

City of Mercer Island

OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST BOARD

Thursday · November 21 · 2019
Regular Meeting Agenda

6:00 pm Letterboxing Recognition

6:20 pm Call to Order & Roll Call

6:25 pm Minutes of September 19, 2019 Meeting

6:30 pm Public Appearances

6:35 pm Regular Business

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. Bench request | Alaine Sommargren (20 min) |
| 2. Roots in accessible trails | Alaine Sommargren (20 min) |
| 3. 2020 Work Plan brainstorm | Alaine Sommargren (10 min) |
| 4. Quadrant Reports | Trustees (5 min) |
| 5. Next meeting: January 16, 2020 | Chair (5 min) |

7:40 pm Adjournment (estimated)

BOARD MEMBERS

Marie Bender, *Chair*
Thomas Hildebrandt, *Vice Chair*
Craig Olson, *Secretary*
David Wisenteiner, *Council Liaison*
Carol Lynn Berseth
Geraldine Poor

STAFF

Ryan Daly, *Interim Parks and Recreation Director*
Alaine Sommargren, *Interim Parks Operations Manager*
Kim Frappier, *Natural Resources Specialist*





OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST BOARD & PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION JOINT MEETING MINUTES SEPTEMBER 19, 2019

Call to Order:

Chair Bender called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM

Roll Call:

Open Space Conservancy Trust (OSCT) Board members present included Chair Marie Bender, Vice Chair Thomas Hildebrandt, Secretary Craig Olson, Trustee Carol Lynn Berseth, and Trustee Geraldine Poor. Council Liaison David Wisenteiner was absent.

Parks and Recreation Commission members present included Chair Rory Westberg, Vice Chair Jodi McCarthy, Commissioner Don Cohen, and Commissioner Lyn Gualtieri. Commissioners Amy Richter, Sara Berkenwald, and Kirk Robinson were absent.

Staff present were Ryan Daly, Interim Parks and Recreation Director, Alaine Sommargren, Interim Parks Operations Manager, and Kim Frappier, Natural Resources Specialist.

Minutes:

Secretary Olson motioned and Vice Chair Hildebrandt seconded to approve the July minutes.

Motion passed: 5-0.

Public Appearances:

There were no public appearances.

Regular Business:

(I) Recognition of Rory Westberg, outgoing OSCT Board Chair

Chair Bender shared remarks on Rory Westberg's service on the OSCT Board and thanked him for his service.

(II) Overview of the Parks and Recreation Commission and OSCT Board

Commissioner Westberg provided an overview of the Parks and Recreation Commission. He noted that the primary purpose is to be the eyes and ears of the Mercer Island community, be a conduit to share ideas, and make policy recommendations to City Council. The first important project will be to contribute to the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan.

Park Operations Manager Sommargren presented the history and mission of the OSCT Board and the plans that guide the work of the Open Space Conservancy Trust Board.

(III) Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan (PROS) Plan Overview & Timeline

Interim Director Daly provided an overview of the purpose of and process for developing the PROS plan. The Plan is vetted by the public and serves as a guiding document for the Parks and Recreation Department's work. The Plan also improves the City's eligibility for grant funding.

(IV) Quadrant Reports

NW Quadrant: Trustee Berseth

Trustees discussed concerns over the dogs digging holes under the Don Cohen bench and the impacts to the fenced off area adjacent to the bench. Staff reported that park users continue to vandalize the fence, remove signage, and allow dogs to use as an off-leash dog area. The impacted area continues to increase, and dogs are digging holes next to native vegetation. Trustees suggested using hardware cloth under the Don Cohen bench.

Vice Chair Hildebrandt reported that the Hatheway Bench restoration is on hold because the Eagle Scout hasn't submitted a plan yet.

NE Quadrant: Trustee Poor and Trustee Bender

Trustees noted that the trail clean up went well.

SE Quadrant: Secretary Hildebrandt and Trustee Olson

Trustees reported on the improved trail conditions.

Trustees inquired into the purpose of white spray paint on roots within trails. Interim Park Operations Manager Sommargren explained the purpose is to alert walkers to roots in the trail for their safety.

(V) Other business

Trustees requested more information about the sword fern decline at Seward Park. Natural Resources Specialist Frappier explained that she serves on the Sword Fern Decline Working Group, primarily to stay abreast of new developments. This group is primarily focused on Seward Park, but land managers from other jurisdictions also participate. She explained that we have two sites with areas of die-off that the Natural Resources Program is monitoring.

Trustees raised a concern about commercial activities going on in Pioneer Park. Trustees observed yoga and exercise classes being led in the parks by outside groups, which is against City policy.

Trustees raised concern over park visitors parking above the curb on 84th Avenue SE. Drivers keep pushing further into the Park, impacting vegetation. Trustees inquired whether there is a way to get logs to delineate the parking area off the street. Interim Park Operations Manager Sommargren will put this on a future agenda.

Trustees asked why the Pumpkin Walk event was moved from Pioneer Park to Luther Burbank Park. Interim Park Operations Manager Sommargren provided more information on the event and explained that they needed a park that had space for food trucks and a larger gathering space with more lighting.

(VI) Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for November 21, 2019.

Adjournment: 7:20 PM

Marie Bender, Chair

Attest:

Kim Frappier, Scribe



**CITY OF MERCER ISLAND
OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST BOARD
STAFF REPORT**

Action Item No. 1

November 21, 2019

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Description: | Request for new bench location in NW quadrant |
| Exhibits: | 1. Correspondence regarding current request |

BACKGROUND

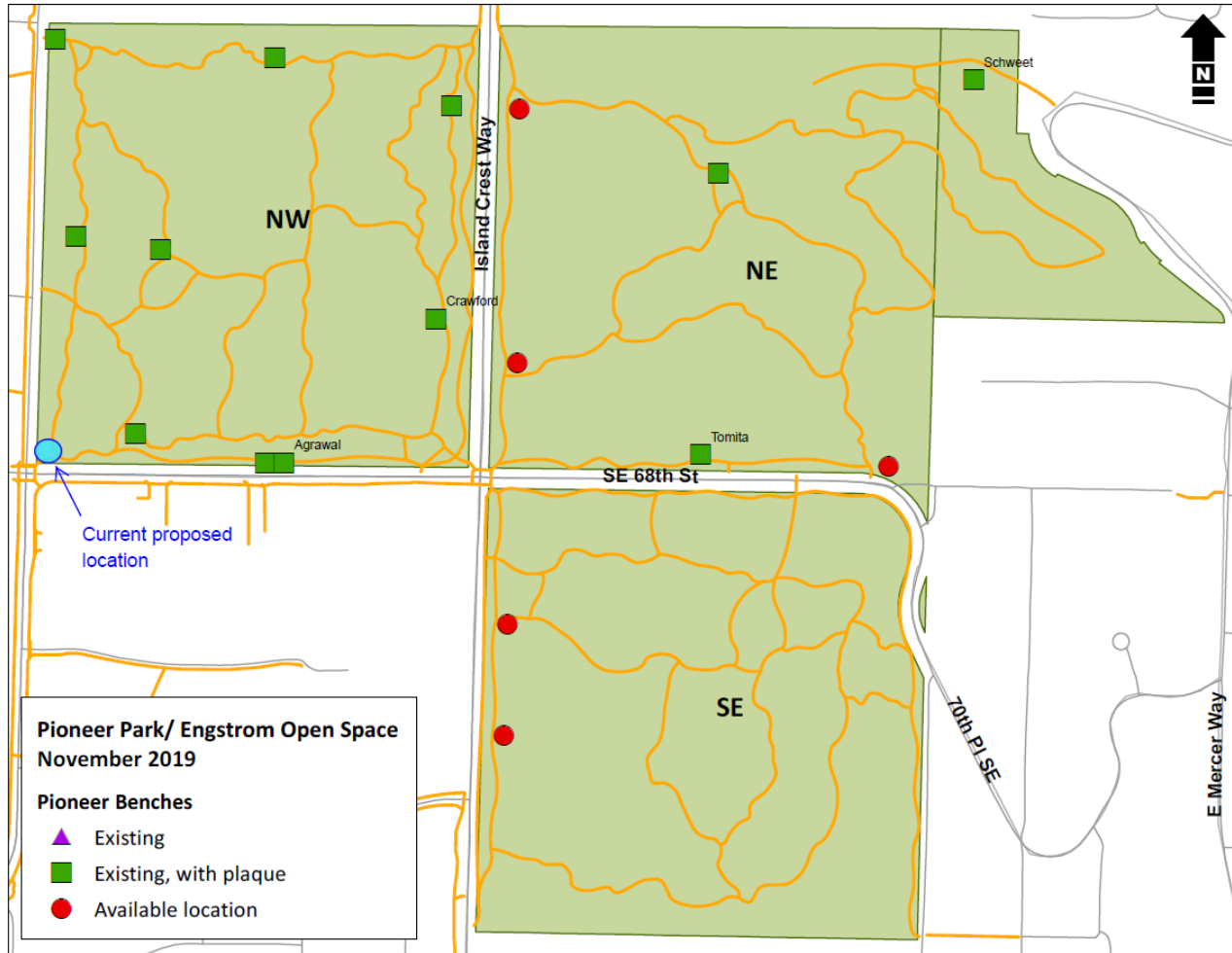
In August 2006, the OpenSpace Conservancy Trust Board approved a map showing available locations for new benches within Pioneer Park, at the request of staff, who were receiving many requests for donation benches throughout the park system. The approved map, which shows both existing benches and approved locations for new benches, has been updated in the years since (see below). In the intervening years, several requests have been made for new benches in non-approved locations. In some cases, these requests have been turned down by the Trust board and some have been approved. In all cases, the final decision has been made by the Parks and Recreation Director after receiving a recommendation from the Trust Board.

CURRENT REQUEST

This summer, the Parks and Recreation Department received a request for a new bench donation in Pioneer Park from the family of Ewan Lill. After speaking with staff about available locations, the family requested that the Open Space Conservancy Trust consider the placement of the donation bench in a non-approved location near the corner of SE 68th St and 84th Ave SE. Diane Mortenson, the Parks and Recreation Community Engagement & Program Manager, suggested that the family write a letter to the Trust Board to provide details about their request. This letter, as well as letters of support from the community, are compiled in Exhibit 2.

PROPOSED LOCATION

The Lill family has requested that the new donation bench be placed in the southwest corner of the Northwest quadrant, under a maple tree. The proposed location is shown in blue:



Taken from the street corner, this photo shows the approximate location of the proposed bench in relation to current trails and signs:



Jenny Harrington Lill and Michael Lill
4821 88th PL SE
Mercer Island, WA 98040
206-673-7040
www.teamewan.com

August 14, 2019

Dear Open Space Conservancy Trust Members:

I am writing as a mother of a beloved Mercer Island Resident to request that bench be installed in the Northwest (NW) Quadrant of Pioneer Park in his memory. Eight-year-old **Ewan Lill** died of acute lymphoblastic leukemia on May 7th of 2018¹. He was a third grader at Lakeridge Elementary School and a lover of animals, sports and nature. Currently, there is no space available to install a bench in the NW Quad of Pioneer Park. Our family is requesting that the Open Space Conservancy Trust Members amend the availability and allow for a bench in the location marked in Figure 1. The proposed location can be viewed in Photo 1. There are no other benches nearby.

I am requesting the amendment for the following reasons:

1. Ewan frequently walked through the NW Quad with his dog, Poppy (Photo 2). We have fond memories of letterboxing in the Quad, or 1st year on Mercer Island. It was also the location of the Mercer Island Pumpkin Walk, October 22, 2016. That was the first year of Ewan's cancer diagnosis. Despite feeling sick, he made a point of getting out (in the pouring rain that year) to see the Jack-O-Lanterns. We have many memories of time spent with Ewan.
2. We are not alone. A bench in this space will give many Islanders the opportunity to relax and enjoy Pioneer Park and remember him. Ewan spent time with his friends in this section of the park. They remember meeting up for loops through the forest. Last year, to mark Ewan's 9th birthday, even though Ewan had died, his friends held a chocolate cupcake and chocolate milk fundraising bake sale in this location, to benefit Team Ewan Guild², a 501(c)(3) non-profit partnered with Seattle Children's Hospital for High-Risk Leukemia Program at Children's³.
3. The location is perfect. A new Peace Pole recently went up, courtesy of the Mercer Island Rotary Club, near the spot we would like to see a bench placed. A bench on this corner would serve as a sitting place to reflect on peace and harmony – two of Ewan's core values. On the one-year anniversary of Ewan's death, Michael and I walked the parks of Mercer Island and evaluated all the locations available for a bench. Because the NW and SW Quad locations are so close to Island Crest Way, we felt that they were unsafe for children to visit regularly and run around. They are also very noisy locations and parts of Pioneer Park that Ewan did not visit. This is a common meetup for many of Pioneer Park's patrons.

Our goal is to protect and preserved the Open Space properties of Pioneer Park. We want to place a bench in a location that will act as a touchstone and joyful resting spot for all Islanders. Please consider our request.

Sincerely,



Jenny Harrington Lill and Michael Lill

1. <http://www.mi-reporter.com/life/mercer-island-third-grader-loses-battle-with-cancer/>
2. <https://giveto.seattlechildrens.org/teamewan>
3. <https://www.seattlechildrens.org/clinics/cancer/services/high-risk-leukemia/>

Figure 1.

Proposed location of bench for Ewan Lill in southwest corner of North West Quadrant of Pioneer Park. Circled in red with white X in pink box.



Photo 2.

Proposed location of NW Quad of Pioneer Park.



Photo 1.

Ewan, Jenny and Poppy taking a selfie in NW Quad of Pioneer Park.



Jonathan and Justine Lill
657 E. 26th St #3S
Brooklyn, NY 11210
617.905.7710
jonathanlill@yahoo.com

City of Mercer Island
Parks and Recreation Commission
Open Space Conservancy Trust
2040 84th Avenue SE
Mercer Island, WA 98040

Saturday, June 29, 2019

To Whom It May Concern,

We are writing this letter on the recommendation of Diane Mortensen to request a donation by us of a park bench for Pioneer Park. The bench would be in honor of the Lill-Harrington family of Mercer Island—parents Michael Lill and Jenny Harrington, and their children Torin, Wesley, and Elena—and particularly in memory of their youngest son (our nephew) Ewan Macaulay Lill.

Ewan was diagnosed with leukemia in the summer of 2016 when he was not yet seven years-old and immediately began treatment at Seattle Children's Hospital. We were awed by how Mercer Island family and friends, school teachers and classmates, neighbors and church family all rallied to support "Team Ewan" as the family themselves supported Ewan in his illness. After a year of treatment Ewan's leukemia went into remission but the illness returned in January 2018 and despite further heroic efforts Ewan passed away May 7, 2018. We were touched again by how the community turned out in support of Ewan's family, with hundreds attending Ewan's memorial service at Mercer Island Presbyterian Church and performances there by Ewan's classmates from Lakeridge Elementary School, and Wesley's classmates from Islander Middle School. Justine and I are still astonished by the depth of the bonds between the Lill-Harringtons and the entire Mercer Island community that were demonstrated that day.

Though a year has passed the community has continued to support Team Ewan, particularly to raise money for leukemia research at Seattle Children's. Justine and I thought however that there could be a way to remember Ewan closer to Mike and Jenny's home and closer to the community that showed such support for them; we were excited to discover that donating a bench to a Mercer Island park was a possibility. In our discussions with Diane she provided us with a map of the suggested bench locations to choose from, but we would very much like to suggest a different location, near the corner of 84th Ave SE and SE 68th St. The attached letter from Jenny Harrington Lill and Michael Lill includes images of the

specific desired location. As Jenny describes, that location is a busy part of Pioneer Park that Ewan frequented, a popular meeting place that has been the site of numerous bake sales and lemonade stands, activity we believe a new bench would encourage. Justine and I feel strongly that encouraging that community activity, more than the bench itself, is the best way we might honor Mike and Jenny, Torin, Wesley, and Elena, and to remember Ewan, on Mercer Island.

We are happy to discuss this further by email or phone though Mike and Jenny should be the final deciders of the bench placement and plaque language, their address and contact information is 4821 88th Pl SE, Mercer Island, WA 98040, 206.673.7030, jennyaharrington@gmail.com. We look forward to hearing your thoughts.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Lill

Justine van Straaten Lill

Ruth, Michael, Jamie, Molly, Grace and Dan Cartwright
7625 East Mercer Way
Mercer Island, WA 98040

August 15, 2019

Dear Open Space Conservancy Trust Members:

I am writing in support of a bench being placed in the Northwest (NW) Quadrant of Pioneer Park in honor of Ewan Lill. Ewan was a friend of our son Daniel Cartwright. Having a bench in the location would mean a great deal to our family, giving us a place to remember Ewan on our walks around the park. It is extremely important for Ewan's young friends to be able to remember and honor their friend whenever they need to, in a safe place that meant a lot to Ewan. Thank you for considering this matter.

Sincerely,

The Cartwright Family

Tracy Drinkwater
5912 83rd Place SE
Mercer Island, WA 98040

August 15, 2019

Dear Open Space Conservancy Trust Members:

I am writing in support of a bench being placed in the Northwest (NW) Quadrant of Pioneer Park in honor of Ewan Lill. My family and I know Ewan and his story, and have been friends with his family for the past several years, and proudly support Team Ewan.

Ewan has had an amazing impact on our community, and his spirit lives on through those who have known him and his family. Having a bench in the location would mean so much to us and many others. We appreciate the values of loving nature and being in the outdoors that Ewan embodied. A bench seems a very fitting tribute to this child who was taken from us too soon.

Thank you for considering this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tracy Drinkwater", with a stylized, cursive script.

Tracy D. Drinkwater (and family)

Alaine Sommargren

From: Leah Colson <leahco@microsoft.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2019 9:05 PM
To: Diane Mortenson
Subject: Bench in memory of Ewan Lill

To: the Open Space Conservancy Trust Members

I'm writing to ask for your support to honor the memory of one of our MI's friends, Ewan Lill. His family would like to have a bench placed in the NW quad to honor his memory and for his dear friends to gather to remember him.

The specific location is:

NW Quad, near the corner of 84th Ave SE and SE 68th St.

This is a meaningful spot for Ewan's family and friends who miss him greatly.

Our boys were his friends and played MI soccer with him and his mother as their coach (best coach ever!). We would love to honor and support them in his memory and hope that you'll see this as an important statement for many of the community who loved Ewan and continue to love and support his family.

Thank you for your consideration and for helping us all honor a loved boy and the community of kids who loved him dearly.

Thank you,

Leah Colson and Dennis Austin

Alaine Sommargren

From: Jennifer Flood <jfld2004@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 14, 2019 10:07 PM
To: Diane Mortenson
Subject: request of Open Space Conservancy Trust

Dear Open Space Conservancy Trust Members,

Thank you for your service to our open spaces and to our community. I am writing to request your support for having a bench placed in honor of Ewan Lill in Pioneer Park in the NW Quad, near the corner of 84th Ave SE and SE 68th St. This would be an ideal location for a bench honoring Ewan, who was a beloved member of our community that recently passed away, and especially loved this part of the park. Many members of the MI community have both acutely felt his loss and believe this would be an especially meaningful way for all of us to keep his memory alive.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jennifer Flood

4553 84th Ave SE, Mercer Island, WA 98040

Alaine Sommargren

From: Jennifer Glick <jendogger@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2019 6:23 AM
To: Diane Mortenson
Subject: Ewan Lill Park Bench Request

Dear Open Space Conservancy Trust Member

I am writing in support of a bench being placed in the Northwest Quadrant of Pioneer Park in honor of Ewan Lill. We know Ewan and his family through Lakeridge Elementary, where my son, Elijah attended classes with Ewan during second and third grade. Ewan and Elijah enjoyed each other's company a great deal. Having a bench in the location would mean a lot to us as we always enter the park there and would be able to visit Ewan's memory each time we do so. Thank you for considering this matter.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Glick
Elijah Glick
7375 80th PI SE
Mercer Island, WA 98040

Alaine Sommargren

From: rjginn@juno.com
Sent: Wednesday, August 14, 2019 6:52 PM
To: Diane Mortenson
Subject: Open Space Conservancy Trust Members

Dear Conservancy Trust Members,

This letter is in support of a bench in the NW Quad of Pioneer Park in memory of Ewan Lill. Ewan was just a little guy and a very special fellow. He died last year of leukemia. He had many friends, all of whom would be delighted to see a bench in Ewan's name in Pioneer Park.

I understand that there are no more "spots for benches". However, having walked with an elderly friend recently, I'd like to say that there are not too many benches and another one would be appreciated by older folks who like to take a short walk in the park. Please don't let the lack of places for benches stop you from approving a bench in Ewan's memory. Some will love it because it is Ewan's Bench. Others will welcome a place to sit and rest.

Judy Ginn
7815 85th Place SE
Mercer Island, WA 98040

Alaine Sommargren

From: Julie Hey <jhey810@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2019 9:09 PM
To: Diane Mortenson
Subject: Open Space Conservancy Trust petition for Ewan Lill bench

Dear Ms Mortenson --

I am writing to you in an effort to appeal to the Open Space Conservancy Trust Board members to make a bench exception in the NW Quad of Pioneer Park, near the corner of 84th Ave SE and SE 68th St., to accomodate a bench in the memory of Ewan Lill.

Ewan was an extraordinary young man and active member of our community in sports, school and social activities. So many of us followed closely his struggle with leukemia. We smiled at the photos of his toothy grin and stories of his love of puzzles, friends, and everyday life in spite of the insurmountable odds associated with his disease. We collectively held our breath as he awaited test results; and ran his fundraising races, hoping to make some sort of contribution in the face of helplessness. Ultimately we came together in tears as we mourned his death. Even now, so many of us follow the Lill family's story and contribute to their efforts to fundraise through Ewan's Children's Hospital fund.

Ewan truly represented all of our children in some way and his untimely death affected our community deeply. I would love to see Mercer Island honor his life and memory with a bench in the area and community he loved and ask that you consider making a spot available when you meet later this month.

Sincerely,
Julie Hey
2226 72nd Ave SE

Alaine Sommargren

From: Anne's Comcast Email <ahritzay@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2019 10:12 AM
To: Diane Mortenson
Subject: letter to Open Space Trust Conservancy Members

Re: A bench for Ewan

Dear open space trust conservatory members, Thank you for your continued excellent work maintaining our prized Pioneer Park for our enjoyment and necessary nature walks! I write to support the efforts to place a bench in Ewan Lill's honor at the corner of 68th and 84th. Ewan touched so many lives including my own, and his memory continues to inspire and support our community in healing and caring for other children and their families seeking cures to devastating illness.

In addition, this is the standard meetup point for all of us community walkers, and I've often thought a bench here would be so useful as a park amenity as we wait for friends. Please consider adding this bench for us to use as well as embrace Ewan's memory.

Thanks for your consideration ,

Anne Hritzay
206-999-1363

Sent from my iPhone

Alaine Sommargren

From: Daniel Kalish <dan.kalish@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, August 17, 2019 5:04 PM
To: Diane Mortenson
Subject: Bench for Ewan Lill

Dear Open Space Conservancy Trust Members:

I live in South Mercer Island, and I have lived on Mercer Island for about 9 years. I am writing to request that the city place a bench in Ewan Lill's honor in the NW Quad, near the corner of 84th Ave SE and SE 68th St.

One of the great things about Mercer Island is that the community comes together to assist those in good times, and to help in times of need. Ewan Lill was such an influential kid and had an impact on so many lives in South Mercer Island, and I could think of no better way for the community to come together to honor Ewan's life.

Thank you, Dan
206-251-7957
7749 85th Pl. SE
Mercer Island, WA 98040

Alaine Sommargren

From: Jamie Hsu <jamie@lakevillehomes.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2019 10:12 AM
To: Diane Mortenson
Subject: A Bench for Ewan

Diane and the Open Space Conservancy Trust Members,

I am aware that Jenny Harrington, Mercer Island resident and mourning mother is looking to get a memorial bench installed in Pioneer Park. While I do not know Jenny, nor did I have the opportunity to know her sweet little boy in life, he has impacted so many island residence with his love for life and his brave battle against a ruthless disease. While Ewan earned passage from this life, his impact continues to be felt.

The Mercer Island Little League honored his memory with demarcation on every uniform for the 2019 season.

As a symbol of resilience and a message of inspiration and love that extends beyond this earthly existence, I would love to see a bench to honor this young man in our parks. And imagine what it would do for those who love him so dearly to have a spot to reflect.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Jamie

Jamie C. Hsu, CAPS, CGR
President, Lakeville Homes

****National Association of Home Builders "Remodeler of the Month", July 2015, April 2012****
****2013 MBA K/S Remodeler Member of the Year****
****2012 MBA K/S Builder Member of the Year****
****Professional Remodeler Magazine, 40 Under 40, Class of 2012****
****Puget Sound Business Journal 40 Under 40, Class of 2012****
****425 Magazine - Best Remodeler / Best Home Builder 2012-18****

Visit us on our Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/lakevilleconstruction>

Alaine Sommargren

From: Elizabeth Kaplan <elizakaplan@hotmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, August 17, 2019 8:18 AM
To: Diane Mortenson

Dear Open Space Conservancy Trust Members,

I am writing to advocate for the placement of a bench in Pioneer Park ideally in the NW Quad, near the corner of 84th Ave SE and SE 68th St in honor of the most special, dearest little boy, Ewan Lil. Ewan was an incredible child who touched so many people in this community, He and his family are such a special part of this community and I support all efforts to honor his legacy. I have a young daughter who was in Ewan's 3rd grade class. She would love to have a place to go to honor Ewan in a location that was special to Ewan.

Thank you for your consideration
Elizabeth Kaplan

Alaine Sommargren

From: Katharine Lamperti <klamperti@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, August 17, 2019 9:21 PM
To: Diane Mortenson
Subject: Letter in support of a bench for Ewan Lill in Pioneer Park

August 17, 2019

Dear Members of the Open Space Conservancy Trust,

I am writing to request that the Conservancy Trust approve the request from the Lill family for a bench to be placed in the Northwest (NW) Quadrant of Pioneer Park in honor of their son, Ewan Lill. As you most likely are aware, Ewan was a beloved young member of our community who died last year at age eight from leukemia. In his short life, Ewan touched many others and is lovingly remembered for his kindness and courage. We first met Ewan and the Lill family shortly after they moved to Mercer Island, when Ewan was just a toddler. Our entire family has been affected by Ewan's life and death, and it would mean a great deal to have a bench in Pioneer Park in honor of his beautiful spirit.

As a long time supporter of parks and open spaces, and as board member of the Friends of Luther Burbank Park, I understand the need to be judicious when considering installations or other changes to our treasured open spaces. The NW Quadrant of Pioneer Park is somewhat unique already, with the proximity to pathways for students traveling to school and activities, and as a relatively flat and smooth pathway for people of all ages to enjoy time in the woods. The location requested by the Lill family would be particular special for our youngest son, who was Ewan's "big brother" at Lakeridge and has been deeply affected by Ewan's death. Having the bench in this location, where he could run past it while training for cross country or sit on it for a break while walking our dogs, would be a positive reminder of all the good things that Ewan represents. How fitting for a legacy from Ewan to be a gift for others to enjoy.

Thank you for your consideration, and for your service to our community.

Sincerely,

Kate Lamperti (9202 SE 33rd Place)

Alaine Sommargren

From: Ralph Morton <RMorton@seattlesports.org>
Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2019 3:33 PM
To: Diane Mortenson
Subject: Bench for Ewan Lil

Open Space Conservancy Trust,

As 15 year Mercer Island residents, we love the parks in this community, which are often filled with our kids, enjoying everything this amazing island has to offer.

We understand that a request has been made to install a bench honoring the life and legacy of Ewan Lil, who inspired many of us in his fight against cancer and continues to do so to this day through the life that he lived.

We ask that the Board consider a petition to approve this placement of the bench, it is something that will be a lasting place to celebrate his life, on this amazing island we call home. I appreciate your consideration, and look forward to sitting in that bench one day soon.

Thanks,

Ralph and Laura Morton
Mercer Island

Alaine Sommargren

From: Paramita Mukherjee <paramita_mukherj@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 14, 2019 9:39 PM
To: Diane Mortenson
Subject: Request for space to place bench in memory of Ewan Lill

To,
Open Space Conservancy Trust Members

Dear Board Members of the Open Space Conservancy,
Ewan Lill was a 3rd grade kid from Lakeridge who died in 2018 after a long and tough fight against cancer. He was the sweetest kid , full of spirit who loved to play in Pioneer Park . And his favorite place was the NW Quad of Pioneer Park near the corner of 84th Ave SE and SE 68th St.
I would like to request the board to consider the request by Ewan's parents to place a bench in Ewan's memory in Pioneer Park - a place he loved and enjoyed during his very short life .

Sincerely,
Paramita Mukherjee
(Resident of South end of Mercer Island)

Alaine Sommargren

From: Jane Reynolds <janegfr@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2019 9:21 PM
To: Diane Mortenson
Subject: Memorial bench request

Greetings,

I write in support of the petition to place a bench in [Pioneer Park](#) in memory of Jenny Harrington's son Ewan, who died of cancer. I understand Jenny has proposed a viable location.

Yours,

Jane Reynolds

- J

Alaine Sommargren

From: Christy Shiers <shiersfamily@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 14, 2019 6:34 PM
To: Diane Mortenson
Subject: Open Space Conservancy Bench

Dear Open Space Conservancy Trust Members,

I would like to strongly encourage that you head the recommendation for Ewan Lill's memorial bench in Pioneer Park.

This is a beloved family on Mercer Island and there are so many connections of all ages to Ewan. Please honor their wishes and place the bench in the NW quad in the location they specified.

Thank you!

Christy Shiers
Mercer Island Resident
206-409-5631

Alaine Sommargren

From: Jianlan Song <jianlan_song@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 14, 2019 9:15 PM
To: Diane Mortenson
Subject: Bench for Ewan

Dear Open Space Conservancy Trust Members:

I'd like to petition to the board members to dedicate a memorial bench for Ewan Harrington, who passed away from cancer last year. We would like to get one placed in the NW Quad, near the corner of 84th Ave SE and SE 68th St. one of Ewan's favorite places and frequented.

Thank you for your consideration!

Jianlan (MI resident)

Alaine Sommargren

From: Jenna Sytman <jsytman@mac.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2019 2:46 PM
To: Diane Mortenson
Subject: A Bench for Ewan!

Diane and members of the Open Space Conservancy Trust,

Please consider allowing a park bench in memory of Ewan Lill to be placed in the NW Quad of Pioneer Park, near the corner of 84th Ave SE and SE 68th St. Ewan Lill touched the lives of many Mercer Islanders during his short life, and especially during his valiant battle against cancer. A park bench, in a place that Ewan loved, would be a touching tribute to remember such a remarkable young life. Please support this effort and help bring smiles to the faces of his family, friends, and community that rallied around the family during their darkest times. Help his memory always be for a blessing by allowing this bench.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jenna Sytman

Alaine Sommargren

From: Holly Kathryn Tabor <hktabor@stanford.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, August 14, 2019 9:44 PM
To: Diane Mortenson
Subject: Open Space Conservancy Trust Members-bench request

Dear **Open Space Conservancy Trust Members, c/o Diane Mortenson,**

I am writing to request your support of the installation of a bench in memory of Ewan Lill in the NW Quad of Pioneer Park. Ewan was an amazing young boy, who sadly died last year. Ewan was inspiring to everyone he met, and made a significant on not just the Mercer Island Community, but on the world at large in his short time on earth. He is deeply missed by the entire community. As a resident of Mercer Island for 8 years, I was a frequent walked/runner in Pioneer Park, and Ewan also loved the park. I can think of no greater memorial to him than a bench in the park he loved, where the people who loved him can remember his wisdom, kindness and spirit. For years, as I walked in the park, I paid attention to the existing benches, and thought of the people who they memorialized. While I no longer live on Mercer Island, I visit many times a year, and I know that I would really value seeing Ewan memorialized in this way. Please consider allowing this bench to be dedicated/placed in the location requested by the Lill family.

Thank you for your consideration.

-Holy Tabor
Formerly of 8851 SE 74th Place, Mercer Island



**CITY OF MERCER ISLAND
OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST BOARD
STAFF REPORT**

Action Item No. 2

November 21, 2019

Description: Root intrusions on accessible trail

SUMMARY

Tree roots have grown in the surface of the Perimeter Trail in the northwest quadrant. Where the roots project above the gravel surface they may pose a trip hazard for park users. City of Mercer Island staff have outlined several strategies that they propose to manage this condition.

BACKGROUND

In October 2001, the Open Space Conservancy Trust Board adopted the Pioneer Park Master Plan (<http://www.mercergov.org/SIB/files/PPMP.pdf>). The Master Plan made recommendations for trail design, entry and roadway improvements, viewpoint improvements, park furniture, planting and signage, to be used as a guide for the City during improvements.

In the Master Plan, the Perimeter Trail in the NW Quadrant is identified as an Accessible Trail. The final plan does not identify any universal standard such as American with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) for the park's accessible trails but does lay out specific design standards for these trails throughout the plan.

ROOT INTRUSIONS INTO TRAIL

This summer, trail users notified Parks staff about numerous tripping hazards on the NW Perimeter Trail, caused by root intrusions from nearby trees. One such root caused a park visitor to trip and fall.

Parks staff assessed all root intrusions into the trail and found that there were four areas on the Perimeter Trail where roots are protruding above the trail surface, and many other areas where roots are well above the trail grade on the



Example of in-trail and trail edge root intrusions



Example of in-trail root intrusions adjacent to a healthy tree



Example of trail edge roots

edges of the trail. Further inspection revealed that two of the in-trail intrusions were connected to dead trees and two originated from large, healthy trees.

All in-trail root intrusions, each measuring approximately 1" above trail surface, were marked with white marking paint at the time of this assessment. Many prominent roots along the edge of the trail were also marked to increase their visibility to trail users.

For the two in-trail intrusions where the roots were attached to dead trees, staff determined that the roots should be removed and back-filled with gravel.

OPTIONS FOR IN-TRAIL ROOT INTRUSIONS

For the current in-trail intrusions, and future intrusions that are likely to appear as trees continue to grow near the accessible trail, staff would like the Board's direction for managing these natural obstacles in the trail tread. Possible management options are listed here for consideration:

- **No change:** No active management of the roots is performed, with the exception of periodic spray paint marking to highlight the roots and increase visibility.

Although many design standards for accessibility are included in the Master Plan, tread obstacles are not addressed specifically. The ABA trail technical guidelines for trails, which were updated in 2013 and are commonly used as the standards for accessible trail building, address tread obstacles as follows:

A tread obstacle is anything that interrupts the evenness of the tread surface. The vertical alignment of joints in concrete, asphalt, or board surfaces, as well as natural features, such as tree roots and rocks, within the trail tread can be tread obstacles.

The limit on the height of tread obstacles on trails, passing spaces, and resting intervals is based on the surface material used. When the trail surface is constructed of concrete, asphalt, or boards, tread obstacles cannot exceed one-half inch in height at their highest point. When the trail surface is constructed of materials other than concrete, asphalt, or boards, tread obstacles are permitted to be a maximum of 2 inches high.

Frequent tread obstacles and tread obstacles that cross the full width of a trail tread can make travel very difficult for people using mobility devices. Where possible, separate tread obstacles by at least 48 inches, particularly when the obstacles cross the entire tread width. This separation allows people using mobility devices to fully cross one obstacle before confronting another.

If this standard were used as a threshold for action on the NW Perimeter Trail, roots would only be actively managed if they were 2" above grade or higher.

- **Cut or grind roots:** Roots would be cut or ground to bring them below the tread surface.

Cutting, chopping or grinding roots attached to live trees has the potential to significantly harm the trees to which they are attached. In addition to removing a structural support and a water/nutrient conduit, cutting or grinding roots opens wounds that allow diseases to enter the tree. This is particularly concerning in Pioneer Park, where the presence of root rot fungi is well-documented.

- **Add gravel:** Supplement gravel around tree roots to raise the tread grade.

Adding gravel around uplifting roots has minimal impacts on tree health, given that the area is already compacted and gravelled. However, this gravel tends to get redistributed away from the roots fairly quickly, and only serves as a temporary solution to the issue.

- **Re-route the trail:** Move the alignment of the trail enough to avoid the root intrusion.

Moving the alignment of a trail requires a great deal of work and causes disturbance to adjacent habitat. Where this has been done in other areas of Pioneer Park to deal with erosion and drainage issues, they were smaller trails. Because the Perimeter Trail is a minimum 6' wide tread with 2' wide clear shoulders on each side, the impact would be significant.

However, one of the current in-trail intrusions occurs in a location where users have created a redundant social trail. In this case, the root issue will be resolved by decommissioning the social trail and restoring the plant community.

DISCUSSION

This issue will probably not be solved with a simple decision. There is an inherent tension in managing Trust properties between protecting the health of the trees and providing the public access to the open space. It is not the intention of this report to ask the board to select one option over another or make decisions about specific roots. Staff are seeking the Trust's input and values clarification to help guide future decisions in this area. Staff expect to return at a subsequent meeting with any recommendations they can distill from the input that Trustees provide.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Discuss outlined options.



**MERCER ISLAND
OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST
2020 Work Plan**

| January 16 |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual Report to Council: The Trust is required in its by-laws to report to City Council each year on the status of Trust properties.• Work Plan: The Trust develops a list of topics that it intends to address during the year (this document). This work plan is submitted to City Council with the Annual Report as a courtesy.• Quadrant Reports (ongoing item): Trustees will report on the condition of certain quadrants at Trust board meetings. |
| March 19 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Letterboxing program (ongoing item): The Trust board will continue to sponsor and support an annual Letterboxing program for youth on Mercer Island. |
| May 21 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Restoration Work Plan: City staff report to the Trust its planned restoration activities in the spring of each year, and recap work completed in the previous year.• Summer Trail Work Plan: City staff report to the Trust its intended maintenance activities in the spring of each year, and recap work completed in the previous year.• Off-leash dogs: The Trust will evaluate success of education measures over the past year and discuss possible changes. |
| July 16 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Herbicide application report: The Trust adopted an herbicide use protocol that requires City staff to report on the use of herbicides on Trust properties each year.• Election of Officers: The Trust is required by its bylaws to elect officers at its July meeting each year. |
| September 17 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eagle Project recognition: The Trust will recognize Eagle projects that have benefitted Trust Properties. |
| November 19 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognition of 2020 letterboxing program participants |

Note: The listing of an item under a particular month means that the item will be introduced at that meeting. There will be follow-up discussions and decisions at subsequent meetings as directed by the Chair.

Potential discussion topics:

- Permanent restroom facility
- Parking on 84th Ave SE
- Sword fern decline