



Cromwell Valley Park Council, Inc.
Minutes – July 13, 2026
July Board Meeting

CVPC Board members in attendance: Rick Childs, Bill Curtis, Kelly Emerson (remote), Kelly Goles (remote), Kate Joyce, Deb Lee, Ray Reed, Kim Shapiro, Mia Walsh (remote), Mike Young, Lisa Zanti

CVPC Members and Guests in attendance in person: Raul Oteiza (Lifetime member and hike leader),

Park Staff: Kirk Dreier

Absent Board members: Carl Gold & Laura Jenifer

1. WELCOME FROM PRESIDENT – *Mia Walsh*

- a. The President called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. The meeting was conducted in-person at Sherwood House. Mia Walsh, Kelly Goles and Kelly Emerson attended remotely via Google Meets. Special Committee Chair Keith Kridenoff was not in attendance. A quorum was established and agenda was approved.
- b. Request to cancel August meeting – The request made by Kirk Dreier was decided via email vote in June. Mia requested that we hold this vote in person, as we have a quorum. The motion to cancel was seconded and approved by a majority. There was one opposed, Ray Reed.
- c. Beech Tree Leaf Disease treatments are complete. Ray suggested that we record which trees were treated through which contract, as two companies provided the service, and we may see differences in effectiveness. Rick said that this data is in the records made by the companies who provided the service.

2. GOVERNANCE

a. Approval of May 2026 Minutes – *Kim Shapiro*

Kim asked if all had seen the last version with revisions suggested by Ray Reed. Ray moved for approval, Bill seconded, Deb abstained. The minutes were approved by a majority.

b. Treasurer's Report – *Deb Lee* (report included in Board Packet)

- 1) Deb reported on two CD's set to mature, one in mid-July and the second at the end of August... Her recommendation is to roll the first to mature to savings until the Federal Reserve makes rate decisions on 7/29. The Finance Committee will convene to decide reinvestment options based on the new CD interest rates looking for the highest potential yield. Sign-off on CD renewals are required from the Treasurer and President. The proposal was generally accepted.

2) Budget versus Actuals –

Revenue

- Dues and Donations are above budget expectations at this early stage in the fiscal year.
- A new category of revenue has been set up to track income from Council-run hikes - #402 (Internal Public Programs)
- Fall Harvest Festival now shows net \$0
- Deb explained the separate designation of donor-advised funds (131.1), as tax accounting is handled separately.

Expenses

- Final bill paid for external accountant for assistance with Quickbooks migration, annual cost for bookkeeping platform from QuickBooks to TechSoup is down sharply due to discount for non-profit organizations. Expenses against Finance line #230 are over budget.



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- A new category of expenses has been set up to track charges for development programs provided by outside organizations in support of Council-run programs - #270 (External Programs)
- A new category has been set up for expenses associated with Council-run hikes - #504 Hiking & Birding
- Deb encouraged line-item owners with unspent budgets to plan to use these funds within the budget year.
- Rick questioned the “Actuals” for expense line 218, and Deb said this reflects a refund.
- Line item 262 has a budgeted amount of \$4000, and Mia explained that this was likely associated with the “Honor Garden” project which cannot be done as planned.

3) Motion for Access Birding Outdoor Leadership Program expenditure (See motion in board packet.) - *Mia Walsh*

- Mia requested \$195 be approved for the cost not covered by the \$445 donation for two volunteer, who are committed to leading accessible bird walks at CVP, to attend an 8-week training class to enable bird guides to help people with physical and sensory disabilities to improve birding skills. Such a walk has been planned for low-vision participants. Birdwalks have brought in \$542 with more coming through future planned birdwalks.
- Ray asked if Mia was also planning to take the course, and she said that she was planning to pay for her own. Ray proposed that the Council include her cost in the total for the motion. This raised the expense to \$640.
- Mia presented the modified motion, Deb seconded and the motion was approved without opposition.
- A discussion ensued regarding the limited accessibility of the “Accessible Trail”. The issue has been the difficulty of wheelchair access and progress on the gravel path.
 - ◇ In response to a question from Deb, Mia said that this area is very good for birding.
 - ◇ Bill suggested that we should get feedback from users and include improvement plans in budgeting. Bill talked about options to improve the surface.
 - ◇ Any such improvements would require County approval. Kirk said that there is project form for that.
 - ◇ Deb suggested that we see if we can get the paving company currently working at the park to assess the condition of the path and provide an estimate on a paved surface.
 - ◇ Kate suggested looping in with Mike Henley (Therapeutic Recreation for Baltimore County R&P staff), as he may be helpful.

- c. Background Checks – *Kim Shapiro* - Review of the approved list shows that Kelly Emerson and Carl Gold are not on the list. Carl said in an email that he received confirmation through the County system. Kelly Emerson will need to find out why her attempts to renew have not led to her name showing up on the approved list.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND UPDATES – CVP Natural Resources Management Plan - Mia thanked those who provided feedback on the plan. She had submitted these to Gabby but has not received a response.

4. MANAGEMENT

- a. Park Staff Report – *Kirk Dreier* Report has been added to the Board Packet
- 1) Mid-summer environmental camp programs are underway..
 - 2) Pipes have been installed under the driveway by the Sherwood Barn..



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- 3) There is progress on a staff project to create a learning station focused on technology used in hunting through history.
- 4) Planning for the Fall Harvest Festival is ongoing, and an art element is included in the planning. Mia reminded Kirk that the Council is offering help in recruiting volunteers to support the event.
- 5) The Natural Resource manager, Gabby Acampora, and DEPSIS approved the White Turtlehead planting near the Minebank planned by EISAI volunteers.
- 6) An unplanned lack of power at the Sherwood Barn forced movement of a freezer to Willow Grove. Wayne Skinner identified the need as the freezer provides storage of food for the raptors maintained at the County nature centers.
- 7) Urban Zinc used excess gravel to improve the Red Trail. Swails will need to be recut to that erosion doesn't ruin the gravel work.
- 8) The Halten Garden Club has been working on the Sherwood patio garden.
- 9) Rick asked about the visit of a large charter bus that came into the park. Kirk did not know the identity of the group.

b. Leaseholder's Report – *Kate Joyce*

- 1) In June, the graduation ceremony was held for the VA group. Thirteen graduated through the basic course. Eight plan to return for the advanced level of training that begins on Wednesday the 15th.
- 2) Serviceberry Farm received permission to paint the inside of the Eck House in preparation for expanding the Christmas tree sale and holiday festivities.
- 3) Produce is being harvested at the farm.

c. Friends of Sherwood – *Mia Walsh* – no report

d. Standing Committees –

1) Governance - *Carl Gold (absent)*

- See Carl's submission in the Board Packet.

2) Finance (including Insurance) – *Mike Young & Ray Reed* (Reports are included in the Board Packet.)

- Mike reviewed the proposed plan for compiling the budget for 2027. Input from committees requested by 8/15, compilation by Finance Committee by 9/14, finalized by 10/16, submitted for approval 10/19
 - ◇ Deb provided data through 2025 and YTD 2026. Rick suggested that data from 2024 would also be helpful. Mia said that she has a spreadsheet of data that covers the last seven years.
 - ◇ Mike is looking for help to get the list of those who need to provide line-item-input, as those besides Standing Committee Chairs would need to be involved.
 - ◇ Regarding the schedule for budget completion, Deb said that the Bylaws allows for approval as late as December.
 - ◇ Mike will call a Finance Committee meeting for 8/15.
- D&O Insurance Renewal Effective 6/22/26 The D&O insurance premiums have been reduced by \$770 by changing the provider.
- The Crime policy renews on 7/16 at \$768, same rate as last year. Ray is pursuing potential cost reduction on that policy. Deb asked Ray to share a summary of the coverage with Board members.

3) Fundraising - *Mia Walsh* (Report is included in the Board Packet.)



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- Mia reported revenue from Birdwalks (\$542.51), Hikes (\$262.85), and NOwN (\$765.54). Deb said that the numbers she has are slightly different, and that credit card fee accounting may be responsible. Mia said that she will check into that.
- Additional fundraising revenue from appeals are included in the Fundraising Report.
- Mia is looking for input on potential fundraising campaigns, as the end of the year, like Giving Tuesday is a good opportunity. Potential options:
 - ◊ The aging Gator will eventually require replacement, and so could be an opportunity.
 - ◊ Fence-painting project? Deb said it is slated to begin 9/1.
 - ◊ Deb suggested “Trail for All” improvement. Mia said that this may be too uncertain, since we need County approval.
 - ◊ Kirk/Bill – Chimney swift tower? – Rick said that project did not come to fruition because of tower assembly logistics.
- Membership – Kim Shapiro (Report included in Board Packet) We now have 330 members, up from last month. Most of the new members have come in because of the birdwalks and hikes that the Council is leading. Most of these memberships are basic level.
 - ◊ Mia asked how we stand in membership numbers compared to last year. Kim had not included the number in this report, but estimated it is close to 20% lower than July, 2025. (Review of data since puts that number at 21.5% below July, 2025.)

4) Building and Grounds - *Rick Childs*

- Service of equipment – The old Gator required a new starter. Currently, it is working fine, but maintenance needs increase with age.
- The trail crew is looking to obtain more heavier-duty hedge trimmers. There is money in the budget to cover this.
- Rick talked about the need for the County Mowing plan. Areas need to be mowed to manage vines that can choke trees. Kirk will check with Gabby.
- Deb asked about the use of goats this year.
 - ◊ Rick is concerned about the areas accessibility considering the ongoing construction.
 - ◊ Kirk feels that there will be adequate access.
 - ◊ Mia suggested that fall timing may work
 - ◊ Rick/Kirk – important to put goats in the same areas that they have worked the prior year.
 - ◊ Mia/Kirk – Gabby could help with this.
 - ◊ Deb – what is the lead-time for the goats? Mia said that she will follow up.

5) Programs & Events - Council-hosted events

- Two Dam Hikes on 6/13 – Raul and Ray hike leaders
 - ◊ Ray reported 24 hikers participated. Net income \$90. (See report in Board Packet for Two Dam Hikes details.)
- Discussion about fee structure going forward (30’s & birdies, Women’s hikes and 2-dam hikes)
 - ◊ Fee structure has been loosely put together thus far:

One price for members of CVPC and a higher price for non-members

Should hikes be free for members? A favored approach is to have a low price for members just to reduce the likelihood of no-shows on hike day



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Lisa is also a hike leader and said that she was a proponent of free hikes, but she recognizes the benefit of the small fee to keep hikers committed. Raul said that the Two Dam Hikes had a show of 75% of those who originally signed up.

Ray suggested that we offer the hike for free if the person takes membership. Mia said that Bloomerang can handle that situation.

Kate suggested considering a hardship fund for those who may want to participate but may not feel they can spend the funds.

Bill suggested that \$5 members / \$10 non-members

- ◇ There was some discussion about liability as well.

Paying the fee assures “signing the waiver”

Raul has asked Carl to review the liability statement. It stands now that the waiver allows us, in the case of a health emergency, to do no more than call 911.

- ◇ Additional discussion points included our actions in the event of cancellations or postponement – Mia suggested we work out this messaging offline/

- Ideas for hikes? (Raul)

- ◇ Proposed a junkyard hike, old cars, etc.; need to clear some areas this time of year because of overgrowth
- ◇ Two different areas for history hikes
- ◇ Lisa suggested Intro to Backpacking – ideas:

2-sessions – instructions on packing, followed by hike another day (Raul/Lisa)

1-session – pack, then hike immediately (Kelly G)

In Newsletter – article on tips for backpacking (Kelly G)

NOWN dedicated to backpacking, perhaps expert from REI (Deb)

Set dates and Mia can promote. (Mia)

6) Communications – *Mia* (Report in Board packet)

- Mia needs help managing this, as she is overbooked. Mia said that Vanessa has been in communication with a possible future Communications Chair.
- The Newsletter needs more support – management of content. Dave serves as designer, but help is needed with relevance to the Park. Lisa has volunteered to do this. She is already working to feature park visitors.

7) Volunteers – *Kelly Goles*

- Need to support getting volunteers for the fence-painting project. Recruiting can be accomplished in Bloomerang..

5. OLD BUSINESS - none

6. NEW BUSINESS - none

Mia asked for a motion for adjournment, so moved, approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 p.m.



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Respectfully submitted by Kim Shapiro (Secretary) 7/16/26

The next meeting will be held on Monday, September 14th at 6:00 pm at Sherwood House and virtually. This will be a General Meeting.