



Cromwell Valley Park Council, Inc. (CVPC)

Meeting Minutes

June 9, 2025, 6:00 PM

● COUNCIL MEETING ATTENDANCE

- The meeting was held virtually through Zoom.
- Board In attendance: Rachel Allshouse, Mia Walsh, Deb Lee, Laura Jenifer, Carl Gold, Bill Curtis, Kelly Emerson, Ray Reed, Rick Childs, Kate Joyce, Pat Novak
- Park Staff: Kirk Dreier
- Membership/Guests in attendance: Corey Johns, Sharon Opdyke, Keith Kridenoff
- Absent: Stacey Cruise

● WELCOME FROM PRESIDENT, MIA WALSH

- Call to Order at 6:00pm, the agenda was adopted, and a quorum was established
- Welcome to Corey Johns, Baltimore County Board of Recreation & Parks
- Gilchrist Steps of Hope
 - Thank you to Kelly Emerson and those who helped with parking. Reported 300-600 people in attendance. 10th year hosting at CVP.
- Thank you to Dave Schroeder for his work on the Summer Newsletter and the Apple Orchard signage, as well as to the Trails Crew for cleanup after storm damage.
 - Mia Walsh is working with park staff and the Department of Public Works (DPW) on broken pipe. Another giant limb fell near Honor Garden (addressed in Park Staff report).
- Nature Council Stakeholders Group Meeting – May 15 - Update by Deb Lee & Mia Walsh
 - Many leaders were present. An update on the budget was provided. The line items discussed by Debra Shindle were approved (p.3, May 2025 CVPC Minutes).
 - Discussion of fall listening sessions, stakeholders meeting, town hall meetings which are ways the County reaches out to the community about their plans.
 - \$18.9 million budget (3% increase from prior years). No additional full time employees for the upcoming year are slated. No new large projects for the upcoming fiscal year, only current projects and those under design.
 - Asked about current open positions in BCRP. They are interviewing, but will not start until the new fiscal year starts on 7/1.
 - In the upcoming election cycle, there will be a fiscal year 2029 bond referendum for voters regarding preservation—asking people to vote yes for funding (\$8 million in bonds from 2024 cycle).
 - \$3.4 million from the state for Program Open Space (down from \$4 million). This money is tied to funding of housing sales. Program Open Space money needs to be split evenly between acquisitions and development of existing properties.
 - Did open space money affect our capital project? Yes, but already funded in prior fiscal years. Open Space has paid for land, bridge additions in CVP.
 - Deb Lee added two items; discussion of background checks for volunteers and creation

of a template for events for park events. We have not yet received the template for County and Council partnered events.

- 2025 Baltimore County Budget Approval Update
 - See above.

- GOVERNANCE

- Approval of May 2025 Minutes – *Rachel Allshouse*
 - The secretary verbally reported one edit to the Finance Committee Report (p. 4 of May minutes) since 6/6 distribution.
 - The minutes were approved unanimously.
- Treasurer’s Report–Deb Lee (p.3 of June Agenda Packet)
 - Profit & Loss Statements and Budget vs. Actuals were provided (pp.4-7)
 - Budget v. actuals-at 128% of dues collection to budget
 - Ahead with Night out with Nature (NOWN) income.
 - 64% of donations budget for the year (note that 2025 budget of \$12,500 is slightly down from budget of \$14,000 in 2024)
 - Expenses - overage on the finance committee due to 10% increase in annual subscription to Quickbooks software.
 - Invoice pending for summer 2025 newsletter (not yet reflected in the numbers for Newsletter category; \$1,400 coming).
 - At 421% of credit card fees due to an accounting change in posting credit card fees that will provide clarity on fees. We used to book the net amount for purchases made by credit card through the CVPC website, but now we book the actual gross dollar amount for membership dues, programs and donations and any applicable credit card fees separately. Income and Expense categories look higher (but offset each other) as a result.
 - Ray Reed asked about “other assets” at the bottom of the balance sheet. After doing inventory, CVPC may have over \$100,000 in tools and equipment. Do we report this in the balance sheet?
 - Historically, these items are not listed as assets because there was no value. Many items were donated, so no cost value. Difference between insurable value and replacement cost (ex: steel, John Deere, etc.). Should we insure these items? If it is shown on the balance sheet, are there tax or exemption consequences since we are non-profit?
 - Can Maryland Association of Non-Profit Organizations (MANO) be of assistance? Add to discussion for upcoming meetings.
 - Question of CVPC owning artifacts. According to MOU, we should send BCRP list of anything valued at \$250 or more. We do not own artifacts–see Governance report for more details.
 - Cash Management -
 - See details in Treasurer’s Report of Agenda (p.3)
 - Nothing in bylaws govern how we manage cash. Deb Lee will discuss this more with the Maryland Association of Nonprofit Organizations (MANO).
 - Rick Childs suggested Merrill Lynch as an alternative that is not tied to a CD. Consider longer term options or multiple CDs for a greater rate of return.
 - Discussion: Mia Walsh asked if restricted funds have to remain fluid? Rick Childs asked if we can use savings for other purposes/restrictions? Ray Reed noted we can liquidate a fixed-term CD before maturity, but we will forfeit earned interest. Deb Lee believes that the proposed caps on checking and savings account balances is a conservative plan and there would be enough of a buffer for

unanticipated cash needs. Joe Rector supports this plan. Agreement among CVPC that we should keep assets in one bank instead of looking for a higher rate at another bank.

- A motion is not needed for the Treasurer's cash allocation proposal based on bylaws. The President and Treasurer need to be present at Bank of America to transfer money from checking and/or savings to a Certificate of Deposit.
- Mia Walsh made a motion to allow our Treasurer and Executive Committee to mobilize money from checking/savings to Certificate of Deposits or other investment accounts. The motion passed unanimously.
- Baltimore County Recreation & Parks Transition Grant
 - We have not received the money yet. CVPC has to submit a report by 7/30 once the money is received. Mia is working on gathering copies of invoices for the report.
- Internal financial review (for 2024) update
 - Bill Curtis and Rick Childs are reviewers. When both are done, it will be reported in the July meeting. Bill's review is complete and he will make plans with Rick to pass it on.
- Housekeeping (see Agenda)
- 2026 Budget (see Agenda)
- Background Checks- Rachel Allshouse (p.8)
 - Upcoming expiration dates highlighted in yellow. Next expirations in August. Please review.
- MANAGEMENT
 - Park Staff Report – Kirk Dreier
 - May was super busy as it is leading up to the summer season for CVP. The last of our schools were also in May and the staff had various training sessions to attend.
 - Down two staff members and scheduling constraints.
 - June is the busiest time as we are doing our own training for all the Seasonal Naturalists for the entire division of R&P. Tomorrow is their presentation day that culminates in their final exam. We have been all over the county this week and are finishing up at Marshy Point tomorrow. After that Kirk and Breena will be attending CPR training.
 - Call Matt or other staff at the Nature Center if anyone needs access to Sherwood when Ranger Kirk is out.
 - Wednesday 6/11, we have the Halten Garden Club at Sherwood and I'll be presenting a program on Edible and Medicinal plants of CVP to them on Thursday, 6/12. Their License Agreement is finalized but for them to sign it and send it back to Jessica Jeanetta, BCRP Regional Coordinator for Nature Centers.
 - 6/19, Kirk will be attending Banneker Museum for the celebration and parking duties. This year it will be held on the actual holiday from 1:00-7:00 pm instead of the weekend.
 - Our first Camp is Camp Chickadee (half day camp) and that starts the week of 6/16. Our Second camp, Camp Bluebird starts on 6/23.
 - Ranger Breena is working with Kelly Emerson on the Chesapeake Shakespeare Company (CSC) event since Kirk will be out in July.
 - Ranger Kirk will be out from 6/30 through the first week of August with knee surgery and recovery. Ranger Breena will be there for the July Board meeting. We don't have a meeting scheduled for August.
 - The big concrete drainage pipe has been looked at by the Chief (Ben Porter) with Ranger Kirk today. He worked with Brian from property management to contact DPW. DPW is aware and will be sending someone to survey the issue and will be back in touch. Photographs were taken this afternoon. No mention of the timeline. [DPW will be on site on 6/18 to review the pipe.]
 - Fishing with a Ranger Saturday, 6/7 with Ranger Matt. About 8 people attended the program. Unfortunately, the Kubota died while Matt was there. We got it up and running this afternoon.

- Apparently, a battery went bad internally, and when that happens it won't even jump start. (which we tried to do unsuccessfully). It spent the weekend parked on Loch Raven Drive.
- A pine branch snapped off near Honor Garden. This happened late morning or early afternoon today. Ranger Kirk will assess and handle between park staff and trails crew.
 - Allocation of riding mowers that belonged to the Fire Department—each Nature Center that requested one, received one. There will be a meeting to get training on how to use it. This will help alleviate some work for the trails crew. The mower is in Sherwood Barn. County Facilities owns it and CVP Staff will maintain it. Ranger Kirk will ask the Chief if volunteers can use it—what are the county requirements?
 - Long standing Scout Leader has a scout that is going to do work with wire fencing for the community garden.
 - Debra Shindle gave the park staff an update on Merrick Barn.
 - Roof part has been repaired (this was the maintenance request that was lost).
 - Bigger problem is the rest of the barn. Ranger Kirk will ask.
 - Is there news on repaired or new Sherwood sign?
 - No updates beyond that a replacement is in motion.
 - Kirk is moving forward with the purchase using the County P-card for an interfaced audio system mounted on 3 sides of Willow Grove building to make announcements through radios.
- Leaseholders Report - Talmar - Kate Joyce
 - VA farms program concluded and held graduation. There will be a 2 week break, then the advanced program begins.
 - At 108% of the goal – served more adults than planned to date.
 - Farm stand is stocked (peas and radishes in the refrigerator).
 - The tree trunks below Eck House that were requested to be removed are still at TALMAR. Ranger Kirk will check into this.
 - Draft lease received.
 - Green house no longer included, increased rent 2% (and additional 2% per year). Kate has forwarded the document to the Board.
 - Exactly the same as the lease from two years ago. There was a reply to this draft two years ago with bullet points.
 - Corey Johns asked Kate to send a list to him now. TALMAR is under the purview of the County Board. He will sit down with Sam O'Neil, Deputy County Administrative Officer of Health and Community Services to help advocate. Now that there is a lease, he can help to ensure bullet points are addressed.
 - A camera showed a deer throwing its body against the critter fence to break it. It is keeping rabbits out.
 - Friends of Sherwood Report – Mia Walsh (p.9)
 - Is the Halten Garden Club going to weed and mulch the Honor Garden? Ranger Kirk reported that yes, they have been recently. Rick and Sharon mulched the Honor Garden recently and the Halten Garden Club came last week for additional work.
 - Standing Committee Reports
 - Governance – Carl Gold (p.10)
 - Board believes that Jim Kelly has the written agreement of Historical Society of Baltimore County (HSOBC) items referenced in the report. Kelly Emerson has the inventory. Kelly will also keep an eye out for an agreement in her documents.
 - Ray Reed shared that the appraisal shows large pieces of furniture. Hard to insure-fine art, historical? If damaged or stolen, would CVPC be responsible to repair or replace? Are there also items in the Willow Grove Center?
 - Should we consider insuring these items? We are a bailee—could be legally responsible

under bailment. We don't have an agreement in writing. Can we draft a written agreement relieving us of liability if something happened to these items? Is there an agreement? Ask Jim Kelly. If not, will ask Mr. James Keffer if open to a new agreement (items are theirs, we're storing them, if something happens we are not responsible.) MOU with the county says they are not liable for anything.

- Keith K. shared that there may be paperwork with artifacts in the room in Sherwood with the large piece of furniture.
- Ranger Kirk wants to reach out to James Keffer about the bronze plaque that was removed. Do they have plans to replace it? Carl will share contact information.
- Finance – Raymond Reed (p.10)
 - Insurance: Not appropriate to have crime coverage for CVPC Board due to the fact that the quote excludes crime committed by board members and we CVPC has no employees with access to funds. Better use of time would be to review financial control procedures.
 - Discussion of coverage for a cyber attack or “others” (ex: 3rd part embezzlement, check scrubbing). A proposal was included for this. Ray will review that next month. Cyber theft has happened with other nature councils. We may have funding utilizing the grant if we pay the invoice in the next three weeks.
 - \$5,000 personal property limit is the total at Sherwood House. If we choose to insure any inventory, we will need to include additional addresses. No coverage on vehicles/tools at Willow Grove Barn. \$80,000 replacement cost for tools/vehicles in there. Theft a concern, but also what if the barn catches fire?
 - Ray Reed would like to recruit from CVPC or membership (with finance/accounting background) to join the Finance committee. This will help make recommendations to the board easier. Ray will email Mia and Pat guidelines for a future email blast or notice in the fall newsletter.
- Fundraising – Mia Walsh (p.11)
 - Report as submitted
 - Thank you to Baltimore Road Runners Club generous check (unrestricted donation \$1,665).
 - Membership Sub-Committee – Kim Shapiro (p.12)
- Building & Grounds – Rick Childs
 - Trails crew working on trees/limbs down.
 - We lost the beaver dam, wiped out in storm.
 - Annual servicing of equipment next week will put us over budget. Transfers from other accounts will cover that.
- Programs & Events – Kelly Emerson
 - Gilchrist, 6/1, Steps of Hope
 - No longer a CVPC event. Kelly Emerson was there to support Park Staff in opening up the tent and greeting early volunteers. Park staff reported no problems, that parking (Evans) went well and they left everything spotless. Everything went very well, and should be even smoother next year now that we have a pattern. Around 300-600 attendees enjoyed it.
 - NOWN Pop Up History Event, 6/28
 - Planning and volunteers well in hand, we could use some additional registrations so please sign up and invite your friends.
 - Link to planning document shared in Kelly Emerson's emailed report.
 - Saturday and Sunday, 7/19-20 CSC Shakespeare Beyond, 7:00pm
 - Site visit with CSC and Park Staff held, plan to proceed as last year.

- CSC will provide parking volunteers. We will still need help. Kelly will send requests for volunteers.
 - CSC will not be able to provide lighting support. We will begin half an hour earlier.
 - Kelly has reached out to an ASL interpreter and is waiting on an estimate. Have spoken with park staff about requesting support/staffing from the County.
 - New banner needed. Out of budget. Cost should be under \$150 and will be re-usable because it will not be specific to a play.
 - Saturday, 10/11-Fall Harvest Festival (FHF)
 - One day event partnered with Towson Arts Council (TAC), rain or Shine, Willow Grove, 10:00am-4:00pm.
 - Planning meetings with TAC, committee and Park Staff have been productive
 - Main goals this year to improve parking and signage. Large signs from Marshy Point are owned by the County. Ben Porter was going to check to see if we could borrow them. Kirk should follow up.
 - There has been some word that a new three party agreement will be drafted. Kelly has been assured by Cortney Weinstock that:
 - the spirit of the document will be upheld
 - and that in the essence of the agreement with TAC will not be impacted
 - we can confidently proceed with planning
 - Food Vendors - Mexican on the Run and Rita's secured. Working on additional 1-2 food vendor(s).
 - Next meeting 6/25 at 1:00pm on zoom
 - Link to planning document shared in Kelly Emerson's emailed report.
 - Communications – Mia Walsh (pp.13-14)
 - Newsletters being delivered. Thank you to Carl and Stacey for their contributions.
 - Note image for Cromwell Valley Park Apple Orchard sign in report (p.13)
 - Volunteers – Pat Novak (p.15)
 - Pop-Up Museum on 6/28. Attendance encouraged. Received two new volunteers via email.
 - Pay Novak keeps volunteer records in groups. Will send anything finance/accountant related to Ray.
- NEW BUSINESS
 - Sharon Opdyke from the Cromwell Coventry neighborhood and attended the meeting virtually. She noted comments in the zoom chat as follows: (1) Please include her in any meetings the County has planned on the work at the park. (2) She will walk the BGE service road that overlooks Sherwood House entrance if anyone is interested in seeing the park from that vantage point. (3) There are 6 drainage sites from CC area and she believes 3 go directly to Sherwood. (4) She requested that CVPC ask the County about Army Corp. of Engineers involvement with this project and also ask for clarification re the SWM pond they mentioned
 - QR Code Signage for Hike Through History: Signage for Honor Garden, Trail Guide, Hike Through History's last sign has been received.
 - Corey Johns - Updates from Board

- Updates on contacts. New process using templates to help efficacy of contracts for partnered events. These have not yet been received.
 - Alternative option to rent pavilions with smaller increments of time. The permits team are looking at a hybrid model. Staffing to be considered. A 7 hour block is restrictive and expensive.
 - Leadership understands that communication needs to improve. Feedback received that the necessity to use CivicRec vs. dropping into events feels restrictive.
 - New process with the County Board. Issues to be brought to Corey Johns via Mia Walsh (he has a new email address). He will submit issues, Deputy Director Cortney Weinstock will respond within two days and follow up with a long-term plan. New tracking system is going to be used. Commitment to more transparency with departmental leadership.
- OLD BUSINESS
 - Sherwood-Eck Trail Guide & Hike Through History - *Mia Walsh / Deb Lee - See Communications*
 - County Grant Request re: footbridges over streams – MPW - NO UPDATE
 - Sewer Project -Gunpowder Interceptor Relief Sewer Line, Soil Borings, and Test Holes - MPW
 - Sent letter to Property Management and DPW regarding drainage pipe along Blue Trail
 - The meeting adjourned at 7:50pm.
 - Respectfully submitted by Rachel Allshouse, Secretary 6/09/25
 - The next meeting will be held on Monday, July 14th at 6:00pm at Sherwood House and virtually.