

DRAFT
MARATHON COUNTY PARK COMMISSION

Date and Time of Meeting: Tuesday, July 2, 2019 at 2:00 pm

Meeting Location: Marathon Junction, Marathon Park 1201 Stewart Park, Wausau WI 54401

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

Park Commissioners excused: Jacob Langenhahn

Staff present: Jamie Polley, Dan Fiorenza, Greg Freix

Others present: Alan Christensen – Town of Ringle Chairman

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 – Christiansen was looking for recommendations on promoting an area in Ringle where people can access the Eau Claire River for kayaking. Suggestions were that staff should put it on the County website and Christiansen should check to see if it's on the Town of Ringle website.

Approval of Minutes of the May 7, 2019 Park Commission Meeting – Motion by Conrad, second by Peckham to approve the May 7, 2019 Park Commission minutes. Motion **carried** by voice vote, no dissent.

Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance or Resolution:

Discussion and Possible Action by Committee – 1. Discussion and Possible Action Appointing a Representative from the Commission to serve as the Liaison to the Wausau/Marathon County Parks and Recreation Foundation – Polley explained that Rick Seefeldt is currently the representative from the Parks Commission to the Parks Foundation. The Parks Foundation has moved their meetings to the third Tuesday of every other month at 4:00 pm. Seefeldt has a prior commitment of being on a standing County Committee at these same dates and times. Polley discussed some of the current projects the Parks Foundation is working on. Durham volunteered to be the representative to the Parks Foundation. **Motion** by Peckham, second by Smith to appoint John Durham to be the representative from the Park Commission to the Park Foundation. Motion **carried** by voice vote, no dissent.

Policy Issues for Discussion and Committee Determination for Consideration by Environmental Resources Committee

A. Department Structure – 1. 2020 New Position Request – 0.6 FTE Motorized Recreational Coordinator – Polley reported that the current Park Ranger and ATV/Snowmobile Coordinator, Jon Daniels, has given his retirement notice after being with the Department for 37 years. Since 2005 Daniels has been completing this position plus his law enforcement duties. If the State is going to provide funding to the ATV/Snowmobile programs, the County has to manage it. Daniels spends fifty percent of his time on the ATV/Snowmobile program and the other fifty percent on doing enforcement. Recently he has spent more time on the ATV/Snowmobile program side because of the work involved in replacing six snowmobile bridges. Staff feels with the growing number of people using the County facilities and the number of calls he receives that someone is needed to do more enforcement. Staff feels it is best to separate the positions and have a .6 FTE Motorized Recreational Coordinator and a full time Park Ranger position again. The change in the budget would be fairly minimal due to other retirement savings and the fact that a new ranger would start out at a lower wage than Daniels. Forty-four percent of his salary is reimbursed through the ATV/snowmobile grant program. Peckham thought the Park Ranger should be more visible in the facilities. Durham thought the 0.6 FTE Motorized Recreational Coordinator was a necessary position. Polley discussed how she is working with the Sheriff's Department regarding the Park Ranger position, **Motion** by Peckham, second by Durham to approve the new position of .60 FTE Motorize Recreational Coordinator. Motion **carried** by voice vote, no dissent.

Educational Presentations/Outcome Monitoring Reports

A. Discussion of Fee Policy Directives – Polley said the County has been working on priority based budgeting and eventually the Department will have to review its fee polices and what its future cost recovery is going to be. They will look at how the fees are currently set, some of the past directives from the Park Commission, and need feedback on what staff should be looking at going forward. In some instances the Park Department provides services for the whole community like

park maintenance at Marathon Park. There are no fees that go along with that per se, it's a County tax levy dollar. There are also instances where the County provides programs that only serve a small portion of the community and in that case maybe the fees should cover 75% to 100% of their costs. Polley discussed the enterprise accounts of Marathon Junction, Eastbay Sports Complex, Nine Mile, and the ice arenas and what their recovery rates have been. In the future, staff may bring the enterprise accounts back for discussion to see what the ultimate goal is for those facilities. She mentioned there has been pushback from local users at Nine Mile if too many events are held there. Currently fees are set for small events with the large events being negotiable. They may want to keep the negotiable fee because each large event is different but staff is working on criteria to develop a more consistent policy. Another facility the Department tracks separately is Sunnyvale Softball Complex which started at a 70% cost recovery but was reduced after the group came to Commission. Everyone would like lower fees but the Department has its costs and none of this includes capital projects. If the Department wants to do any capital projects that's an additional revenue source it has to get from grants, donations, partnerships, or the Capital Improvement Project process. The current fees for camping, boat launches, shelters, cross-country ski and bike passes are tracked except for administrative costs.

Rick Seefeldt left the meeting at 2:45pm

Those fees are set every year by looking at what other communities are charging, the Consumer Price Index and utility expenses. Should the Department go more off of cost recovery based on who it is serving? Is the ultimate goal to raise one hundred percent of the cost for some of the facilities? This item will come back for policy discussion and action. Peckham thought they needed to take into consideration, for example, a program that doesn't affect very many people but would be very important is something like training life guards. Polley said some of the programs in priority based budgeting were consolidated. The lower scoring items included mowing the grass, park building maintenance, and snow and ice removal in non-parks. These serve the entire community but don't have any cost recovery. She believes the County is trying to better consolidate its services and enhance the cost recovery of those programs that it can. Polley discussed how staff will look more into its event fees. She discussed the IronBull event said it may be brought forward to Commission in the future to discuss its fees. That event will return some of its profit to the Parks Foundation which eventually helps the parks. There are other events that help the community so there are a lot of factors when thinking about charging fees. Polley said if the directive is to recover 100% then they have to look at the policies for those bigger events, how many events there are and what the Department's maintenance costs are for them. Durham would like to know the Departments costs for some of the large events and what the business side is on some of them. He also thought that the costs of wear and tear on equipment and facilities was another factor to consider. He didn't think they wanted to make all kinds of money and thought it was kind of a gray area on how much they should subsidize. Conrad was also interested in the Departments costs and its profit on events. They want to be supportive as a community resource but they also only have a limited amount of staff. Smith also would like to know Departments costs and said these large events also bring intrinsic value to the County because people visit restaurants, hotels, gas stations, etc. Polley said these are programs and facilities for which fees are currently charged. There is still a big portion of what the Department does that has no fees associated with them so that will still be on the tax levy but for the areas where fees are charged direction is needed on how those fees are set. Staff will bring back some cost recovery numbers for its programs including the enterprise accounts. Staff will continue to work on events and will bring that back as a separate discussion item.

B. Discussion of E-Bikes – Polley gave Commission an update about E-Bikes. The articles previously sent included information on the International Mountain Biking Association stance on the issue and also what different States are doing. Legislation has been brought forward and is a mirror of a number of other States that have set guidelines for E-bikes as to separating them into the three classes and requiring that they are distinctly identified in what their motor power and speed are so that it's easier to enforce. It is up to municipalities where they want to allow or restrict E-bikes once it's set. Most communities that have adopted this ordinance are allowing the class one on all trails, even single track trails. If Wisconsin passes the legislation, the County can decide to follow it and allow or restrict E-Bikes where they want to. Polley thought it would be beneficial to work with the local bike groups. She mentioned the Class one E-Bike that a lot of people are approving is an assist bike where the pedals have to be moving in order for the assist to work. The target group is the baby boomers who want to stay active but physically aren't as strong or can't ride as far. Peckham thought it was a good idea to hear from the local bike groups and that the classification idea was a good thing. Durham thought it would extend people biking when their health starts to fail. Polley will keep Commission informed on this topic.

C. Project Update – Multi-Purpose Building: Lobby floor tiles are being removed and floor prepared for new rubber flooring. Bitzke Nature Trail: Bridge repairs and trail restoration. Marathon Park: Final segment of LED roadway lights

nearing completion. County Forest Units (Leather camp, Kronenwetter and Nine Mile): Culvert installation/replacement in progress along with trail restoration. Shooting Range: Granite removal and turf restoration on 600 yard range (near target stations). Park Inventories: Complete inventory of all park buildings and property in the open is almost complete. The updated inventory is needed for the CORP update, Facilities and Capital Management and Risk Management. Routine Operations/Programs: Urban forestry program; tree trimming, removals, stump grinding; building and structure maintenance; shelter reservations and special events; equipment maintenance and repair, mowing operations, sports facilities (Eastbay Sunnyvale Softball Complex), Campground Operations

D. Program Update – Rib Mountain Adventure Challenge – This was a very successful event that was based out of the Dells of the Eau Claire Park on May 25th. Next year it will be an IronBull event. The age range was from an eight to a seventy year old that participated. There were 101 teams, 270 racers that came from eight states and it took forty volunteers to run the event. This event raises approximately \$10,000 in scholarships for the UW-MC. D.C. Everest Park – Sunday shows have begun for the Central Wisconsin Water Walkers. There are performances through Labor Day weekend. Wisconsin Endurance Mountain Bike Series “Romp the Swamp” – it was another successful mountain bike race at Nine Mile on June 8th. There were seventy-nine participants from throughout Wisconsin that competed in this one day event. Sunny Vale Softball Complex – The June Bug Classic Girls Fast Pitch Tournament was held on June 15-16th. The USA Softball Wisconsin Class B Girls Fast Pitch State Tournament will be on July 11-14th. Wausau 24 will be held at Nine Mile July 26-28. In addition to the traditional Mountain Bike Races there will be a 1/2 Marathon and 10K Trail Run on Friday. Eastbay Sports Complex - the complex is having its highest use in its 5th year of operation. Wausau Area Youth Soccer Association will begin their season on July 15th. Wausau Hmong Festival will have their 3rd annual event at the Complex July 27-28. Camping at the Big Eau Pleine, Dells of the Eau Claire, and Marathon Park continue to be extremely popular with another banner year of reservations. Summer Kick Off was held indoors at Marathon Park on June 14th due to the rainy forecast. General Shelter Reservations for June: 163

Announcements

- A. Next Meeting Date & Time, Location – Tuesday, July 30, 2019 at 10:00 am, Operations Shop, 900 Pardee Street, Joint Meeting with the Fair Board to follow
- B. Future Agenda Items – MSA will conduct 2nd meeting on CORP update

Adjourn – Motion by Peckham, second by Smith to adjourn at 3:37pm. Motion **carried** by voice vote, no dissent.