



# MARATHON COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AGENDA

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

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

The meeting site identified above will be open to the public. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health directives, Marathon County encourages Commission members and the public to attend this meeting remotely. To this end, instead of attendance in person, Commission members and the public may attend this meeting by telephone conference. If Commission members or members of the public cannot attend remotely, Marathon County requests that appropriate safety measures, including adequate social distancing, be utilized by all in-person attendees.

Persons wishing to attend the meeting by phone may call into the telephone conference beginning five (5) minutes prior to the start time indicated above using the following number: 1-408-418-9388.

**Access Code: 299 404 549**

**Attendee ID / Numeric Meeting Password: Parks050520** (72757050 from phones and video systems)

When you enter the telephone conference, PLEASE PUT YOUR PHONE ON MUTE!

The Public Comment portion of the agenda has been temporarily suspended, pursuant to Marathon County Resolution # R-29-20, dated April 21, 2020, because the technology necessary to afford the public the opportunity to address the County Board, or its subgroups, during public Comment is difficult to guarantee, if a large number of individuals have elected to call in.

## **Park Commission Members**

Commissioners: Connie Conrad, Allen Opall, Pat Peckham, Rick Seefeldt,

***Marathon County Mission Statement:** Marathon County Government serves people by leading, coordinating, and providing county, regional, and statewide initiatives. It directly or in cooperation with other public and private partners provides services and creates opportunities that make Marathon County and the surrounding area a preferred place to live, work, visit, and do business. (Last updated: 12-20-05)*

***Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department Mission Statement:** Adaptively manage our park and forest lands for natural resource sustainability while providing healthy recreational opportunities and unique experiences making Marathon County the preferred place to live, work, and play.*

## **Agenda Items**

- 1. Call to Order – Park Commission**
- 2. Approval of the Minutes of the April 7, 2020 Park Commission Meeting**
- 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
  - B. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee to Forward to the Environmental Resource Committee for its Consideration
    1. None
- 4. Policy Issues for Discussion and Committee Determination for Consideration by Environmental Resources Committee**
  - A. None
- 5. Educational Presentations/Outcome Monitoring Reports**
  - A. Project Update – Park Maintenance and openings, MC Sports Complex, Boat Launches, Parking Lots, Dasher Board Installation, Exhibition Building Maintenance, Routine Operations
  - B. Program Update – COVID-19 Operational Changes, Summer Rentals/Events, 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

**6. Announcements**

- A. Next Meeting Date & Time, Location – June 2, 2020, 2:00pm at 212 River Dr., Wausau WI 54403
- 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**

Signed /s/ Jamie Polley  
Presiding Officer or Her Designee

*Any person planning to attend this meeting who needs some type of special accommodation in order to participate should call the County Clerk's Office at 715-261-1500 or e-mail [infomarathon@mail.co.marathon.wi.us](mailto:infomarathon@mail.co.marathon.wi.us) one business day before the meeting.*

FAXED TO DAILY HERALD

(Email/Fax City Pages, Marshfield News, Midwest Radio Group)

Date April 30, 2020 Time 1:00 pm

By Jodi Luebbe

THIS NOTICE POSTED AT THE COURTHOUSE

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

By \_\_\_\_\_

**DRAFT**  
**MARATHON COUNTY PARK COMMISSION**

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

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

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

Staff present: Jamie Polley-Director, Tom Lovlien-Forest Administrator, Greg Freix-Asst. Director of Operations

1. **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.
2. **Special Recognition of Outgoing Commission Members** – Polley recognized Park Commission members who were not running for re-election. She thanked Gary Gisselman, Dennis Smith and John Durham for their time and years of service working on the parks.
3. **Approval of the Minutes of the February 4, 2020 Park Commission Meeting - Motion** by Conrad, second by Peckham to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2020 Park Commission meeting. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 7-0.

**4. Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance or Resolution:**

A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee

1. None

B. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee to Forward to the Environmental Resource Committee for its Consideration

1. Review and Propose Policy Revisions to Marathon County 15 Year Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan Chapter 900 – Lovlien explained that the Forestry/Recreation Committee and the Environmental Resources Committee have been reviewing chapters quarterly. Chapter 900 deals with intensive recreational operations on the County forest that the Park Commission has some jurisdiction over, so he is looking for their input. This is not the last opportunity to provide input as there will be a public meeting in July and also a public comment period.

Lovlien said that it was recognized that intensive recreation has been growing throughout the last fifteen year planning period so a separate chapter was created. The Forestry Comprehensive Plan guides the management of County forest taking all of the ecological, social, recreational, economical aspects into account in balancing uses on the forest. Chapter 900 includes information on planning, authority, entrance and user fees, recreational service agreements, recreational use permits for organized events, extensive recreational use of the forest, intensive recreation areas/uses, recreational trail access, demand development/exclusion, trail construction and maintenance, organized trail use and special events, designated recreation trails, and recreation program funding and grants. Lovlien mentioned that similar to the past plan, current uses will continue. One thing that the public has commented on that cannot be provided is for more recreational trails at Nine Mile. There has been no new trail mileage since 2002 primarily because there are so many current existing trails and in trying to balance everything, if new trails were created would cause potential for resource damage and additional user conflicts. The plan is to continue the management of Nine Mile as it's been in the past and focus on upgrading the current trail systems to make them more user friendly.

Gisselman supported Nine Mile's current management and said what is occurring there is unique and needs careful consideration going forward. Peckham questioned why equestrian trails were allowed in all areas except the Harrison-Hewitt and the Bern Forest Units. Lovlien said a lot of the trail systems at those two units are wet and go through lower areas which don't have built up trail systems to support equestrian use.

Commission members mentioned that a citizen had brought up a concern to some of them about language regarding trails. Lovlien commented that both he and Polley had taken the citizens information and will be discussing it with him directly. Lovlien also explained that there will be future opportunity for input and he can give more information on it as the public meeting gets closer and the thirty day comment period takes place.

Conrad thought the plan represented a lot of work and thoughtful input. Peckham had a question on language referencing Committee and Lovlien explained that the Statue reads that the Forestry/Recreation Committee is the Committee of jurisdiction so it references the Forestry/Recreation Committee in relation to moving this plan along and the Environmental Resource Committee is the statutory Committee that approves anything that goes to County Board. If Park Commission is comfortable with the draft 900 Chapter knowing there could be some changes forthcoming before it goes to County Board their recommendation will be forwarded to the Forestry/Recreation and Environmental Resources Committees. **Motion** by Smith, second by Conrad to forward Chapter 900 to the Forestry/Recreation and Environmental Resource Committees. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 7-0.

2. Approval of Resolution to Participate in a State Motorized Recreation Trail Aids Program – Marathon County has 29 snowmobile clubs that maintain and manage over 790 miles of snowmobile trails. The State of Wisconsin has established a program to aid the snowmobile clubs in maintaining the trails. Under the guidelines of the program the County is required to designate a position to oversee the grant program. Marathon County has a designated Motorized Recreation Coordinator. The grants to participate are due on April 15<sup>th</sup> of each year. The grant requires that the County approve a resolution that acknowledges participation in the program. **Motion** by Peckham, second by Smith to recommend approval of the resolution to participate in a state motorized recreation trail aids program. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 7-0.

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

**6. Educational Presentations/Outcome Monitoring Reports**

A. Project Update – General Spring Park Cleanup: Staff has commenced park cleanup on locations where snow melt and firm soil conditions allow. Gates will be open as each park road is deemed safe and no further snow is expected. Water Systems: Meters and plumbing components are being installed for spring activation of water systems; restrooms, fountains, irrigation systems, etc. Eau Claire Dells Campground: Site remediation and road repairs are underway from the electrical upgrade last fall. Boat Launches: Piers are being installed as snow melts and flood waters are subsiding. Parking Lots: Spring cleanup; sweeping, blowing and grading operations are underway. MPB #1: New dasher board installation is scheduled for mid-May. Routine Operations/Programs: Snow removal operations as needed; Urban forestry program-tree trimming, removals, stump grinding; Building and structure maintenance; Shelter reservations and special events are on hold; Equipment maintenance and repair; Sports facility maintenance.

Polley discussed some park updates from the Covid-19 pandemic. Events have been cancelled through April and no new reservations are being taken until June. If the Governor’s order is extended, then May events will be cancelled. Campgrounds are currently considered essential and will stay open as long as they are considered as such. Group campsite reservations will be cancelled. The Department’s 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration is scheduled to take place August 15<sup>th</sup> instead of June 13<sup>th</sup>.

B. Program Update - East Gate Hall: Since the social distancing regulations were enacted East Gate Hall has served as an alternate site for Catholic Charities Warming Shelter. The facility has been a great temporary space with enough room for 25+ people, bathrooms and a serving kitchen. The Warming Shelter has now found a more long term facility with the YWCA and will be moving out of East Gate Hall by April 6<sup>th</sup>. Elections: Due to the Warming Shelter in East Gate Hall and the schools being closed, the City has moved the election sites that were originally at East Gate Hall and Wausau East High School to the Multi-purpose Building #2 in Marathon Park on April 7<sup>th</sup>.

**7. Announcements**

A. Next Meeting Date & Time, Location – May 5, 2020 at 2:00 pm, Rm 3, 212 River Drive, Wausau WI 54403. (possible time change)

B. Future Agenda Items – none brought forward

**8. Adjourn–Motion** by Smith, second by Peckham to adjourn at 2:45pm. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

**AGENDA SUMMARY**

3A1. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding the Opening of the Marathon County Splash Pad and Marathon Junction

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. Staff will review Governor Evers' Badger Bounce Back plan and explain how the plan effects staffing and operations. A plan for the pools and splash pad, based on the guidelines will be presented.

The Commission is also asked to discuss the Operations of Marathon Junction (train and snack bar). Staff will provide expenditure and revenue information to better determine hours of operations, staffing, attendance projections, etc.

5A. Project Update

**General Spring Park Cleanup:**

Staff is nearing completion on park cleanup.

**Marathon County Sports Complex: (Eastbay is no longer facility sponsor)**

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 schedule for install next.

**Parking Lots:**

Spring cleanup; sweeping, blowing and grading operations is continuing

**MPB #1:**

New dasher board installation is rescheduled to 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 – On Hold

Equipment maintenance and repair

5B. Program Update

Staff will provide an update on operational changes relating 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.

Staff will be meeting with the Fair Board on Monday, May 4<sup>th</sup> to discuss their plans for the 2020 **Wisconsin Valley Fair**.

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 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration** is scheduled for Saturday, August 15<sup>th</sup>. 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.