

DRAFT
MARATHON COUNTY PARK COMMISSION

Date and Time of Meeting: November 30, 2021 at 10:30am Location: Conf. Rm 5, 212 River Drive, Wausau WI 54403

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

Staff present: Jamie Polley-Director, Andy Sims- Assistant Director of Operations, Michael Van Offeren – Recreation Deputy, Mitch Fox – Motorized Recreation Coordinator, Tom Lovlien – County Forest Administrator

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 November 2, 2021 Park Commission Meeting – Motion by Seefeldt, second by Herbst to approve the November 2, 2021 meeting minutes. 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. Approval of Revisions to the Park Naming Guidelines and Criteria and Sponsorship Policy for the Parks and Park Facilities – Polley explained that both the Park Commission and City Parks and Recreation Committee had previously reviewed and approved a Park Naming Rights Criteria and a Sponsorship Policy. The goal of the department is to have one set of naming rights criteria and one sponsorship policy for both the City of Wausau Parks and Marathon County Parks. The City Attorney’s office reviewed the documents and made several changes most of which were formatting and the reduction of redundancies. The content and overall goal of the documents remain the same. In developing the criteria for park naming and a Sponsorship Policy it was important to develop guidelines and criteria that the Committee and Commission can utilize to make an informed, impartial decision on the naming of City and County parks and park facilities and obtaining sponsors for the parks and park facilities. Peckham questioned a possible typing error where “new” media possibly should say “news” media. Polley will verify which wording is correct. **Motion** by Seefeldt, second by Zagrzebski to approve the revised Park Naming Guidelines and Criteria and the Department Sponsorship Policy. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 6-0.

2. Rules for the Edgar to Fenwood Trail – The Edgar to Fenwood Trail is the only County trail that doesn’t fall within a park or have the governance of a State trail. Over the past few years there has been confusion on how to manage the trail as well as some safety concerns. To better manage the trail for safety and consistency with other County ATV/UTV trails, the Motorized Recreation Coordinator is recommending establishing a set of rules for the trail that are consistent with the rules set for Burma County Forest which has ATV/UTV trails. One concern is the use of the trail during hunting season when the trail traverses or is adjacent to private property. Burma is closed to ATV/UTV use but still allows foot traffic within the County Forest Unit during this closed time because the County forest is open for hunting. For consistency, the suggested rules include trails are closed to ATVs and UTVs from Oct. 1st to Nov. 30th, non-motorized trail users are advised to wear blaze orange or bright colors while on the trail during the gun deer season(s) (late November to Mid-December), ATV/UTV’s must yield to those not on motorized vehicles, and motorcycles/dirtbikes are prohibited on this trail. The rules are enforceable if posted. Fox felt it was important to be cognizant of the adjacent landowners and how the trail affects them. He thought the rules were important for the safety aspect and to have continuity with Burma. Deputy Van Offeren also said having continuity with Burma makes it easier for the public to understand. **Motion** by Herbst, second by Zagrzebski to approve the rules set forth for the Edgar to Fenwood Trail. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 6-0.

5. Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance or Resolution:

A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee

1. Review of County Code of Ordinances Sec. 19.05 – Vehicles in Parks – Polley explained that the County Board recently approved an ordinance opening many of the County roads to ATVs/UTVs. Some of the roads that will now be open lead to County parks. The ordinance currently allows ATV/UTVs in County parks as long as they are on “paved” roads or in another area of the ordinance it says “established” roads. Polley believes the ordinance should just say “established” roads in all areas. ATV/UTVs are not allowed on trails, beaches, playgrounds, etc. Big Eau Pleine Park is signed that no ATVs are allowed in the park and Polley believes that was to keep them off the park trails. Commission can keep that sign or take it down and allow the ordinance to be followed which is that ATV/UTVs would be allowed in all parks on established roads. Campground roads would be considered established roads. Polley did not think Marathon County was a destination for

ATV/UTVs to go trail riding. There also is something in the ordinance about unreasonable noise so that concern is covered. Deputy Van Offeren said from a law enforcement perspective they could try allowing ATV/UTVs to enter parks as motor vehicles and see if they have any issues or they could be more proactive and keep them out of the parks knowing they have some issues of ATV/UTVs doing donuts, burnouts, and wheelies on roadways in the towns that have open routes. Opall did not believe eliminating ATV/UTVs from park roads was a good idea after the County Board has passed an ordinance allowing them on roads. Polley said small “no ATV/UTV signs could be attached to trail posts and on some park maintenance roads. **Motion** by Opall, second by Maszk to remove the “no ATV/UTV” signs at Big Eau Pleine Park and allow the ordinance to be followed which is that ATV/UTVs are allowed on established roads in parks. Polley will check with Corporation Counsel if the ordinance language can just be changed to say “established” roads instead of “paved” roads or if that must be brought back through the Committee’s. **Motion carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 6-0.

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. Seidler Property Donation – This item had been discussed at a previous meeting and since then a couple of Commissioners have walked the site. One of the biggest challenges is the cost of a bridge to cross a small creek and wetland area. So far the landowner has not been willing to donate a corner of the lower southeast quadrant where there already is a logging road and culvert. Discussion occurred on what the costs of building and maintaining a road going into the park might be. Lovlien said the landowner’s requirement is for a public road which would be a significant cost. Questions were raised on what entity would maintain the road. If it’s a road just to the park the Department probably would, otherwise if the surrounding land is ever developed in the future, then it may be the Village of Maine or the County’s responsibility. Maszk thought there were already existing parks scheduled to be developed and she felt there were a lot of stipulations to the request. Herbst also thought the family was making a lot of demands and couldn’t support it at this time. Peckham would like final answers from the family on if they have a timeline regarding development of the property and if they would also donate a corner of the lower southeast quadrant. He thought staff should work on getting an estimate for a bridge from the Highway Department. Opall felt they shouldn’t accept it without a piece of the lower quadrant. Seefeldt thought building the road would be very costly plus the question of who would then maintain it. Polley felt that although the land is a beautiful 40 acres, she couldn’t recommend this without the land having a unique feature to it, plus a 40-acre County park is small. With the inherent costs there and the Outdoor Comprehensive Plan’s five-year timeline, they have Brokaw which is going to be a 100-acre park and something she feels is a higher priority to develop. They also have the Wisconsin River Forest Unit which offers more unique opportunities for the community. If the County wanted to take the land to have it long term that was one thing but if there is any thought that it must be developed in the next ten years, she didn’t know that it would be in the best interest to prioritize it over other areas that are more unique and would cost less. **Motion** by Maszk, second by Herbst to thank the Seidler family for their offer but the Park Commission declines it based on cost concerns and other priorities. **Motion carried**, vote reflected as 6-0.

7. Educational Presentation/Outcome Monitoring Reports for Discussion

A. Park Update - Big Eau Pleine: Seven culverts have been installed with some additional road restoration work yet to be complete prior to spring. The electrical upgrade is complete including site restoration. Fishing piers have been removed at all city/county locations. Nine Mile: Pre-season maintenance on the ski trails is complete. Restroom painting will be complete within the week. Parking lot restoration due to vandalism is complete. Memorial Benches: Two memorial benches have been installed at Dells of Eau Claire Park. Marathon Park: Ice operations are well underway. Parking lot grading was recently completed. Christmas Tree: Courthouse Christmas tree was installed, and lights hung. Routine Operations/Programs: Mowing Operations: mulching at county parks as well as Nine Mile ski trails; Urban forestry program: Regular tree maintenance, small pruning; building and structure maintenance; equipment maintenance and repair.

8. Announcements

Opall gave an update on deer issues in Rib Mountain and Polley will see if the Rib Mountain Deputy can give a future report about the deer to Commission.

A. Next Meeting Date & Time, Location–Tue., January 4, 2022 at 10:30am, 212 River Dr., Rm 5, Wausau WI 54403

C. Future Agenda Items – Brokaw Property Appraisal

9. Adjourn – **Motion** by Opall, second by Herbst to adjourn at 11:50am. **Motion carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 6-0.