

**DRAFT**  
**MARATHON COUNTY PARK COMMISSION**

Date and Time of Meeting: June 27, 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  
Excused: Lou Larson

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

Others present: Brandon Stefanski – Wildlife DNR Biologist-(via Webex), Nick Nowak, Barry Moodie, Mike Hytry,  
Sue Hytry, Christi Stellingworth, Faye Blaubach, Mark Blaubach, Janelle Nagrant

**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** – Nick Nowak, 912 13<sup>th</sup> Drive, Wausau – is interested in purchasing County owned land adjacent to DC Everest Park.

Barry Moodie, 1657 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Drive, Stevens Point – is in favor of establishing an archery hunting season in Big Eau Pleine Park.

Mike Hytry, – 136583 Eau Pleine Park Road, Mosinee – is in favor of establishing an archery hunting season in Big Eau Pleine Park.

Christi Stellingworth – 726 S 4<sup>th</sup> Ave., Wausau, (also representing Shelly Filber - 315 Cottage St., Wausau) – both do not support the sale of County owned land near DC Everest Park.

Mark Blaubach – 307 Imm St., Wausau – does not support the sale of County owned land near DC Everest Park.

Janelle Nagrant – 207964 Kris Ln., Mosinee – does not support the sale of County owned land near DC Everest Park.

Faye Blaubach, 307 Imm St., – does not support the sale of County owned land near DC Everest Park.

**3. Approval of the Minutes of the May 30, 2023 Park Commission Meeting** – **Motion** by Maszk, second by Herbst to approve the May 30, 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. Proclamation Designating July as Park and Recreation Month – The proclamation is designated by the National Parks and Recreation Association. The Park Department has promotions and events during the month to get people outdoors. **Motion** by Maszk, second by Zagrzebski to approve the proclamation designating July as Park and Recreation Month. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

2. Establishing an Archery Hunting Season in Big Eau Pleine Park – Staff has been aware that there are many deer in the park. Currently the ordinances don't allow hunting or trapping in the County parks so an ordinance revision must be done if hunting is allowed. Big Eau Pleine Park is a heavily wooded peninsula that is used year-round. The benefits of having a deer hunt to control the deer population for disease management, to reduce crop damage, and for forest regeneration must be weighed with the safety of recreation activities. Staff has recently met with the wildlife biologist, Brandon Stefanski, to discuss options. If the Commission chooses to consider allowing a deer hunt in the park this year, the County could offer a special hunt or it could open the park (or a portion of the park) to archery hunting during the regular archery season that would specify the dates, number of tags available, what can be harvested, etc. Polley discussed the pros and cons of each option. Stefanski suggested following the State Park system guidelines which opens it up for general archery starting November 15. A questionnaire could be placed in the park to find out how many deer were harvested. He would support whatever the County decides, whether it's a special

hunt or not. Discussion occurred on having a special hunt or opening it up to any licensed hunter. Polley said some ordinance wording is needed but the guidelines could be set later. Members discussed and favored having a hunt in the entire park instead of just in the north part of the park. **Motion** by Opall, second by Maszk to establish an archery hunting season in Big Eau Pleine Park from November 15<sup>th</sup> until the end of archery season. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

## **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

1. Updates to Chapter 19 of the Marathon County General Code – Proposed changes include clarifying the smoking regulations as it pertains to parks and park facilities and adding fat tire biking. Staff works to mirror the City and the County park ordinances where possible. The smoking regulations mirror the City park ordinance. In addition, fat tire biking is currently allowed in Big Eau Pleine Park however is not addressed in the park ordinance. Other minor grammatical changes are also included. One additional change in the draft updates is the hunting regulation. After Commission discussion it will read “Archery hunting is permitted in Big Eau Pleine Park only during the open season from November 15 through the Sunday nearest January 6<sup>th</sup>. Archery hunters must be 100 feet from designated trails and structures. Access to the park for the purpose of hunting is allowed starting at 6am or one hour prior to shooting hours until 11pm”. **Motion** by Zagrzebski, second by Herbst to approve the ordinance changes of the Marathon County General Code as discussed and forward to the Environmental Resource Committee. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0. Discussion occurred. **Motion** amended by Zagrzebski, second by Herbst that the words “Archery hunters must be shooting from an elevated stand” be added to the ordinance. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0. **Motion** by Zagrzebski, second by Maszk to approve the ordinance changes of the Marathon County General Code as discussed and forward to the Environmental Resource Committee. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

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

A. Discussion and Possible Action Considering the Potential Sale of County Parkland

Polley explained that the Department has been approached by a citizen to purchase County owned land near DC Everest Park. This property was donated to the County in 2002 in conjunction with the County purchasing the adjacent property and is under the Park Commission’s purview. The property does not have any park dedication stipulation however it was purchased to potentially relocate the parking lot for DC Everest Park in the event that the park could be expanded to include additional green space and increases the uses of the park. Staff recommendation would be to not to sell County owned property because there is potential for future uses. Polley discussed some of the possible future plans for the park. Discussion followed. **Motion** by Maszk, second by Herbst to not divest of this County owned property at this time. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

## **7. Educational Presentation/Outcome Monitoring Reports for Discussion**

A. Project Update – SunnyVale Softball – Sunnyvale Softball Complex hosted the Wausau Slugfest last weekend and was very successful. Shooting Range – culvert replacement is complete including paving by the Highway Department. Big Eau Pleine – Disc golf tee pads complete. Playgrounds – Bluegill and Mission need soil restoration, Cherokee needs chips and border, Eau Claire Dells is fully operational. Kayak Launch – The new ADA launch funded by the Lake Wausau Association has been installed at DC Everest Park.

B. Marathon Park Water Project – The main contractor is complete, concrete work is complete, plumber is working on building hook-ups, and paving will be completed soon. Parks staff is working to complete the site restoration.

C. State of Wisconsin Proclamation: Great Outdoors Month – The Governor has proclaimed July as the Great Outdoors Month which shows how important outdoor recreation is to the State of Wisconsin.

D. Thank You Letter from Sporting Heritage Youth Day – a thank you letter was received from the Coordinator of the Sporting Heritage Youth Day. This is a volunteer group that teaches kids outdoor activities.

**8. Announcements**

A. Next Meeting Date & Time, Location – Tue., August 1, 2023 at 10:00am, 900 Pardee St., Wausau, WI 54401 followed by a joint meeting with the Fair Board at 11:00am.

B. Future Agenda Items – Bat HCP Enrollment Program

**9. Adjourn - Motion** by Maszk, second by Opall to adjourn the meeting at 12:00pm. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.