

DRAFT
MARATHON COUNTY PARK COMMISSION

Date and Time of Meeting: May 5, 2020 at 2:00 pm

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

Park Commissioners present: Connie Conrad (via phone), Allen Opall, Pat Peckham, Rick Seefeldt(via phone)

Staff present: Jamie Polley-Director, Greg Freix-Asst. Director of Operations, Karyn Powers-Recreation Superintendent, James Wadinski-City Council

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

2. Approval of the Minutes of the April 7, 2020 Park Commission Meeting - Motion by Conrad, second by Opall to approve the minutes of the April 7, 2020 Park Commission meeting amending the wording of the following paragraph (in italics) “Commission members mentioned that a citizen, *John Beatty*, had brought up a concern to some of them about language regarding ~~trails~~ *trail additions to Nine Mile or the possibility for trail changes*”. Seefeldt mentioned his last name was misspelled but upon further review this error could not be found in the April 7 minutes. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 4-0.

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

A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee

1. Discuss the Opening of the Marathon County Splash Pad and Marathon Junction – Polley explained that staff has met with the County Administrator and the Marathon County Health Officer to discuss guidelines for opening the pools and Splash Pad this summer. Last night the City Park and Recreation Committee met regarding the opening of the three Wausau pools based on the phases from the current Badger Bounce Back Plan. Phase One allows for a maximum of ten people in any one area. Phase Two allows for a maximum of fifty people. The Park and Recreation Committee decided to postpone opening the Wausau pools until July 1st and will make their decision by or before their June 1st meeting. Polley wanted to know Commission’s thoughts on following the same recommendation for the Splash Pad and not to open until they are at least to Phase Two. The Splash Pad is easier to open than the pools because there is only one staff member, it’s fenced in, and there is no standing water.

Polley said the Junction is its own enterprise fund and runs itself on revenues from rentals, concessions and train rides. There will be decreased revenues from the rentals but those account for a small portion of the revenues. Staff feels the concessions and train rides could be managed with social distancing and extra cleaning in place or they could choose to keep the Junction closed if the Splash Pad is going to be closed. Polley discussed how the pool decisions are trying to be made in coordination with Rothschild/Scholfield and Weston. They would like to make the decisions regionally because it’s in the best interest of the safety of the users and staff. In addition staff has just received a meeting request to attend a collaboration meeting this Friday with Stevens Point, Marshfield, Merrill, Rothschild/Scholfield, and Weston to make it broader as a north central decision. If one closes that will push people to another pool and they have to confidently be able to make sure that everything is safe and that the physical distancing requirements can be managed.

Peckham had received an email from someone that really wanted safe swimming opportunities provided versus the swimming opportunities on lakes and rivers. Polley said they are trying to provide safe swimming facilities and if they can provide a safe facility that can be managed with the numbers allowed and it’s fiscally responsible or something communities want to do, that is their ultimate goal but if they can’t even allow fifty people in the pool then it doesn’t work because pool staffing at a minimum is ten while at the Splash Pad the staffing is only one. The County has numerous beaches that are open as of right now and signage has been placed to remind people of the physical distancing requirements. The beaches are not staffed and are not guarded so people swim at their own risk. The Health Department could close the beaches if physical distancing is not taking place. Peckham wondered about providing a lifeguard at Sunny Vale Park if the pools were closed. Polley said that would have to be looked into because there are different guidelines and training for the lifeguards and if it’s guarded once it would probably always have to be guarded. Powers said there is not a budget for lifeguards on the County side and staff is not trained in open water rescue for beaches on rivers or lakes, the skillset is different. **Motion** by Opall, second by Peckham to keep the Marathon Junction concessions and train open for the summer as scheduled. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 4-0.

Opall thought with the Splash Pad they should wait until after the regional meeting to make a decision. Polley said that currently staff's suggestion is for the Splash Pad to follow the same protocol as what is being done with the Wausau Pools which is to postpone the opening date until July 1st tentatively based on the numbers they could allow in according to the Badger Bounce Back Plan. When the Splash Pad is re-evaluated they may take into consideration that it would be easier to regulate than the City pools. Powers noted that the train and concessions are licensed and inspected by the Health and State Departments whose guidelines must be followed in order for them to operate. **Motion** by Opall, second by Peckham to follow the guidelines of the Wausau Pools to postpone the opening of the Splash Pad until tentatively July 1st based on re-evaluation and input from the regional meeting. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 4-0.

B. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee to Forward to the Environmental Resource Committee for its Consideration - None

4. Policy Issues for Discussion and Committee Determination for Consideration by Environmental Resources Committee – None

5. Educational Presentations/Outcome Monitoring Reports

A. Project Update – General Spring Park Cleanup: Staff is nearing completion on park cleanup. Marathon County Sports Complex: (Eastbay is no longer facility sponsor) Polley explained that the new Assistant Director will be working on that sponsorship program. Site remediation and turf work is completed around the new shelter. Water Systems: Installation of meters and plumbing components are almost completed in restrooms for spring activation of water systems. Boat Launches: Piers are installed and use has been steady. DCE fishing pier is scheduled for install next. Parking Lots: Spring cleanup; sweeping, blowing and grading operations have been completed including in the campgrounds. MPB #1: New dasher board installation was rescheduled to the first week of June due to COVID-19 related setbacks. Marathon Park Exhibition Building: A couple of booths located in the center rotunda are being remodeled with counters, shelving and electrical upgrades. Routine Operations/Programs: Mowing equipment is being prepped for upcoming operations; Urban forestry program-tree trimming, removals, stump grinding; Building and structure maintenance; Shelter reservations and special events are on hold; Equipment maintenance and repair. There was a cave-in at the farm museum over winter and staff is soliciting quotes for insurance work to have that work completed. Tennis court and pickleball nets have been put up. Staff is currently outfitting an extra restroom vehicle. Some restrooms will be open and others will remain closed as now there are daily cleaning requirements. Seasonal staff has been reduced which means less capacity for cleaning restrooms. Seefeldt questioned who emptied park dumpsters as he had seen one that was overflowing. Freix explained that the Department has a contract with Advance Disposal and typically it starts May 1st. There has been an influx of home garbage being disposed of in our park sites and the recreation deputies are working on it.

B. Program Update – Polley gave updates and changes in operations related to Covid-19. All rentals and events in the County Parks have cancelled through May and many through the end of June and July. Refunds have been given for cancellations related to COVID-19. Organized sports groups are mostly on hold. Park crews and office staff are taking measures in effort to keep with physical distancing. Campgrounds opened May 1st with some regulations, the group campsites are not open. Playgrounds and basketball courts are not open. Disc golf, tennis/pickleball courts, boat launches, bike trails and horse back trails are open. Staff will be meeting with the Fair Board on Monday, May 4th to discuss their plans for the 2020 Wisconsin Valley Fair. Seefeldt commented that the Fairboard made a decision to go along with what the State Fair does. The Fourth of July Fair is still scheduled for this time however the organizers are contemplating whether to have the event due to COVID-19 restrictions. The County Parks 100th Anniversary Celebration is scheduled for Saturday, August 15th. Family events, food trucks, the band Hello Weekend, and fireworks are planned. Staff is working closely with the Department of Health and will change the celebration if needed. Questions were answered and discussion followed.

6. Announcements

A. Next Meeting Date & Time, Location – June 2, 2020 at 2:00 pm, Rm 3, 212 River Drive, Wausau WI 54403. (possible time change)

B. Future Agenda Items – Election of Officers, Wausau/Marathon County Parks and Recreation Foundation Representative, Big Eau Pleine Park Forest Management, Future Meeting Schedule

7. Adjourn–Motion by Peckham, second by Seefeldt to adjourn at 3:00pm. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.