

DRAFT
MARATHON COUNTY PARK COMMISSION

Date and Time of Meeting: February 2, 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-(via webex), Kurt Gibbs – County Board Chair-(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 January 5, 2021 Park Commission Meeting – Motion by Herbst, second by Seefeldt to approve the January 5, 2021 Park Commission meeting. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 6-0.

4. Policy Issues for Discussion and Committee Determination

A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee

1. To Approve Changes to the Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department 2021-2022 Facility and Program Fees - The 2021–2022 Facility and Program Fees were reviewed and approved by the Parks Commission on September 1, 2020. In December the department purchased a new Recreation Software that staff is currently working on setting up. The new software will allow for the majority of all passes, recreation programs, and facility rentals to be done online. As staff was setting up the fees in the new system inconsistencies and fee changes were identified. Polley discussed some of the changes which include raising the Nine Mile annual bike pass fee from \$25 to \$30, taking out the \$10 additional boat launch pass fee and charging \$30 for each pass, charging one fee for the group campground area, simplifying the family structure for disc golf, swimming, and skiing passes so that the first adult pass will cost full price and additional family members will be discounted, eliminating the student/youth rate to just a youth rate, adding a youth category to disc golf passes, simplifying cross-country running races so that its one fee for all schools at all facilities, eliminating the key replacement fee and the police/fire fees, (Opall arrived at 10:40am) changing Marathon Junction rates to by-the-hour or full-day, clarifying Marathon Park shelter five rates for with and without restroom, charging a fee for before 8am or after 11pm shelter rental use, changing shooting range pass purchase dates from one-year-to-date to the current calendar year, adding an organized youth group ski/snowshoe rate, clarifying hours and rates at the sports fields, removing all other recreation fees related to programs from the fee directive because they fall under the department’s policy document, and housekeeping of some language and fees so that the fee directive reads better. Questions were answered. **Motion** by Peckham, second by Wadinski to approve the fee schedule as presented. **Motion** carried by voice vote, vote reflected as 7-0.

2. To Proceed with Planning and Future Development of Rib Falls Park – The County Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan identified the development of a master plan for Rib Falls Park as a high priority. In 1982 the County purchased 314 acres adjacent to the Rib River and just west of County Highway S from Wisconsin Valley Improvement Company for Highway Department needs and future park development. Since 2004 the site has been mined for sand and gravel. Staff is verifying that the non-metallic mining operations are complete to move forward with park development. Currently Rib Falls Park contains a playground, restrooms and shelter on the original park land. The undeveloped 314 acres is currently not available to the public. The lake area is utilized by the Sheriff’s Office for various trainings including their Dive Team training. A park fund was established with the proceeds from the mining activities for the development of the park. This fund currently has a balance of \$497,420.00. Additionally, \$80,000 is budgeted in the 2021 budget for Rib Falls Park in which the funds can be used for the final design development and construction documents. Staff will be putting together a Request for Proposals (RFP) for design services to develop a final plan, cost estimates and potentially construction documents for the park. It is anticipated that once the firm is hired, staff will conduct a few community input sessions on the park design and staff will reach out to the Town of Rib Falls as well.

Polley explained that there had been an idea at one time to add camping to the park. Commission members were very supportive of developing the park and favored looking into the feasibility of having a campground there. Polley noted that if desired, staff will work with the Sheriff's Department to see what can be done as a partnership to allow them to continue using the park. Questions were answered. Polley said the next step is to go out for RFP to see what the consultant would cost to help put together the final plan and to start having discussion with the towns and communities on what they would like to see at that park. **Motion** by Peckham, second by Herbst that Commission wholeheartedly supports continued work to bring this plan back for consideration and future development of the property. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 7-0.

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. None.

7. Educational Presentation/Outcome Monitoring Reports for Discussion

A. Park Update –Campgrounds (BEP Park): Staff is currently underway processing over 100 cords of firewood for camping season. Bluegill Bay Park: Vegetation management; staff is using a forestry mulching head attachment on a tracked skid steer to remove undesirable invasive species (i.e. buckthorn, honeysuckle) in designated areas. Also cutting back other species for “rejuvenation” of desirable species. Routine Operations/Programs: snow grooming operations at Nine Mile Forest and Sylvan Hill Recreation Area; snow removal operations; urban forestry program including tree trimming, removals, and stump grinding; building and structure maintenance; equipment maintenance and repair; maintenance of a few restrooms.

B. Westside Master Plan Update – The plan that was developed in 2007 which included Marathon Park and the UWSP-Wausau Campus needs to be updated and include the West Street area where some County facilities are located. There is an idea of possible redevelopment of the West Street area. There has been an initial meeting with City and County staff to get an idea of how to start on the plan. One thing that needs to be taken into consideration is that the County is doing a facility study on all the County facilities and what the needs are. There is an idea that the County facilities on River Drive go elsewhere for further development of this area of the City. The study on County facilities will be done first with some determinations made on the Highway Department, Emergency Management and Park Operations. Once completed the County can move forward with the study of the Westside area and determine the best uses are for the area. The RFP is not going forward at this time, but will still be part of the discussion. Getting the plans and ideas started in the first part of the year is still a plan.

8. Announcements

A. Next Meeting Date & Time, Location – Tuesday, March 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, video of how the department processes firewood

9. Adjourn – Motion by Wadinski, second by Peckham to adjourn at 11:30am. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 7-0.