

DRAFT
MARATHON COUNTY PARK COMMISSION

Date and Time of Meeting: January 7, 2020 at 2:00 pm

Meeting Location: Conference Room 3, 212 River Drive, Wausau WI 54403

Park Commissioners present: Connie Conrad, Gary Gisselman, Allen Opall, Pat Peckham, John Durham, Dennis Smith

Excused: Rick Seefeldt

Staff present: Jamie Polley-Parks, Recreation, Forestry Director, Greg Freix-Assistant Director of Operations

Others present: Brian Kowalski – City Pages

Call to Order – President Gary Gisselman called the Park Commission meeting to order. Official notice and the agenda for the meeting was posted publicly in accordance with the State statutes.

Public Comment Period – none

Approval of Minutes of the December 3, 2019 Park Commission Meeting – Motion by Smith, second by Opall to approve the minutes of the December 3, 2019 Park Commission meeting with a typing correction in section B. WASA’s Use of Sunny Vale Softball Complex to change “*have made not contact*” to “*have not made contact*”. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 6-0.

Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance or Resolution:

A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee

1. Implementing Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan Recommendation to Create Multimodal Transportation Subcommittee – Polley said this is moving quickly because Infrastructure Committee would like it to come back to them as soon as possible. They see a great benefit in putting a subcommittee together to coordinate where there should be connections between parks and communities and where the County roads might fit in. The plan recommends the creation of a Multimodal Transportation Subcommittee to coordinate with the Wausau MPO, North Central Wisconsin Regional Plan Commission, local units of government, and advocate groups to develop, plan and further priorities for on and off-street Countywide bicycle routes and trails. The plan also states that a dedicated Countywide Bike Plan should be authored and reviewed under the oversight of the Countywide Multimodal Transportation Subcommittee to ensure thorough engagement and continuity. The vision for the subcommittee is to include staff from both the Parks and Highway Department and report to both the Park Commission and the Infrastructure Committee. A Countywide bike routes and trail plan will assist in the planning of future trails and highway improvement plans. It will also assist the County’s towns, villages and cities plan for the routes and trails that will utilize their land and roads.

The subcommittee will have to identify what the Countywide Bike Plan is and what the priorities are. Priorities could be to connect the County parks to the different municipalities and towns, or to provide bike loops or routes. The routes need to be figured out especially when it comes to the County highway system and what roads are safe to put bikes on, what roads aren’t, what town roads need to be used, and what needs to be pursued further for off-road trails. If an area is slated for road reconstruction where a trail could be built alongside the road or the shoulders widened. Another topic of discussion is if other modes of transportation will be considered such as ATV/UTV’s, horses, etc. The former County Administrator had mentioned they should come up with a 26.2 mile route in the County that would be used for all marathons. Polley said when this was put in the outdoor recreation plan it was meant to be more bike/pedestrian but it is labeled multi-modal so what it covers will be up to the subcommittee. Conrad thought it would be helpful to give the subcommittee some base considerations on where to start, such as phases to work on so that it doesn’t seem so overwhelming. Members liked the idea of picking larger parks such as Dells of the Eau Claire, Big Eau Pleine, and Mission Lake and getting those connected to towns and municipalities. Polley felt having the groups on the subcommittee that do organized bike rides would be helpful as they could work to identify making some of their existing routes safer.

After discussion, possible subcommittee members suggested including a staff member from the Highway Department and from the Park Department, someone from the County’s MPO/Bike/Pedestrian Committee, Wausau Wheelers, the City bike/pedestrian committee, Sherriff’s Department, a town representative from the east and west parts of the County, possibly someone from the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, and possibly someone from the Central Wisconsin Off Road Cycling Coalition as a member at large. Polley said she will take Commission’s ideas to the Highway Department to see what they may have and they will come up with a list of names and more of a plan to present.

2. Recommending Allocation of Outstanding Usage Payment to Improvements at Sunny Vale Softball Complex – Following the Committee action in December, the unpaid balance of the Wausau Area Softball Association (WASA) for use of Sunny Vale Softball Complex was forwarded to the County’s Corporation Counsel. On December 13, 2019 the County received a letter from WASA proposing the payment to the County of \$87,401 for the majority of the 2013-2015 season balances. Per the State Statute of Limitations the County can go back no more than six years to collect unpaid balances. WASA also requested that the payment go directly towards improvements at Sunny Vale Softball Complex.

Corporation Counsel advised a resolution to the dispute however only the County Board can approve the funding allocation to improve Sunny Vale Softball Complex. The revenue from these outstanding balances was recognized within each respective year they should have been paid however the revenue was not anticipated in the 2019 or 2020 budget. The updated CORP includes recommendations for improvements to the ball diamonds of Sunny Vale Softball Complex. The payment of \$87,401 would assist with the implementation of the plan recommendations without the need to borrow additional funding for these improvements through the Capital Improvement Plan process.

Staff is recommending the Park Commission’s approval and recommendation to the Human Resources and Finance Committee that the monies from the payment be used for the improvement of Sunny Vale Softball Complex, as it relates to softball activities and softball fields. Polley explained that because its revenue that it could be put in the Department’s general fund as an offset for expenses but from an operation standpoint because the capital improvements aren’t funded all that well if the Department had the ability to use it for infrastructure plans that would be desired. Discussion followed and members hoped a plan would be implemented so that something like this wouldn’t happen again. **Motion** by Peckham, second by Durham to make recommendation that the \$87,401 be put towards assisting in operations and improvements at the Sunny Vale Sports Complex facility. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 6-0.

3. Discussion and Possible Action Approving the Draft 2020 Seasonal Park Use and Concession Lease Agreement for Wausau Area Softball Association’s Use of Sunny Vale Softball Complex

Polley said the agreement will be a base agreement for all users of Sunny Vale Softball Complex including WASA. She mentioned that the fees are set and the cost recovery for Sunny Vale Softball Complex is at 55%. Fees are not being discussed today but they may want to look at the cost recovery rate of all the sports complexes in the future. Polley discussed how typically the sports complex users are billed and pay in two installments and generally that practice has been working. Some special events are charged a deposit before their event and that is something they could impose on other organizations. A late fee charge will also be spelled out in the agreement.

Polley said in the years past WASA has had exclusive use of the concession stand and that will change. They have paid for and furnished most of the equipment inside of the concession stand. Discussion followed regarding the equipment and the walk-in cooler. WASA runs the concession stand during all of their activities and has been given the opportunity to run the concession stand during tournaments run by other organizations. If exclusive use of the concession stand is allowed then when a tournament comes in, those tournament organizers don’t have the ability to get revenue from the concessions which is a lot of times why people put on tournaments. Also the County is not making any revenue off those concessions. The fee schedule states that the County gets 10% of gross sales for any concessions and they should be charging the same for the Sunny Vale concession stand just like they do for the Eastbay Sports Complex, the hockey rink, and for special events. The County has not received any revenue from the concession stand in Sunny Vale Park in years and it is inconsistent with what is done in all other concession stands within the County. If exclusive use is not allowed then either the County could buy its own equipment for the concession stand or WASA could be given a 14 day notice to remove their equipment so then the concession stand becomes available to tournament renters. The group that is renting the facility would then be responsible for bringing in their own equipment. Those groups don’t have to rent the concession stand and then it wouldn’t be available for that tournament to use, it would be part of what the tournament asks for. Staff discussed the operations of other concession stands in County as well as City parks. Peckham questioned WASA paying ten percent or a total annual rental of \$2,500. Polley said if its ten percent of gross sales then the County has to rely on the organizations to give them the correct amounts. The County could change the fee schedule and charge a flat rental fee for the concessions such as \$2,500 for the year during the WASA season. If the County were to rent it out just for a tournament they would probably do a per day fee. Polley said this is the County’s agreement being put forward for use of the facility and if a group doesn’t sign the agreement they do not get to use the facility. Polley will finalize the agreement and will not be bringing it back to Commission. Corporation Counsel has told her she does not need to bring facility agreements to Commission but she did in this case because of the past history of WASA and the Sunny Vale Complex. She noted specifically for WASA that they will be given the agreement by January 31st every year and will have until March 15th to sign it. If they do not sign the

agreement they will not have use of the facility for the upcoming season. The agreement is not going to be negotiated unless something was totally missed.

Educational Presentations/Outcome Monitoring Reports

A. Update on Department Restructuring Plan - At their December meeting the County Board approved the restructuring plan of the Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department. Since that meeting the top candidates for the two Assistant Parks and Recreation Manager positions have accepted the positions. One manager started on December 30th and the other Manager will begin on January 13th. On December 30th Greg Freix's title changed to Assistant Director of Operations. The Assistant Director of Community Services position is currently posted and open for applications until January 24, 2020.

B. Project Update - Nine Mile Cross Country Trails: Trails opened on December 16, 2019. Grooming operations continue daily as temperatures allow. With the warm temperatures and rain the days leading up to New Year's, grooming operations had to cease until colder temperatures set in. The soft snow and saturated ground did not allow for machinery to be utilized to groom trails effectively without doing more damage to the current trails. Marathon Park Ice Arenas and Ice Rink: Open skate continues to be well attended on the indoor rinks. Hockey season is in full swing. The Zamboni is in need of repair however parts are on order and a temporary replacement is arranged. Due to warm, wet weather the outdoor rink has not yet been open. Pond hockey will utilize Sunny Vale Lake and not Marathon Park for 2020. Big Eau Pleine Park: Fire wood processing to begin next week (weather permitting) at BEP Park. Staff is removing hazard and downed trees adjacent to and on trails within the BEP Trail system. Routine Operations/Programs: Snow Removal Operations, Urban forestry program; tree trimming, removals, stump grinding, Building and structure maintenance, Shelter reservations and Special Events, Equipment maintenance and repair, Sports Facilities (Marathon Park Indoor Ice Arenas)

Announcements

A. Next Meeting Date & Time, Location – Tues., Feb., 4, 2020 at 2:00 pm, Rm 3, 212 River Drive, Wausau WI 54403

B. Future Agenda Items – none brought forward

Adjourn–Motion by Conrad, second by Smith to adjourn at 3:20pm. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 6-0.