



Cromwell Valley Park Council (CVPC)

Meeting Minutes

May 12, 2025, 6:00 PM

- **COUNCIL MEETING ATTENDANCE**
 - In-person: Rachel Allshouse, Mia Walsh, Deb Lee, Laura Jenifer, Carl Gold, Bill Curtis, Kelly Emerson, Ray Reed, Rick Childs, Kate Joyce
 - Virtually: Joe Rector
 - Park Staff: Kirk Dreier
 - Membership/Guests: Jan Markowitz, Drew Emmer, Jeffrey Budnitz, Wayne Skinner, Debra Shindle, Mike Mauro, Sharon Updyke, Mimi Knuth, 2 additional members of Cromwell Coventry Association.
 - Absent: Stacey Cruise, Pat Novak

- **WELCOME FROM PRESIDENT, MIA WALSH**
 - Call to Order at 6:00pm, the agenda was adopted, and a quorum was established
 - Meeting participants introduced themselves
 - The President thanked all those who made the Membership & Volunteer Appreciation Picnic a success!
 - The President officially welcomed CVPC's new Finance Committee Chair, Raymond Reed and special guests Drew Emmer, Debra Shindle, Jeffrey Budnitz.

- **NEW BUSINESS**
 - Drew Emmer, Chief, Capital Planning & Development, presented "Cromwell Valley Park Enhancement Project." Debra Shindle, Chief, Property Management, answered questions and gave input throughout.
 - "Cromwell Valley Park Enhancement Project" presentation
 - Last presented in 2023 with proposed design (available publicly: <https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/files/departments/recreation-and-parks/documents/cromwellvalleyparkproposedenhancements072024.pdf>).
 - Tonight's presentation showed side by side the proposed plan vs. approved 100% design. Drew Emmer stated he would send the 100% design documents to CVPC.
 - Scope of work was outlined (7 items). Focus on road widening, accessibility, and parking lot improvements.
 - Project has entered the 2 year permit phase.
 - Stormwater management and green areas in parking areas are primary changes since 2023.
 - Pavilion in plan is a 20x20 pre-engineered metal pavilion.
 - Questions from meeting participants
 - How many people does the pavilion hold? (Can lookup exact number).
 - What is the use of the pavilion? (first come, first served if not rented through CivicRec)
 - Will it have power? (No).
 - What about grilling? (Can request charcoal grill through Park staff, like rest of park)

- How close to bathrooms? (At Nature Center and Spot-a-Pots outside. Barnitorium would have bathrooms if/when budget allows for that project.)
- Was there a public hearing about this? (No—but presented at CVPC meeting in 9/2023 to gain stakeholder feedback. Any future questions should go straight to Drew Emmer.)
- What direction is the entrance going to be expanded? (Wide enough for 2 way traffic - 24 feet wide except for the single-lane bridge)
- Hope that cedar trees will not be disturbed.
- Drew offered to setup a virtual meeting with the architectural consultant to go over precise details.
- Who decided where pavilion would go? Is pavilion set in stone? (Design costs outweigh pavilion costs. Pavilion would not replace the tent—too far for electricity. Drew Emmer offered to have it staked in exact location. Ranger Kirk had input in the Pavillion location.)
- How many accessible parking spots are in the new design? (Precise numbers outlined in presentation. More ADA spots than legally required will be built).
- Replanting will be part of this project. Outside of the floodplain. Tree management if trees fail. 2 year contract on all mitigation and stormwater management.
- Accessible walking path from parking lot to Barnitorium to pavilion. Consideration of access to Barnitorium for trails crew equipment storage.
- Stormwater management: drain locations reviewed. Has been reviewed, designed by professional engineers, and approved by all departments. 3 bioretention ponds. County and State departments have to review and sign off. Do bioretention ponds have to be fenced in? No. Drew Emmer can post photos of what recently built ones look like.
- Direct any questions about interference with the sewer project to Debra. Should not impact one another.
- Will entrances be closed once the project starts? Winter 2025 anticipated start date. County working with user groups on phasing. Desire to work together for as little impact to programming as possible. Areas may have to be shut down for periods of time.
- Kirk will be at every project meeting.
- Discussion of parking lot work; sub-base and cut and fill.
- Staging plans are part of the bid plans. Can be negotiated with the contractor. Will share drawings when available to the public.
- Valewood Stream Restoration Project
 - Not BCRP. Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability.
 - Proposal being reviewed. See slide with overview of information.
 - Construction funding anticipated in FY28.
 - Dennis Genito, project manager. Drew can get his contact info.
- Trail Assessment
 - Upcoming initiative. Trail systems at this park site and evaluating best repairs (bridges, accessibility repairs, holistic look at park).
 - Began with discussion of footbridges and CVPC's Citizen Generated Request in March of 2021.
 - Make a master plan of trail system with a design consultant (Grant plus county funding).
 - Community engagement will be important in this process.

- Study piece in the fall.
- No construction funding yet. Plan would be to apply for additional grants with the state.
- Sewer replacement is going to cut through Minebank Trail—will impact trails.
- Erosion is a big issue.
- Cheverly Road Site, off Providence
 - The initiative to move BCRP office to this site was not feasible and their offices were moved to Washington Avenue in downtown Towson.
 - Public input meeting will be held. Received approvals to demolish existing building (vandals have been accessing it) and then determine what could go there.
 - Funding is earmarked for that site. Need community buy-in. If additional (private) land is acquired, another entrance to the park is an option.
 - Adding parking/access for that side would be a goal.
 - Start with an internal constraints plan. Determine usable area before design consultant is hired; then design documents will be produced.
- Debra Shindle, Chief, Property Management, presented projects coming to CVP as a result of the county-wide building assessment.
 - 191 buildings assessed in total from third party consultant. Invest in current structures/buildings currently owned. 1-10 year plans were made.
 - Projects at CVP outlined in Agenda Packet (pp 8-10)
 - Line items are in the budget that has not yet been approved and which could be cut. Final County budgets will be approved on 5/22/25.
 - Talmar: Are there long term plans to make Eck House accessible? Upgrades are appreciated, but there are large-scale accessibility concerns to and in house itself. Assessment did not identify larger scale access, but Debra will look into it.
 - Talmar: Desire to ensure repairs do not interfere with programming.
 - Barnatorium: Discussion of termite traps in older buildings. Should they be maintained long term? Normally, termites are only treated for 10 years and traps will be abandoned.
 - Ongoing concerns about the Barnatorium and a leaking roof. An order was put in over a year ago, but the paperwork was misplaced. A new work order was submitted about 2 months ago. Debra will check on the status of this for CVPC.
 - Community Garden
 - Drew Emmer spoke to the water issue and pest deterrent concerns. Deer fence is up from BCRP. Additional money for pest barrier is not feasible in this FY.
 - Community member: Nobody will want to plant if rodents chew what is in place to get to plants. Hardware cloth was shared as a way to deter rodents as placing mesh does not work long-term.
 - Drew Emmer is checking on the water issue and looking into financing or alternatives to pest concern.
 - From a historical perspective, CVPC voted not to support the Community Garden in March of 2021.
 - Additional concerns: Look into power. Is it no longer working over there?
- Jeffrey Budnitz, Roland Park Nature Council spoke about water erosion effects/efforts on the uphill trail from the Barnatorium.
 - Address the uphill trail all the way to the green spot at the top. Dangerous, unstable.
 - In a perfect world, zig zag road would be ideal for water acceleration.
 - 15-16% slope areas. Current condition is more severe than 2019. Material loss.
 - Lateral water bars. Redressing.
 - Hikers issues with people tripping. Use rock as an anchor for putting materials down.
 - Outreach this summer. All weekend.

- 2 year window of keeping the water bars in place. Easier to maintain than fix.
- Not a property management type project.
- GOVERNANCE
 - The April 2025 minutes were approved unanimously. Kim Shapiro was thanked for her excellent work.
 - Treasurer’s Report–Deb Lee (p.2 of Agenda Packet)
 - Profit & Loss Statements and Budget vs. Actuals were provided (p.3-6)
 - The BCRP Transition Grant was approved on 4/16 (p. 7). These funds will be put in a separate Grant Account on the income statement, increasing any year-end surplus. The grant covers money already spent from July 2024 - June 2025.
 - Background Checks- Rachel Allshouse (p. 12)
 - Report as submitted. Upcoming expiration date highlighted in yellow. Please review.
- MANAGEMENT
 - Park Staff Report – Kirk Dreier (p.15)
 - Report as submitted.
 - Per Kirk’s request, Mia Walsh made a motion to cancel the August meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Mia updated the CVPC website calendar and Rachel will remove August date from future agendas.
 - Leaseholders Report - Talmar - Kate Joyce
 - Webex meeting was held today to discuss TALMAR’s lease. The meeting was 8 minutes long. A draft lease was promised by the close of business today, but was not received. Approval of a 15-year lease will be a TALMAR Board decision.
 - Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding is on hold until the lease is received. The CDBG application was due on 2/4.
 - Mia Walsh will send an email inquiring about the status of the lease.
 - Susan Dubin’s name was shared as the contact of a real estate attorney.
 - The Office of Therapeutic Rec. has hired a director. He visited. Plan to collaborate on a monthly event for exposure to all programs within the county.
 - Friends of Sherwood Report – Mia Walsh (p.5)
 - Sherwood Herb Garden Mulching – Thank you Trails Crew!
 - BCRP has been working on a licensing agreement with Halten Garden club, not an MOU.This document will define a terms of service commitment with the garden club and in return the use of the Sherwood House for no fee. The level of commitment of service from the club will be written into the terms of the agreement.
 - Standing Committees
 - Governance - Carl Gold (p.16)
 - Report as submitted
 - Finance (including insurance) - Ray Reed (p.17-18)
 - Historical artifacts are not CVPC’s property, therefore we are not responsible for insuring or appraising them. Does bailment apply for these items? Carl Gold is working with the Historical Society of Baltimore County to get more information.
 - CVPC’s Balance Sheet shows money only, but not assets (equipment, anything else?).
 - CVPC does not have coverage for a board member stealing money. Ray Reed has requested a quote for 200k coverage for this.
 - Ray Reed recommends renewing coverage for D&O. Summary in Board Report. This is in the budget, so it does not need to go to a vote.
 - Business owner’s policy expires 9/1/25. It is a one year policy. Ray Reed will work with Deb Lee on cost.
 - We work with one broker on both policies.
 - Ray advised that our current Businessowners policies have various exclusions under the

liability coverage. Most notably, there is no coverage for liability caused by campfires, outdoor camping or any activities that exceed 2,500 in attendance. We discussed these issues and believe that the council's exposure to these items is very limited.

- Fundraising - Mia Walsh (p. 13)
 - Report as submitted
 - Membership report as submitted (p. 20)
- Building & Grounds - Rick Childs
 - Trails crew is working on taking down a big tree and clearing the area behind the Lime Kiln house.
 - Deer management on 4/16. 60 deer culled.
- Programs and Events - Kelly Emerson
 - Membership Appreciation Event 4/26. Sherwood House, 3:30-6:30pm
 - Overwhelming positive feedback
 - Just over 100 registered, about 10 no shows
 - Guests well enjoyed, weather held, Band well received and easy to work with
 - Trinacria sandwiches boxes got rave reviews
 - Documentary premiere and Pop up Museum well received
 - To Be Determined: Connect with Deb Lee regarding final budget analysis and decide on plan for next year.
 - UPCOMING EVENTS
 - Gilchrist, 6/1, Steps of Hope. Evans Funeral Home does parking. Technically no longer a CVPC event, but still an opportunity for us. How can we/ how are we willing to support?
 - Volunteers are requested for the Pop-Up Museum Event on 6/28.
 - Chesapeake Shakespeare Company's (CSC) Shakespeare Beyond, 7/19-7/20, 7:00pm. Site visit with CSC planned for this 5/16 at 9:30am. Request for Parking volunteers was a yes. Request for additional lighting was a no. To Be Determined: Find and fund ASL interpreter, Make stickers for banner indicating date, decide on additional marketing.
 - Fall Harvest Festival (FHF) 10/11. One day event partnered with Towson Arts Collective (TAC). Rain or Shine, Willow Grove, 10:00am-4:00pm. The general plan is to proceed with last year's template. The feedback document is available. The initial small in person meeting with TAC was productive. TAC's main concerns are:
 - How to make the event more profitable
 - How to improve parking and traffic flow
 - Improved signageNext meeting is 5/16 at 10:00am. Action items include marketing, image, donor contacts, volunteer recruitment.
- OLD BUSINESS
 - Sherwood-Eck Trail Guide & Hike Through History - *Mia Walsh / Deb Lee* See Communications Report
 - County Grant Request re: footbridges over streams – MPW See Drew Emmer report
 - Sewer Project -Gunpowder Interceptor Relief Sewer Line, Soil Borings, and Test Holes - MPW
 - Old business was not specifically discussed in the meeting, but some items were discussed as part of Drew Emmer's presentation.
- Kelly Emerson closed out the meeting by reading a poem written by Anne Marie Anderson from the Membership Appreciation Event. The meeting adjourned at 8:28pm.
- Respectfully submitted by Rachel Allshouse, Secretary 5/13/25
- The next meeting will be held on Monday, June 9th at 6:00pm at Sherwood House and virtually.