



Cromwell Valley Park Council, Inc. (CVPC)

Meeting Minutes

November 10, 2025, 6:00 PM

1. COUNCIL MEETING ATTENDANCE

- The meeting was held in person. No Google Meet participants.
- Board In attendance: Mia Walsh, Laura Jenifer, Carl Gold, Bill Curtis, Rachel Allshouse, Rick Childs, Keith Kridenoff, Deb Lee, Kim Shapiro, Kelly Emerson, Kate Joyce
- Park Staff: Kirk Dreier
- Guests in attendance: Amy Walls, Jeff Reagan (Green Trust Alliance)
- Absent: Joe Rector, Ray Reed

2. WELCOME FROM PRESIDENT, MIA WALSH

- Call to Order at 6:01pm, the agenda was adopted, and a quorum was established
- Vanessa Blackner will take on Nominating Committee Chair; Pat Novak, outgoing volunteer coordinator.
- Motion to change December 8th Board Dinner meeting to Wednesday, December 3rd.
 - Location: Mia Walsh's house
 - The motion passed unanimously.
 - Reminder to change date in Google Calendar and on future Agendas
- Present Shining Star at December Holiday Meeting
- Did anyone send in Advocacy emails / letters for Capital spending?
 - Thank you to Kelly Emerson
- Shout out to Bill Curtis on fantastic coyote critter cam videos.
 - 10th year of hosting the Critter Cam

3. SPECIAL GUESTS, Amy Walls and Jeff Reagan, Green Trust Alliance (GTA)

- Community Ecologist at www.greentrustalliance.org
- Green Trust Alliance, non-profit organization, an urban restoration-focused accredited land trust.
- What we do?
 - Formed 25 years ago.
 - Habitat restoration practices in mid-atlantic region.
 - Stewardship and monitoring of invasive plants, native plants
 - Expanding access to urban and suburban parks.
 - Empower local partners with expertise and people power
- Mission - preserves wildlife habitats, builds coastal resiliency, and strengthens public access to green spaces in the Mid-Atlantic through innovative partnerships and large-scale ecosystem restoration.
- Conservation Focus Areas
 - Easements from Massachusetts to North Carolina
 - In Baltimore and surrounding areas, Lower Gunpowder Falls, Back River, Lower and Middle branch of Patapsco.
- Accomplishments since 2000
 - Nearly 2,000 acres permanently preserved, majority actively stewarded by GTA
 - Nearly 3,000 acres of restored/enhanced habitat
 - Over 1 million trees planted
 - Nearly 100,000 pounds of trash removed
 - Land Trust Alliance (LTA) Member, 2018
 - Land Trust Accreditation Commission (LTAC) Accreditation, 2023

- Baltimore City's largest non-profit led environmental project, 2024 Middle Branch Resilience Initiative (MBRI)
 - Secured native plant grow spaces in Baltimore city and county, with nursery to support projects, 2025
- Guiding Tenets
 - Identify, Recognize, Apply, Prioritize
- We Can Help With
 - Grant proposals
 - Technical Expertise
 - Detailed niche experience -invasive plants, permitting processes, etc.
 - Navigating conservation practices
- Example Projects
 - Stream restorations
 - Native tree plantings
 - Community Rain Gardens
 - Trash removal
 - Living shorelines
 - Example: Welzenbach Farm (2017-2020). Restore ½ mile stream and 2 acres of reforestation and maintenance
- Partnerships
 - Lucky and Blessed Fishing (LABF) -non-profit providing therapeutic experiences to underserved and differently abled communities in Maryland
 - Recruit volunteers
 - Roland Park and Baltimore City Farms
 - Help boy scout troops improve neglected public fields and city gardens
 - GTA used for site prep
 - Most recently, j. Hops removal to clear entrance gate
- Community Engagement
 - Educational opportunities
 - Help with planing and clean-ups
 - Get others involved with stewardship of healthy ecosystems
- How can GTA help CVP?
 - Scale up efforts
 - Stewardship
 - Continue to provide high ecological value
 - Lead stakeholders in varied projects and project planning
 - Small projects that require expertise with design/permits and manual labor
 - Open to suggestions
- Questions
 - Weed Warriors raising questions about invasives along Cromwell Bridge Road.
 - Is it on park property? How do roadways play a part?
 - How does GTA work with Baltimore County Recreation & Parks (BCRP)?
 - Closely with county, city, and Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability
 - Citizen Generation Application forms can take a while to get through
 - Kudzu removal
 - Currently mowing, goats. These are not long term solutions.
 - Kudzu may require chemical treatment. GTA is pesticide certified.
 - Suggest planting to try to take over. What competes with it? Aggressive natives like Virginia Creeper.
 - Two community gardens upkeep.
 - Scout project
 - Two main projects happening in CVP
 - Sewer Line replacement-Does GTA look at planting proposals?
 - Paving - proposal to start in Spring 2026. Eyes look at replanting proposals.
 - No current master plan of the park.

- Stream restoration projects.
- How are you funded?
 - Grants and donated time. Mini-grants from Chesapeake Bay Trust, corporate donations
- Does GTA help fundraise?
 - Beechtree effort. We have a start date and request in with BCRP.
 - Possible grant opportunities.
- Does CVP have a plan for the porcelain berry
 - Ranger Kirk cannot apply pesticides.
 - CVP could use a larger scale plan or site evaluation for invasives.
 - GTA typically has a two-year follow-up maintenance plan, including replanting.
 - Example in Calvert County addressing small areas at a time.
- Ask to strategize top priorities. Start with mini-grants and the ability to get larger. CVPC funds can help. Copy Amy, Jeff and Kirk with follow up communication and documentation. (amy@greentrustalliance.org, jeff@greentrustalliance.org, kirk@greentrustalliance.org)
- Discussion of Weed Warriors and Watershed Stewardship Academy efforts in other counties.
- GTA likes to partner with different non-profits. Mia will share Kate Joyce/TALMAR's contact information, as well as the current citizen requests which CVPC has already submitted to the County.

4. GOVERNANCE

- Approval of October 2025 Minutes – Rachel Allshouse
 - Wait until next month. Approve October and November on 12/3. Send out again with November minutes.
- Treasurer’s Report–Deb Lee (p.3)
 - Report as submitted.
 - Balance Sheet and P&L available in Agenda Packet (pp. 4-7)
 - What could be changed next year?
 - Credit card fees are higher than anticipated. We lose money in fees every time money comes in electronically.
 - Any new updates or concerns about budget? No
 - Remember to submit expenses by **12/20/25** or let the treasurer know if you don’t intend to spend the money.
 - Checks written vs. checks cashed discussed - cash basis, leaves the books when written
 - Fall Harvest Festival (FHF)
 - Reported numbers are everything that has been received by the Treasurer.
 - If anything further is needed to close out FHF?
 - Expenses from CVPC have been submitted to the treasurer.
 - Check from Towson Arts Council (TAC) is still needed.
 - We are supposed to split revenue with BCRP. Agreement states deadline-within 45 days of event (p. 4, article 5).
 - Carl Gold to review
 - We have not seen BCRP’s figures yet. Forward to Deb Lee. Kelly, Deb, Kirk to sit down and review.
 - Kelly would like to finalize an agreement for 2026 as early as possible.
 - October 10 date on calendar for next year. Kirk will check to make sure this is official.
 - Agreement states additional insurance is able to be included as expenditure. This needs to be noted in our submission forms.
 - Hike Through History -Thank you to Rachel and Trails Crew. Metal sheets installed to protect posts.
 - Concern about mowers causing damage. Send photos and a list of things that are damaged to Kirk. Concerns about mowers should start with Jessie Jeanetta.
 - Deb Lee will schedule a meeting with the Finance Committee for Financial Controls Review.
- Nominating Committee
 - Carl Gold and Bill Curtis Director expiration in 2026
 - Bill is considering running for Vice President. This would open a Director position.
 - Kim Shapiro would like to step in as Secretary.

- Communications Committee Chairperson - someone who is not an executive director. Vanessa will reach out to others.
- Volunteer Committee Chairperson - vacant, Deb Lee to speak to a potential volunteer.
- Cultural Heritage Committee - is not requesting a co-chair. History and Cultural Heritage is merged as one committee. Someone within this committee is focusing on the Cultural side. This was decided at a committee meeting. Laury Miller has stepped in to assist.
- Slate of nominees needs to be sent out 30 days in advance (Vanessa and Rachel to send). Can put it in the Newsletter if done in time. Can blast it to membership if it does not meet this date.
- Elections at March 2026 meeting.
- Background Checks (p.8)
 - Rachel Allshouse reported everyone up to date until December 2025. Will notify upcoming expirations individually by email prior to next meeting.
- Mission and Vision Work - Kim Shapiro and Mia Walsh
 - Bill Curtis is interested in helping with this work, along with Kim, Deb and Mia.
 - The presentation was a demonstration of what we can do to get input from others.
 - Who else can we get input from? Diversify input? Trails crew? Staff—maybe more interview style than asking to do a survey? Paper vs. electronic surveys?
 - With holidays coming, how can we maximize our reach?
 - Can we do this by Holiday event in December? QR code to a survey monkey? Have people respond to a large poster board with priorities listed at our October meeting. People can place dots where they agree and include a spot for additional answers with post-it notes?

5. MANAGEMENT

- Park Staff Report – Ranger Kirk Dreier
 - October and November are always busy, but with all the special events staff are kept at a fast pace to keep up. We reported on the October FHF which was a success, but we also are gearing up for the next upcoming specials; ie Fort Garrison Frontier program.
 - This program will be the Sunday before Thanksgiving on 11/23 from 12–3PM.
 - Free to the public, demonstrators dressed in period clothing doing crafts and activities that were done in the late 17th and early 18th century.
 - Activities include interpretation as to what was in MD then, bullet (musket ball drawing) making, coffee making, setting up shelters, fire making, tools and accouterments of the Rangers that inhabited the fort, cooking demos, food demos, etc.
 - Last year it was well received by the community.
 - The program is on Civic Rec, but anyone can come without registering.
 - Ranger Kirk demonstrated stone tool manufacture at Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum in Southern MD on 11/2. It was well received and a beautiful day there on the Patuxent River.
 - 11/5 meeting at Willow Grove with Property Management, the Chief, the Regional Coordinator, and the contractors for the Capital Project coming up.
 - Expected to begin January 2026. The Willow Grove entrance (rain garden, parking lot expansion, entrance expansion) will probably be blocked off during construction and we probably will have to route traffic differently using the inter park roadway. We are awaiting further instructions.
 - Question about signage.
 - All cedars are going to come down. What is the replanting plan? Kirk will look into this.
 - How will park visitors access the Nature Center? TBD.
 - Schools have been picking up, and we've had Geology, Habitat Explorers, Fall Harvest, and this Thursday will be the Hike through History Program.
 - On Saturday, 11/15 Ranger Kirk will be at the Primitive Tech Lab teaching wooden spoon carving from 12-3PM.
 - The master naturalist program ends on 11/15 or 11/22. They will be using the Sherwood house to meet in the morning for coffee. Then they will be doing road trips for birding with Marshy Point's Ranger Rachel Harbert.
 - CVP has been the recipient of many master naturalist projects.
 - The Apple Exhibit will be delivered on 11/19. Work with Mike Mauro to install it by the orchard. Ranger Kirk is excited to have it in place, especially for next Spring. It will make a fine addition.

- Holiday Open House (HOH)-12/6 10am-1pm
 - The big two pole tent will be set up outside the Great Rooms door for crafts and the chili pot.
 - Inside will be the usual music (Andy Anders and myself will play Christmas carols) the kitchen will be decked out for making cookies, the Great Room will be set for swags and wreaths while the library will be set for Mr. and Mrs. Klaus.
 - CVPC is welcome to have a table set up in the foyer and sell memberships etc.
 - See discussion about Mission and Vision feedback at this event.
 - Does History and Culture want to have a table set up as well?
 - CVPC approved to pay for chili ingredients for Ranger Kirk.
- We will be cutting greens the last week of November to stockpile for the HOH and other weekend programs.
- The surveillance systems have been installed and running at Willow Grove and Sherwood. We hope they will be a deterrent now.
 - It may be difficult to see license plate numbers unless very close.
- Concern about sound at FHF. Quote for speakers; in the past, \$2,440. Is this something CVPC can help support? Can we put a motion together for December?
- Would CVPC be interested in sponsoring the Chili for the Holiday Open House.
 - Yes, as long as submitted by the 12/20 deadline.
- Leaseholders Report - Talmar - Kate Joyce
 - Christmas trees arriving Sunday before Thanksgiving (11/23)
 - Help unloading welcome.
 - Sale Fri, Sat, Sunday after thanksgiving and following week.
 - Lease has been signed by Kate Joyce only at this point.
 - Ideally, able to demolish the trailer in January.
 - Kate is having a fun-raiser with Inverness brewing and will share the date with all.
- Standing Committee Reports
 - Governance – Carl Gold (p.9)
 - Volunteer Clothing
 - Trails Crew wants a patch only.
 - Vest or 3/4 zip estimates in progress. It would be nice to distribute around holidays.
 - Carl and Kelly to discuss more. Full zip for accessibility.
 - No update on the pumping station.
 - See nominating committee updates in Governance above.
 - Finance - Ray Reed
 - No report
 - Fundraising - Mia Walsh (p.10)
 - Report as submitted
 - Giving Tuesday - no approval to move forward with Beech Tree fundraising-have it prepared in case we get an answer by December. Focus on Fences if needed.
 - Membership Sub-Committee - Kim Shapiro (p.11)
 - Report as submitted.
 - Request for 2024-2025 lapsed memberships being sent out via snail mail. Over 250. If renewed now, membership will be valid through March 2027. Kim would like feedback if memberships are coming back from the first batch to determine if it is worth it.
 - Building & Grounds(p.11)
 - Let Rick know of any other projects before the fiscal year ends.
 - Rick will fill out Citizen Generated Projects Request Form with documentation for fencing. Deb Lee will help with paperwork. Solicit volunteers for the project; need volunteer coordinator and approval from BCRP.
 - Deb Lee shared progress with the fence painting. Repairs and painting, wonderful job. Baltimore County Eagle Scouts volunteering.
 - Night Out With Nature - Laura Jenifer (p.12)
 - Report as submitted.
 - Four people committed to speaking for 6 open months. Need two more speakers.
 - Mia to share contact info for other leads. Bears? Birds?
 - Communications – Mia Walsh (p.13)
 - Apple Orchard Signage addressed in Park Staff Report. To be installed 11/19.
 - 4Q Newsletter

- Volunteers (p.15)
 - Maryland Non-Profit Volunteer Event (Bill and Deb)
 - How to recruit a volunteer, messaging, onboarding.
 - Pull together notes and send them out. Opportunities to improve.
 - October hours do not reflect Kelly Emerson's volunteer work for FHF.
 - Strategic Planning Event (Kim and Deb)
 - Time well spent.
 - No materials. Kim Shapiro requested slides and will forward.
- Special Committee: History and Cultural Heritage - Keith Kridenoff
 - Table at the Holiday Open House
- Events
 - See FHF discussion in Treasurer's report.
- OLD BUSINESS
 - Consideration about follow up re CVPC not wanting picnic pavilion in the WG side of park
 - Is it too late with the project about to start?
 - If the community wants it, why have they bypassed CVPC?
 - Proposed score has been updated on BCRP's website:
<https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/files/departments/recreation-and-parks/documents/cromwell-valley-park-enhancement-project-250627.pdf>
- The meeting adjourned at 8:24pm.
- Respectfully submitted by Rachel Allshouse, Secretary 11/19/25
- The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 3, 2025 at 6:00pm (closed and held off-site at Mia Walsh's house).