

## MARATHON COUNTY PARK COMMISSION

Date and Time of Meeting: January 5, 2021 at 10:30 am

Meeting Location: Conference Room 5, 212 River Drive, Wausau WI 54403

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

Staff present: Jamie Polley-Director, Marcus Aumann-Asst. Director of Community Services-(via webex), Greg Freix- Asst. Director of Operations, Mitchell Fox – Motorized Recreation Coordinator-(via webex), Recreational Deputy Michael Van Offeren-(via webex)

**1. Call to Order** – President Conrad 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 December 1, 2020 Park Commission Meeting – Motion** by Maszk, second by Peckham to approve the December 1, 2020 with a change to item three under approval of the September 29, 2020 minutes where the sentence was modified to add the words “*within forested areas*”. Suggestion was made to add the words “*of woody plants*” so that the sentence reads “People that feed the deer help keep the population above where it is sustainable and regeneration of *woody plants* within forested areas at Bluegill Bay Park will be decimated by the deer if they continue to be at the current population. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 7-0.

#### **4. Policy Issues for Discussion and Committee Determination**

A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee

1. Snowmobile and ATV Grant Program Overview – Mitch Fox, Motorized Recreation Coordinator explained that this is a State program and Marathon County manages the grant work for twenty-nine snowmobile clubs and one ATV/UTV club. The program is user funded based off of trail pass fees and out of State fees. The volunteer based clubs make, maintain, brush, sign, and groom the trails. There are about 20.75 miles of summer ATV/UTV trails, 791 winter snowmobile trails, and 699.5 winter ATV trails. Fox handles the paperwork for the general trail maintenance, new bridge projects, bids, new trail applications, and rehabilitation projects. He explained how the clubs receive grant monies for their funded trails. They also have their own individual club trails they manage that are not paid for from that same grant funding. All of the clubs preseason and grooming paperwork is submitted to him for review and after his review it goes to a DNR specialist. At the end of the season everything is then audited. Fox discussed how the weather dictates when trails can be open and that safety is a huge concern. He noted a positive change has been the addition of the two recreation deputies especially from a landowner standpoint in keeping the trails open. Fox discussed some of his other work including public outreach, managing the County snowmobiling website, and working on projects such as an ATV/UTV trailhead kiosk at the Burma Forest Unit. He discussed the verbal agreements that are approved as means for the clubs to gain access on private properties and the contract that the County has with the clubs that dictate the clubs responsibilities. Currently Fox is working on updating this contract. Questions about the program were answered.

**5. Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance or Resolution:** A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee and 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. Proposed Amendments to Chapter 19 of the Marathon County Code of Ordinances – Polley said she had discussion with Corporation Counsel regarding the changes to the ordinances. Commission had previously discussed allowing drones by permit. Commission could either not include drones in the ordinance, which is what some communities have chosen because they are so highly regulated by the FAA, or could include them in the ordinance but then it would have to be very specific on when and for what uses a permit would be issued per Corporation Counsel’s direction. Polley and Deputy Van Offeren have not received complaints about drone use in County parks. Deputy Van Offeren explained if he saw a violation of FAA

regulations the federal agents would be notified. If there was drone use with a complaint of inappropriate use like invasion of privacy or disorderly conduct then there are laws that he could enforce. Discussion followed. Polley noted that if problems occur in the future they could revisit this item. Polley will remove the addition of drones from the ordinance and Department staff will become familiar with the FAA guidelines.

Polley explained that currently there is nothing in the ordinance for metal detecting but something could be added if Commission wanted to prohibit them. Polley discussed the current Department guidelines for metal detecting and asked if it was sufficient to keep using the guidelines and not include metal detecting in the ordinance. Commission thought the guidelines were sufficient after clarifying some of the language. Language regarding some of the other ordinances was clarified. Peckham questioned if leashed dogs could be allowed on the margins of the sports complex facility where it is not mowed. He sees a number of people doing a loop around the perimeter of it and taking dogs on east side of it where it is not mowed. Staff was not in favor of allowing dogs in the sports complex. Polley noted that dogs are now allowed in the Eau Claire Conservancy and felt there was ample space outside of the facility. Discussion followed. **Motion** by Peckham, second by Maszk to allow dogs in the un-mowed areas of the sports complex. Motion **failed** by voice vote, vote reflected as 2-4-1 with Peckham and Maszk voting in favor and Wadinski, Conrad, Herbst, Seefeldt voting against. Opall's vote could not be heard. Polley discussed a couple more wording changes per Corporation Counsel's direction in the ordinances. **Motion** by Wadinski, second by Peckham to adopt the changes to the ordinance and recommend them to the Environmental Resource Committee. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 7-0.

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

A. Participation in Office of Outdoor Recreation Roundtable Virtual Meeting – Polley said the Office of Outdoor Recreation has been holding virtual meetings to discuss different aspects of outdoor recreation and the resources that their office could possibly help with. Polley felt the new director was very open minded about how to better the states outdoor recreation both from what is available and the promotion of it to helping figure out funding to improve it.

#### **8. Announcements**

A. Next Meeting Date & Time, Location – Tuesday, February 2, 2021 at 10:30 am, Rm 5 or via Webex, 212 River Dr., Wausau WI 54403

B. Future Agenda Items – sponsorship plan, naming rights policy, possible late summer park tour

**9. Adjourn** – **Motion** by Herbst, second by Peckham to adjourn at 11:45 am. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 7-0.