

DRAFT
MARATHON COUNTY PARK COMMISSION

Date and Time of Meeting: Tuesday, February 5, 2019 at 2:00 pm
Meeting Location: Conference Room 3, 212 River Drive, Wausau WI 54403

Park Commission members present: Connie Conrad, John Durham, Gary Gisselman, Pat Peckham, Rick Seefeldt, Dennis Smith

Park Commissioners excused: Jacob Langenhahn

Staff present: Jamie Polley, Dan Fiorenza

Others present: Brian Kowalski-City Pages, Representatives from Wausau Nordic Ski Club - John Burke, Russ Wilson, Gary Zimbric, John Beatty

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

2. Public Comment Period – John Burke, President of the Wausau Nordic ski club and representative on the Marathon County Forest Citizen Advisory Subcommittee explained that the ski club has been looking into the feasibility of snowmaking at Nine Mile Forest. They had a technical feasibility study, economic feasibility study and a water assessment done. The proposal is to look at about 3.5-3.7 km of ski trail starting at the chalet area going out to the main street and the northern lighted loop area. The system would be heavy on infrastructure which hopefully would make it more affordable to operate. The ski club would fundraise and then turn it over to the County to operate. Snowmaking would make Nine Mile a much more predictable, quality ski destination which would benefit the local community and attract visitors as well. It would help with ski programs and the large ski events held there. Burke discussed a couple of other ski areas where snowmaking is being done. In the last several years it has been tough to open up Nine Mile before January. Snowmaking would involve a two week period in December to make a sufficient amount of snow on that trail to an 18 inch depth which would last into early spring. Polley said the County is waiting to receive one report and then will start reviewing the proposal. Because Nine Mile is a County Forest it will first go to the Forest Citizen Advisory Subcommittee, then to the Forestry/Recreation Committee, and then to Park Commission. A lot of things need to be discussed including County costs and impacts on deer hunting.

3. Approval of Minutes of the January 8, 2019 Park Commission Meeting – Motion by Durham, second by Smith to approve the January 8, 2019 Park Commission minutes. Motion **carried** by voice vote, no dissent.

4. Educational Presentations/Outcome Monitoring Reports

A. Discussion and Possible Action Amending the 2019 Fee Directive – The majority of the 2019 fees had been previously approved except for the Eastbay Sports Complex and Sunny Vale Softball Complex. Staff was waiting for the seasons to finish so that the usage numbers could be reviewed. Staff looked at revenues and expenditures and how fees were being charged especially how people were paying for field usage at Eastbay Sports Complex. The current fee directive has multiple fees based on the size of the field and the user. Staff is recommending a simplified fee structure based only on the size of the field. Fiorenza mentioned that the player fees were increased to keep in line with the County’s goal of having a seventy percent recovery rate. For softball, staff looked at how rates were being charged. Staff would like the game fees to include adult usage and youth usage. Tournaments would be based on the user, if it’s a youth tournament they would be charged the youth rate and then charged the staff time on top of that. Field lights and labor costs did not change. A future Park Department goal is to look at cost recovery and wage fees at the park facilities in general. Polley mentioned that the only fee left to bring back to Commission after the season is evaluated is the 2019-2020 ice fees. **Motion** by Peckham, second by Conrad to approve the fee schedule as presented. Motion **carried** by voice vote.

B. Project Update

Marathon Park MPB/Ice Arenas: Daily programs and arena maintenance operations ongoing. Youth Hockey, High Schools, Wausau RiverWolves, Central Wisconsin Storm and Public Skating. Locker rooms are being painted around the rental schedule. New accumulator is installed in the compressor room. Nine Mile Trails/Grooming Operations: All trails have been rolled and groomed with the exception of the Alps (to be completed later this week). Operations Building Project: Storeroom remodel and reorganization to improve allocation of space and efficiency of locating products and supplies is

almost complete. Campground Firewood Processing: Set for wood processing has begun at Big Eau Pleine Park and work will proceed and continue around other winter and weather operations. (100 cords). Mountain Bay Trail: Intersection gates are removed. Repairs, painting and new safety reflectors are in process. Routine Operations/Programs: Snow removal; walks, trails, parking lots and roads. Urban forestry program; tree trimming and removals. Building and structure maintenance. Shelter reservations and special events. Equipment maintenance and repair.

C. Program Update

Nine Mile – very slow start of a season to say the least. But with the small snowfall on January 23rd the crews did a remarkable job and we were able to open on the 24th. Unfortunately Badger State Nordic and Triathlon had to be cancelled. Special Olympics is scheduled for February 8th.

Many large returning and new events are being worked on for 2019 including; Marathon County United Spring Soccer Tournament, Wausau 24 Mountain Bike Race, Wausau Hmong Festival, Softball Tournaments, Ragnar Trail Run, Rib Mountain Adventure Challenge, Youth Rugby Tournament, Ultimate Frisbee Tournament, and maybe even the return of “Dodgeball”

Marathon Park Ice Arena – Public skate attendance is way up this year. Regular customers consisting of Marathon County Youth Hockey, Wausau West Hockey, Storm Girls Hockey, East/Merrill Hockey, Timberlines Figure Skating, and several Adult Open Hockey groups continue to keep the Ice Arena a busy place this winter.

RiverWolves – Attendance has been averaging about 300 and the RiverWolves organization is pleased with the season overall. They are starting an organized adult league in February.

5. Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance or Resolution - None

6. Policy Issues for Discussion and Committee Determination for Consideration by Environmental Resources Committee - None

7. Announcements

A. Next Meeting Date & Time, Location – Tuesday, March 5, 2019 at 1:30 pm, Rm 3, 212 River Drive, Wausau WI 54403

B. Future Agenda Items – CORP Discussion, April-Ordinance Updates, Future - Spring Park Tour, cost recovery

8. Adjourn – Motion by Smith, second by Peckham to adjourn at 2:35 pm. Motion **carried** by voice vote, no dissent.