

DRAFT
MARATHON COUNTY PARK COMMISSION

Date and Time of Meeting: October 3, 2023 at 10:30am Location: Room 5 at 212 River Dr., Wausau WI 54403

Park Commissioners present: Dawn Herbst, Jean Maszk, Rick Seefeldt-(via Webex), Kelly Zagrzebski-(via Webex)

Excused: Lou Larson, Allen Opall

Staff present: Jamie Polley-Parks, Recreation and Forestry Director, Andy Sims-Assistant Director of Operations, Mai Choua Vue-Administrative Manager

1. Call to Order – Vice-President Herbst called the Park Commission meeting to order at 10:30 am. Official notice and the agenda for the meeting was posted publicly in accordance with the State statutes.

2. Public Comment – none brought forward.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the September 5, 2023 Park Commission Meeting – **Motion** by Maszk, second by Zagrzebski to approve the September 5, 2023 meeting minutes. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 4-0.

4. Policy Issues for Discussion and Committee Determination

A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee

1. Removal or Replacement of the Big Rapids Dam – Polley explained this small dam was installed many years ago to form a swimming area for the park and is not required for this section of the river. The dam structure has failed, and water is currently undermining the dam. The stop logs for controlling the impoundment depth cannot be utilized. Staff can apply for a State grant for either dam removal or reconstruction which is a fifty-percent cost share from the County. Another grant is available for dam removal where the State pays 100% of removal costs but it's capped at \$50,000. There could be potential cost to the County but that won't be known until the project has gone out to bid. The DNR would like to see these types of small dams removed and let the river flow naturally. Polley didn't find any history of the dam other than it used to be a predominant swimming hole years ago. Polley questioned Commission if they saw value in keeping the dam or not and which grant staff should pursue. Questions were answered and discussion followed. **Motion** by Seefeldt, second by Maszk to apply for the dam removal grant. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 4-0.

2. Marathon Park Usage and Campground Operations – Polley discussed how recently there has been increased issues with drugs, garbage, and vandalism in the Marathon Park campground especially within the restroom. The women's restroom door has been damaged so badly that it can't be securely locked. Polley also told Commission that the Wausau City Council has approved an ordinance as of January 1st that drinking alcohol is not allowed in any City park before 4:00pm except for reserved or permitted events. She doesn't know what effect this will have on Marathon Park but thinks it may be significant. She doesn't see the County Board approving this same ordinance for all County parks but possibly for the two County Parks in the City limits which are Marathon Park and DC Everest Park. Staff is trying to brainstorm ideas for a different type of regulation of Marathon Park and more law enforcement presence is needed. Commission members requested that cameras are put up in the park to assist law enforcement. Polley explained that because it's toward the end of camping season, the inability to securely lock the restroom/shower facility, and the length of time to get the new door it has been suggested to close the Marathon Park campground now for the season. Discussion followed. **Motion** by Maszk, second by Zagrzebski to close Marathon Park campground now for the rest of the season. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 4-0.

3. 2024 Commission Meeting Dates – January 4, 2024 – Tentative 2024 Park Commission meeting dates are set based on tentative Environmental Resource Committee meeting dates. The regular January 2nd date will have to be moved because it is a holiday for staff. January 4th will be tentatively held based on finalization of ERC meeting dates.

5. Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance or Resolution:

A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee - None

B. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee to Forward to the Environmental Resource Committee for its Consideration - None

6. Policy Issues for Discussion and Committee Determination for Consideration by Environmental Resources Committee

A. Acceptance of State-Local Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Assistance – Polley discussed how the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and its partner in Wisconsin, Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) help protect people from natural disasters by providing safe rooms. Safe rooms can be constructed or installed to serve a residence or within the community to serve a larger number of people. FEMA and WEM have made grants available for all aspects of saferooms from the feasibility and design to construction. The County received notification that a grant application it had submitted to complete a project scoping activity to determine a location, cost effectiveness and design of a future community safe room was awarded in the amount of \$300,000. This money will be utilized for the feasibility, study, design, site testing, public outreach and a cost-benefit analysis. The County already planned to conduct a feasibility study for the ice arena which could serve a dual purpose as a saferoom. This project could be similar to the Forensic Science Center by providing a valuable service to the community, enhance the uses of the facility and reduce the costs to the taxpayers. Conducting the project scoping project does not obligate the County to construct the facility. Additional grants are available for construction if or when that phase would occur. **Motion** by Maszk, second by Zagrzebski to recommend acceptance of the grant. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 4-0.

B. Discussion of Human Resources, Finance, and Property Committee’s 2024 Proposed Budget and Possible Recommendations Regarding Modifications – Polley explained that overall there was a budget decrease of .6 percent from 2023 in the Department’s budget. She gave detail on expenses and revenues. Polley asked if there were any recommendations from this Committee about the budget. They would be given to the Environmental Resource Committee who will then make any recommendations for budget amendments to the Human Resources and Finance Committee. No recommendations were brought forward.

7. Educational Presentation/Outcome Monitoring Reports for Discussion

A. Project Update – Bluegill Bay – ADA path to playground, restroom, and shelter is complete (DPW). DC Everest Restroom – restroom installation begins 10/2. Dells of Eau Claire – beach parking lot paving is complete. Marathon Park – Hosted first US Hockey League game on rink 1, Rink 2 goes in later in October, campground shower building doors vandalized to the point of replacement. People’s Sports Complex – Hosted the MC United Fall Club and will continue to hold games through mid-November. Nine Mile Events – RAGNAR at Nine Mile was again a success with over 1700 participants. Rib Falls Reclamation – The reclamation plan has been completed by REI and has been submitted to County Materials. County Materials is working internally to plan for the reclamation work that should begin yet this year and continue into 2024. Winterization – Water winterization is underway.

8. Announcements

A. Next Meeting Date & Time, Location – Tue., Oct., 31, 2023 at 10:30am, 212 River Dr., Room 5, Wausau, WI 54403

B. Future Agenda Items – Bat HCP Enrollment Program

9. Adjourn - Motion by Maszk, second by Seefeldt to adjourn the meeting at 11:45 am. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 4-0.