

DRAFT
MARATHON COUNTY PARK COMMISSION

Date and Time of Meeting: April 5, 2022 at 10:30am Location: Room 5, 212 River Drive, Wausau WI 54403

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

Staff present: Jamie Polley-Parks, Recreation and Forestry Director, Marcus Aumann-Assistant Director of Community Services-(via webex), Andy Sims-Assistant Director of Operations, Aaron Ruff-CWOCC-(via webex), Laurie Miskiminis-Conservation, Planning and Zoning Director-(via webex), Brian Kowalski-City Pages-(via webex)

1. Call to Order – President Peckham called the Park Commission meeting to order at 10:30am. 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 March 1, 2022 Park Commission Meeting – Motion by Herbst, second by Maszk to approve the March 1, 2022 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. Central Wisconsin Off-Road Cycling Coalition Proposal for Maintenance and Improvements at Big Eau Pleine County Park - Polley explained that the Central Wisconsin Offroad Cycling Coalition has submitted a proposal to make improvements to Big Eau Pleine Park mountain biking trails. The estimated cost of improvements in total is roughly \$100,000 - \$180,000 depending on contractor vs volunteer work and how extensive the work becomes. CWOCC is proposing to fundraise for all the improvements however there are a few items proposed for 2023 and 2024 that benefit the park users as well as bikers that staff may look at requesting or allocating funding for. Staff supports the enhancements as proposed. Aaron Ruff, President of CWOCC said the trail work in 2022 is for drainage improvements and will all be done by volunteers. Future plans are uncertain and could get pushed further out depending on what happens for mountain biking at Rib Mountain State Park. Opall raised concerns about the expansion of new trails in the park and the greater encroachment on the overall land. Ruff and Polley discussed how the majority of work done this summer would be short reroutes or reworks of current trails to make improvements because of drainage issues and washouts. Polley said they could bring this back each season depending on the work CWOCC was doing to keep the Commissioners up to date and discuss any issues, just as they do for the City Park Committee when CWOCC is working at Sylvan Hill Park. Ruff said it is up to the Commission to determine what the use of the land is and their goal is to create good outdoor recreation experiences and not impede on any other user groups. Polley said from a staff perspective this isn't something where a lot of trail is being added. A majority of what is being done is on the existing trail and improvements that are needed and helpful to everyday users. The Department doesn't have the staff to do a lot of this work so CWOCC is a partner group that allows us to have these amenities because they have the volunteers and the funding to do a lot of this. Staff looks at all of these proposals closely, if they have any concerns, they bring it to the Commission and Committee to discuss. This is the overall plan and future additions can be discussed but are just looking at 2022 right now. Wadinski liked that a group is working to improve public property but if this is approved every year he would like to see more detail about how much trail would be impacted. Discussion followed on the multi-use trails at the park. Opall reiterated he was for improving existing trails but had more reservations when it came to expanding trails. **Motion** by Wadinski, second by Maszk to approve the Central Wisconsin Off-Road Cycling Coalition proposal for maintenance and improvements at Big Eau Pleine County Park for this year 2022 and when new trails are proposed that they are brought back to Commission with more detail. 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 - None

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

7. Educational Presentation/Outcome Monitoring Reports for Discussion

A. Exploratory Mining Article Correction – The Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel recently ran a news story that erroneously inferred that exploratory borings to learn about possible gold content several miles south of the Dells of the Eau Claire County Park could degrade the Eau Claire River and the park. The site where borings have been done in the past is downstream from the park, so it would not be possible for any potential pollutants from the proposed mine site to reach the park, assuming the pollutants would be allowed to escape the site in the first place. In addition, the Conservation, Planning and Zoning Department also sent in corrections about the permits. Miskiminis explained that a Canadian company has contacted them to get a mining exploration permit application which has not been turned in yet. When it does get turned in they will issue a news release, possibly with a map, and notify/provide updates to the appropriate committees as outlined in Chapter 17 Zoning Ordinance. At this time that Committee will most likely be the Environmental Resources Committee. Discussion followed.

B. Park Update – Campgrounds: Cleanup and grading of campground roads and campsites are underway. Corbin Shooting Range: We have grant money to upgrade the archery portion of the shooting range. To date, we have been constructing new target holders and a two-platform shooting tower to safely accommodate elevated practice. Marathon Park: Ice is out of both rinks. Boats and campers are available for pickup. An RFP for the cattle barn roofs was received and accepted. The contractor will be Wausau Roofing and Siding. Mission Lake Park: An RFP for the roadway and parking lot paving was received and accepted. The contractor will be American Asphalt. Mountain Bay Trail: Brushing of low hanging vegetation was completed at the Mountain Bay Trail. Nine Mile: One of the two electric services for the lighted loop failed near the end of ski season. This service will be repaired as soon as the ground has sufficiently thawed. People's Sports Complex: Due to the settling of the landfill, the concession/restroom building has heaved asphalt around the perimeter. The asphalt has been removed and temporarily replaced with road base. Big Eau Pleine: Firewood processing at Big Eau Pleine is over half complete. We have processed the 75 cords for the year and are now working on processing a new delivery of firewood. We anticipate 125+ cords to be processed within the next month in preparation for camping season. Routine Operations/Programs: Snow removal operations, firewood processing, building and structure maintenance, equipment maintenance and repair. Urban Forestry Program: Regular tree maintenance and small pruning.

C. Employee Letter to the Editor – Nine Mile Forest and Recreation Area – Two seasonal employees that work at Nine Mile wrote a letter about what a gem it is and that people come from all over to enjoy it.

8. Announcements

Polley thanked Pat Peckham for all his years of service on the Park Commission and hoped the other members would return to the Commission after the elections.

A. Next Meeting Date & Time, Location – Tuesday, May 3, 2022 at 10:30am, 212 River Dr., Rm. 5, Wausau WI 54403.

B. Future Agenda Items – elect President and Vice-President

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