

DRAFT
MARATHON COUNTY PARK COMMISSION

Date and Time of Meeting: February 1, 2022 at 10:30am Location: Assembly Room, Marathon County Courthouse, 500 Forest Street, Wausau WI 54403

Park Commissioners present: Jean Maszk-(via-webex), Pat Peckham-(via webex), Rick Seefeldt, James Wadinski, Kelly Zagrzebski

Excused: Dawn Herbst, Allen Opall

Staff present: Jamie Polley-Director, Andy Sims-(via webex)-Assistant Director of Operations

Others present: Bill Bertram, John Robinson, Sandy Cihlar

1. Call to Order – Vice-President Seefeldt called the Park Commission meeting to order at 10:45am. Official notice and the agenda for the meeting was posted publicly in accordance with the State statutes.

2. Public Comment – Sandi Cihlar, 203083 Bergen Road Mosinee, commented that she and another family had been startled by a bike coming up behind them on the snowshoe trail at Nine Mile on Jan. 30th. She supports fat tire biking but has a concern about what is compatible on shared trails and thought the snowshoe and bike trails should be kept separate. She appreciated the improvements in signage on the snowshoe trails. Polley commented that bikes are not allowed on the snowshoe trails, however there had been an event that weekend at Nine Mile that it could have been related to. She will give Cihlar’s comments to the Forestry Committee who will be hearing a proposal for fat tire biking at Nine Mile in the coming months.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the November 30, 2021 Park Commission Meeting – Motion by Maszk, second by Zagrzebski to approve the November 30, 2021 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. Great Pinery Heritage Waterway – Bill Bertram – President of the Wausau and Marathon County Park and Recreation Foundation spoke about a project to create historical signage and mapping information at landings along a river trail within Marathon County and branding it the Great Pinery Heritage Waterway. It would include the Wisconsin River, Rib River and lower Eau Claire River. Bertram discussed statistics regarding paddle sports, tourism and why he felt this area could be a premiere destination for paddling in Wisconsin. The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission would do the mapping and it could be promoted on the Central Wisconsin Visitor’s Bureau website. Bertram described locations of landings along the trail and said a State tourism grant will be applied for to market the trail. Polley said staff’s original concern was what the role of the Department would be because staff is spread so thin. The Department already has launches so adding signs to them would not be a real burden. She was hopeful that a maintenance fund would be put in place if major repairs were needed for a sign. She also thought they could consider a qr code on the signs for donations or possible future passes. Staff supports the project especially if there is a maintenance fund. Bertram thought any residual monies from fundraising would come into a maintenance account. Peckham thought the idea had a lot of potential and there was enough expanse of water in the area to spread out the use. He hoped they could publicize when the Wausau Whitewater organization has open water weekends and competitive events. John Robinson wondered about relying more on volunteers to do the project and wanted to make sure landings were accessible in terms of all abilities. **Motion** by Peckham, second by Wadinski that Polley draft a letter of endorsement indicating the support of the Department and Commission for the Great Pinery Heritage Waterway project. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

2. Request by RC Sportsman for Overnight Camping in Sunny Vale Park August 12, 2022 – The RC Sportsmen group that leases the remote-control airfield at Sunny Vale Park is hosting the Annual Fun Fly on August 12th and 13th. They have been working with some scout groups who would like to have a small campout in their remote-control area on the night of the 12th prior to the event activities. Staff has given the group its expectations and doesn’t see any issues. **Motion** by Peckham, second by Maszk to approve the request by the RC Sportsman for camping overnight in Sunny Vale Park on August 12, 2022. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

3. 2021 Year in Review – Polley gave department accomplishment highlights which included: held a successful 100+1 Anniversary Celebration, secured a 5 year sponsorship by People’s State Bank for the Sports Complex, fully implemented a new CivicRec recreation software, installed new playgrounds, managed vegetation with goats, maintained park and street trees, worked on grants, opened a dog park, increased recreation programs and lessons, managed and administered timber sales, maintained city and county parks, upgraded roads and campground electrical at Big Eau Pleine Park, installed new

radiant heat in Marathon Park ice arena, completed update to Sunnyvale Softball Complex, acquired land, replaced vault toilets and more.

4. 2022 PRF Department Workplan – Polley gave highlight about upcoming work which will include: working on the westside masterplan, department sustainability plan, Rib Falls Park master plan, and updating the City Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, treating and removing ash trees, planting new trees, researching snowmaking and fat tire biking at Nine Mile, securing more field sponsors for the People’s Sports Complex, installing playgrounds, continuing road work at Big Eau Pleine Park, replacing restrooms, establishing and administering timber sales, acquiring land, and more.

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 – Purchase of 39.085 Acres Adjacent to Brokaw County Park for Park Land – In August the Commission had approved staff to further pursue the purchase of approximately 38 acres from Mathy Construction. The land is currently adjacent to the Brokaw County Park property. The land has been surveyed and appraised at \$93,800.00. Mathy Construction has reviewed and accepted the Offer to Purchase at the appraised amount. Funding for the purchase will come from the County Park Land and Products account. The purchase of this land falls within the County’s Strategic Plan Objective 5.2 to acquire an average of 320 acres of land per year for the Marathon County Parks and Forests System. Questions were answered. **Motion** by Peckham, second by Maszk to recommend the purchase of 39.085 acres to the Environmental Advisory Committee, Human Resources and Finance Committee and Marathon County Board of Supervisors. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

6. Policy Issues for Discussion and Committee Determination for Consideration by Environmental Resources Committee - None

7. Educational Presentation/Outcome Monitoring Reports for Discussion

A. Town of Rib Mountain Deer Population Update - Polley said the Town of Rib Mountain has taken the lead on putting together an educational campaign for their residents on why not to feed the deer and some options available for reducing the deer population. They also issued 20 in-town archery permits in which 13 were filled. The Town feels it was successful and plans on utilizing the same program next year. At this time there is no expectation of doing anything within Bluegill Park as it was decided that education would be the first step.

B. Park Update - B. Park Update – Big Eau Pleine Timber Sale, Nine Mile Maintenance/Events, Marathon Park Operations and Maintenance, Westside Master Plan, Sports Complex, Routine Operations/Programs - Big Eau Pleine: Timber sale is complete. Nine Mile: Grooming at Nine Mile (3” base currently), Winter Tri, Badger State Games and Winter Triathlon. Marathon Park: Ice operations are well underway, Created a great deal of ice for the CVB’s annual Pond Hockey tournament. With that created additional opportunities for outdoor ice skating – skating river, Eastgate Hall has been utilized on a regular basis for COVID testing. Westside Master Plan: Consultant has been hired and contract negotiations are near completion. Interviews with stakeholders will begin soon, Community outreach will be the next step. Sports Complex: Lot was plowed at the request of the Wausau Fire Department to do training (inter-departmental collaboration). Routine Operations/Programs: Snow Removal Operations, Firewood Processing, Urban forestry program: Regular tree maintenance, small pruning; Building and structure maintenance; Equipment maintenance and repair

8. Announcements

Seefeldt mentioned that after the election the Environmental Resource Committee may be moving their meetings to the second Tuesdays of the month. Park Commission meeting dates will be discussed after that.

A. Next Meeting Date & Time, Location–Tuesday, March 1, 2022 at 10:30am, 212 River Dr., Rm 5, Wausau WI 54403

C. Future Agenda Items –

9. Adjourn – Motion by Maszk, second by Wadinski to adjourn at 12:05pm. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.