



Cromwell Valley Park Council, Inc. (CVPC)

Meeting Minutes

January 12, 2026, 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, Kate Joyce, Ray Reed
- Park Staff: Kirk Dreier
- Membership/Guests in attendance: Lisa Zanti, Mike Young, Vanessa Blackner, Mary Gregory
- Absent: Joe Rector, Kelly Emerson

2. WELCOME FROM PRESIDENT, MIA WALSH

- Call to Order at 6:03pm, the agenda was adopted, and a quorum was established
- A motion was made to formally adopt the 2026 CVPC meeting dates. The motion was passed unanimously.
- Beech Tree Leaf Disease Treatment Update
 - The President provided a brief recap of the disease and how it will impact trees at CVP, especially the 9 iconic trees that line the driveway.
 - After meeting with and communicating with BCRP leadership, and in consultation with BC Property Management, it was agreed that CVPC will pay a tree company to complete the work directly. The County Council has to recognize/accept our donation. It will be in their Council packet in the coming months and a letter of support has been provided by Councilman David Marks to the County Council.
 - Mia has consulted with a federally approved tree company to perform the work.
 - Funding is in the CVPC budget for 2026, which includes \$6K of donations from the public.
- The President presented a new motion for an out of budget expense of \$375 to create a Forest Stewardship Plan with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).
 - This has support from Senator Jennings.
 - Mia has been in contact with DNR for a consultation/plan. Identify what % of trees are beech, what other species of trees are in the forest, and its health.
 - Question: will this include the park grounds only or the forest too? Unsure at this time.
 - There may be a future cost of \$6/acre for tree planter maintenance if the Council / County moves forward with any treatment plans.
 - Several Board members have agreed to accompany the Department of Forestry during their survey, including Rick, Ray and Carl.
 - Has this ever been done before? Ranger Kirk thinks yes, before he started working at CVP.
 - Ranger Kirk says BCRP may not approve/review any plan if it's not pre-approved.
 - The President reviewed what a Forest Stewardship Plan involves, including, inventory of tree species, understory, wildlife assessment, forest management suggestions, and more.
 - Having a plan will help align CVPC with our mission and vision, including advocacy and communication about the health of CVP and the forest. Will help for future fundraising needs. Look longer term about stewardship of the land's needs.
 - A move was made to approve the motion. It will likely go into the Building & Grounds operating expense line item. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. GOVERNANCE

- A motion was passed to approve the December 2025 meeting minutes. The motion was passed unanimously.
- Treasurer's Report–Deb Lee (p.7-8)
 - Report as submitted.
 - Balance Sheet and P&L available in Agenda Packet (pp. 3-6)
 - The Treasurer requested that CVPC look over the numbers over the next two weeks and reach out if details in each category are incorrect or need a closer look.
 - The Treasurer reviewed highlights from the report:
 - December updates: many donations from Giving Tuesday, Year-end Campaigns and additional membership dues were received. Year-end Income included about \$15,500 in dues, over \$19,000 in donations, \$12,000 in restricted donations for Beech Tree, Fence Project, and Goats. Restricted fund lines need to be added for the Beech Tree Treatments and Fence Project.
 - Expense highlights: Refund check from insurance for \$650 was received.
 - The Treasurer presented a new Check/Reimbursement Request form (p.15)
 - The format was revised to hold space for receipt and easy to digitize.
 - It is .pdf editable.
 - In 2026, the committee chair is responsible for signing off (or President/Vice President, but preferably committee chair). Requires two signatures.
 - Suggestion to remove the names of people and add titles instead, for when position holders change.
 - Renewing Certificate of Deposit on 1/26. This will become part of the Finance Committee's quarterly review process.
 - A copy of the final recommendations for financial controls and review from the external accounting firm, C.E.A.Scholtes & Associates, was provided (p.9-14)
 - Weaknesses and considerations were highlighted in red.
 - CVPC was asked to review all considerations in contrast to the Policies and Procedures (both documents emailed to everyone at 8:37pm on 1/12) and think about ways to address each item.
 - What seems outdated and could be updated? How would you address the concern? Example: how mail is opened.
 - Best practices for financial controls.
 - We intended to have this paid in 2025, but it hasn't. A motion was made to move the unspent and previously approved budget for the financial control review expense of \$1,346.25 to 2026. The motion was approved unanimously.
 - Discussion about Goats: Because it was in our MOU, we are allowed to bring the goats back in 2026.
 - The contract has not been signed yet.
 - Discussion of location for goats. Same area as last year? Compare it to the submitted mowing plan. After we know what BCRP will mow, planning can occur for Lake Roland mowing and where goats can concentrate.
 - Kirk will discuss when Lake Roland can come back with Gabby.
 - Areas along the Blue Trail were suggested.
 - The philosophy of the goats is that the more they chew (or get mowed), the less energy the vines have and growth will slow.
- Nominating Committee
 - Vanessa Blackner presented a draft of the Nominating Committee Report for CVPC elections for terms beginning 4/1/26.
 - Template from last year's election used. Open positions listed in blue.
 - Bill Curtis slated for Vice President position, which opens a Director position.
 - Lisa Zanti, who may be interested in the open director position, shared intended areas of focus (diversity, equity, inclusion, LGBTQ+ community, social media and technology).

- Is Lisa interested in the communications committee chair (article 10 of bylaws on website has description of this role that was updated in 2024)?
- Kim Shapiro slated for the Secretary position.
- Ray Reed, already a Director, is resigning as Finance Chair.
 - Mike Young was proposed as a Finance Chair replacement. Ray is able to officially resign and the President can appoint it to a new person mid-term.
- Change term language of Committee Chairs from Annually Elected to Annually Appointed
- Volunteer Chair and Communications Chair are open as an outstanding need.
- Keith Kridenoff has a contact interested in co-chairing the History and Cultural Heritage Committee, (trouble getting in touch–will try again).
- Vanessa will make the edits discussed and send Mia a copy. Slate has to be sent to membership at least 30 days prior to Annual Meeting on 3/9/26 - so slate sent by 2/9/26). Governance needs help to communicate with membership to ask for an open committee chairperson.
- Director and Executive Committee voting will occur at the March meeting, while Standing Committee Chairs will be voted upon at the April 13th meeting.
- Why is the February meeting closed? We don't have to have it closed this year - Mia will update on website.
- Thank you to Vanessa for putting together the ballot.
- Mia sent Mike and Lisa bylaws to review roles and responsibilities, and background check procedures.
- Background Checks (p.16)
 - Rachel Allshouse and Kelly Emerson expiring in the next 60 days.

4. MANAGEMENT

- Park Staff Report – Ranger Kirk Dreier
 - The Holidays at the Park are always busy, and this year was similar.
 - Thanks to volunteers who decorated the Sherwood house. Everything being put back on 1/16.
 - About 168 people attended the Holiday Open House event.
 - Thanks to Kelly Emerson and family for helping with parking.
 - Thanks to the grounds crew for helping put up the tent and putting it away.
 - CVP summer camps all filled within about 20 minutes online on 1/5/26. Waitlists are also full.
 - The gate to the Children's Garden collapsed or nearly so. Ranger Breena and Ranger Kirk shored it up temporarily. Cap'n Jim Gephardt, Tim Mering and Bob Eder have agreed to rebuild it. Materials purchased materials and the 3 of them will decide on date(s) to rebuild it. Hoping the weather will hold. Likely to take an entire day or two to finish. "There is no easy job". Luckily Cap 'n Jim is a good carpenter amongst his many skills.
 - Unfortunately, there have been a couple of recent break-ins at CVP. One was a week ago in the more distant parking lot on the Willow Grove side (shattered window) and another in the lower parking lot behind the chickens (opened the door as the doors were unlocked and the wallet left out).
 - Ranger Kirk is working with Master Naturalist Amy Gold to complete her project for CVP. It will feature some of the projectile points found in the East and the animals they likely hunted. You will look at a stone point, then you can look down at the buttons with pictures of animals. Pressing the button will light up the stone point likely to have hunted the animal you picked. Example – If you see a woolly mammoth picture, a light show goes on at the Clovis or Folsom point. Hope to have this complete before Spring.
 - The staff will be having various equipment training sessions during the winter; trailering, chain saw class on 2/5, operating tractors etc. The Kubota had a glitchy hazard indicator light on and is at the shop, so we're down to the Polaris and the County Truck until it is repaired.
 - Ranger Kirk will be leading off with the Seasonal Naturalist Training again for this summer. Planning starts on 1/21 with the evaluations the Seasonals did for the trainers.
 - The Polliwog program with Ranger Anne, started on 1/6 and has a full house.

- Ranger Kirk will be working this Saturday, 1/17 at CVP teaching a class on glass knapping at the Primitive Technology laboratory, 1:00-3:00pm.
- Ranger Kirk has asked CVPC if they would like to sponsor the food for the Trail Guide Volunteer and Trails Crew Luncheon, between \$200-\$300. A motion was presented to support this. Motion passed, but not all in favor—why are we selecting some groups of volunteers for lunch and not others? (Bluebird Box, Children’s Gardens, Weed Warriors—should all non council related volunteers be invited to attend?).
 - Discussion about CVP volunteers and CVPC volunteers.
- Deb Lee brought up that trail blazes are faded. Ranger Kirk would like to reblaze in 2026. Deb Lee found a volunteer to help. Also hoping to get members from a Notre Dame Preparatory School’s Art Honor Society to help.
 - Discussion about trail signage. Lifespan of 3 years.
- Leaseholders Report - Talmar - Kate Joyce
 - Lease was signed, rent paid, check returned due to small detail noting the parcel number.
 - Offering a workshop to help others with storytelling, 12-15 participants at 2/6/26 in the afternoon. Invitation to CVPC board extended.
 - Current initiatives include adding to social groups, VA Farms enrollment.
 - Trespasser charged on TALMAR property only and not permitted to enter that portion of the park.
 - Someone dumped 3 chickens on TALMAR property.
- Standing Committee Reports
 - Governance – Carl Gold (p.16)
 - Report as submitted
 - Ongoing discussion about insuring items in the Sherwood House. Items were donated by the Historical Society of Baltimore County, but are not covered by our insurance. Carl Gold was verbally told if we sustained a loss, the Historical Society would not hold us responsible. Carl will draft a bailment agreement.
 - BCRP wants CVPC to sign a waiver for equipment storage that is not congruent with MOU for indemnity and liability. Question raised with the law office and we have not heard back yet.
 - CVPC Volunteer patches distributed. These will be distributed to all volunteers of CVPC.
 - CVPC Board Training Event - Saturday, 3/7 9:00am-1:00pm, off-site location at Pelican Management
 - Deb Lee presented information about this training. Maryland Non-Profits will facilitate training with CVPC Board and Committee Chairs as a follow up to their presentation with survey results. Trying to get survey feedback from CVP and BCRP staff to incorporate. Hold the date. Onboarding members are invited to attend.
 - Finance - Ray Reed (p.17)
 - Report as submitted.
 - Thank you to Deb Lee for work on financial control reviews.
 - The new insurance policy covers Sherwood House, Willow Grove Nature Center, Barnitorium, Gators at any distance from the park.
 - The Finance Committee supports renewing the 7-month CD.
 - Property asset tags will be added to CVPC property.
 - Fundraising - Mia Walsh (p.18)
 - Report as submitted
 - Year-End Donor Letters-anyone who donated \$50 or more will get a written receipt.
 - Migration to Bloomerang-criteria for membership data to be brought over (about 1,300 households). Any NOWN and Volunteers attendees brought over. Deep dive into data and cleaned it up (duplicates, fields not migrating properly, etc.).
 - Membership Sub-Committee - Kim Shapiro (p.18)
 - Report as submitted.
 - Building & Grounds - Rick Childs
 - A mowing plan was submitted to BCRP.

