

DRAFT
MARATHON COUNTY PARK COMMISSION

Date and Time of Meeting: October 31, 2023 at 10:30am Location: Room 5 at 212 River Dr., Wausau WI 54403

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

Excused: Lou Larson

Staff present: Jamie Polley-Parks, Recreation and Forestry Director, Andy Sims-Assistant Director of Operations, Tom Lovlien-Forest Administrator

1. Call to Order – President Seefeldt 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 October 3, 2023 Park Commission Meeting – Motion by Maszk, second by Herbst to approve the October 3, 2023 meeting minutes. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

4. Policy Issues for Discussion and Committee Determination

A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee

1. Use Regulations for Marathon Park and the Campground – Polley explained that Marathon Park is central to the county and to the City of Wausau. The department follows different ordinances for county parks than for city parks. However, the department has tried to mirror the park ordinances in all areas possible. The City of Wausau made an ordinance change that will not allow drinking in the city parks before 4:00pm except for permitted events. This ordinance will take effect in January of 2024 and will be reviewed after one year. The Commission may want to consider mirroring this ordinance at Marathon Park and DC Everest Park which are the two county parks in the city limits. There haven't been issues with the general public, but there have been groups of people engaging in daily drinking behavior that bring harassment of local park goers, safety concerns and increased litter. Staff believes Marathon Park will see a change if the city ordinance isn't mirrored there or some other regulations are set. Staff is also considering making Marathon Park an RV (wheeled camping units) campground only, except for during the Fair. Another idea is to have the campground be pre-registration only and not allow self-registration. With pre-registration, payment is made for the entire stay before camping. This would help with some non-payment issues and campground restroom issues. Discussion followed. Members expressed interest at making the park pre-registration only and not going to a complete RV campground yet. Polley said staff will work on language for just the two county parks in the city limits to mirror the city ordinance and the details to make Marathon Park a pre-registration campground only.

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. Review and Consider Entering into an Agreement with the DNR on the Lake States Forest Management Bat Habitat Conservation Plan – Polley explained that various bat species because of white nose syndrome disease became listed as federally endangered on March 31 and WCFA has been working with DNR on how to continue to manage (harvest) the forests. Signing on to the Lake State Bat Conservation Plan, is not a requirement, but is an easy way to receive incidental take coverage and be sure Marathon County forests and parks are in compliance with the Federal Endangered Species Act with respect to federally listed bat species. Staff have been working with the DNR on the landowner agreement which includes forested areas of the county forests and parks. Lovlien recommends the Committee approve the agreement and forward the recommendation to the Environmental Resources Committee to sign on to the Lake States Forest Management Bat Habitat Conservation Plan. **Motion** by Opall, second by Herbst to approve the agreement with

DNR on the Lake States Forest Management Bat Habitat Conservation Plan and forward this on to the Environmental Resource Committee. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

7. Educational Presentation/Outcome Monitoring Reports for Discussion

A. Project Update – Big Eau Pleine – South parking lot was paved and shouldered with the assistance of the Highway Department. Courthouse – Unhoused belongings located by Facilities staff, Parks was consulted on current protocols. DC Everest Restroom – Restroom has been constructed. Dells of Eau Claire – Camping closed on 10/31. Duane L. Corbin Shooting Range – New staff have been hired and the range is getting busy. The range will be open every day in November until firearm season. Marathon Park – Boilers were replaced at East Gate Hall. Rink 2 went in on 10/23, one week earlier than normal. McMillan Marsh – Met with partners to discuss status of current MOA and clarify roles and responsibilities. Nine Mile – Memorial planting completed. CWOCC storage area completed per agreement. Eagle Scout installed snowshoe signage on 10/27 and CWOCC will be installing the permanent Fat Tire Biking trail signage in November. Peoples Sports Complex – Scheduled for the next week. Rib Falls Reclamation – County Materials is currently working on the grading plan. This will continue into 2024. Seeding of the site will take place in 2024. Winterization – Water winterization is underway, we are shutting water off to all shelters and closing most of the remaining flush restrooms. Vault toilets will remain open as long as we have staff to maintain them. We will be removing the fishing pier and Kayak launch at DC Everest tomorrow as well. We will also be removing tennis nets and pickleball nets.

B. Misconduct of the Governor’s Snowmobile Council Letter – The Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA) sent a letter to Governor Evers and the Secretary-Designee of the Department of Natural Resources noting in detail numerous issues that are causing concern. In particular, potential conflict of interest among Council members and possible failure to comply with statute, code and Council guidelines.

8. Announcements

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

B. Future Agenda Items – none brought forward

9. Adjourn - Motion by Maszk, second by Herbst to adjourn the meeting at 11:30am. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.