients. He said law enforcement qualified staff is essential, and doesn't know if the District is prepared to take this on. He thinks the District has underestimated the costs, and does not want to be taxed off the island with levy after levy which he thinks will be needed once the true costs are known. He is concerned about environmental issues related to the spit. He asked about deeding property to a local body and asked what guarantee there is that the property will remain public. He thinks the state has found solution for 1-1/2 more years and we should wait this out and think this through.

Mark Hinkley, island resident for 11 years, said the concern is less about who has the parks and more about how they are maintained. He said he doesn't want to see the parks closed, but doesn't see the need to rush. He wants the parks to continue with the State and transferred to the District only if they are going to close. He'd also like to see

the treatment plant built at Fay Bainbridge. He'd like the District to be in first position, if the State does decide to close the parks.

Linda Lemon, island resident, said this is a complex issue which should not divide us. She said we are talking short term versus long term. It is not known if the State will have the funds in the long run to keep these two parks, and that neither side knows what the economic climate will be in the future. She said it is much easier to mobilize local forces to volunteer and raise funds for the parks, than to pressure the state to properly maintain them. She said she has not seen this effort at the state level. She thinks to delay the state parks transfer is to postpone the inevitable and that in the meantime the island's state parks are deteriorating. She encouraged the Board to look at the long run, keep negotiations open, and be prepared to take them on. She said tourists look at the views and do not care if there is state or local ownership. She said parks that are not properly maintained affect all islanders, and asked the Board to assume responsibility for taking on the state parks in the long term.

A brief discussion followed with some questions raised that will later be addressed. These include: What are the possibilities for using volunteers in the parks when under State ownership? Can Fort Ward be opened up for equestrian use? What are the legal fees and costs to transfer the parks to local jurisdiction?

Commissioner Robinson said the next step is a second public meeting on July 21. Following this the Board will hold discussion and make a decision at an upcoming board meeting. He thanked the public for coming.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 7:45 pm.

Elizabeth R. Shepherd
Terry M. Lande
BAINBRIDGE ISLAND METROPOLITAN
PARK & RECREATION DISTRICT

BY: _____
John Thomas Swolgaard

BY: _____
Lee Cross

BY: _____
Kirk B. Robinson

BY: _____
Kenneth R. DeWitt

ATTEST: _____
David L. Shorett - Secretary