



**Cromwell Valley Park Council, Inc.
Minutes – June 14, 2021**

CVPC Meeting via Zoom

Board members in attendance: John Canoles, Rick Childs, Bill Curtis, Kelly Emerson, Kate Joyce, Kristin McFaul, Sya Kedzior, Joe Rector, Kim Shapiro, Mia Walsh and Abe Yoffe.

Park Staff: Kirk Dreier Absent: Pat Novak

1. WELCOME FROM PRESIDENT – ABE YOFFE

- a. Abe called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. The meeting was conducted online using the Zoom meeting app, due to safety considerations during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Abe began by adopting the agenda and quorum was established.
- b. Abe thanked Barry Smith for installing the posts for the gazebo signage and to Kim Shapiro for bringing various tasks to completion to finish up projects which have been ongoing.
- c. Bryan Sheppard from Property Management sent his mowing update and is working on the enhancements for the park, which are in the concept design stage. As Recreation and Parks and Property Management develop more information and background, they will be sure to engage with the community for input.

2. GOVERNANCE

- a. Minutes – Mia Walsh Approval of May 2021 Minutes: website. <https://cromwellvalleypark.org/about-cvpc/park-council/> Jim Kelly contacted the President regarding a piece of the May minutes noting a discrepancy for the fund balance for the Lime Kilns, specifically a check payment which stated was not accounted for in 2020, but was actually posted into a different line item. The President, Treasurer and Finance Chair have a meeting scheduled for Thursday, June 17th for a reconciliation with Jim Kelly and any adjustments will be reflected in future financial statements presented at the August Board meeting.
- b. Finance – Kristin McFaul, Treasurer Kristin reviewed the documents which were distributed prior to the meeting. Some highlights include:
 - 1) We are currently at 90% of dues budget, while donations are at 224% of budget. Note a new donation of \$1,000, which was deposited 6/14/21 for a park bench.
 - 2) There are \$15,000 of expenses noted for the Summer Camp (\$7,500 for the staffing with the remainder to be used for T-shirts, CampBrain annual fee). Rick Childs said we should add \$22,500 for income under the budget for Summer Camp to ensure that the bottom line on the budget is reflective of moving forward with Summer Camp this year.
 - 3) A discussion ensued about restricted donations skewing the actual vs. budget report. Some donations are project-based, rather than restricted per se, and shall be entitled facilities enhancements on a donation line. Examples of this are benches and approved enhancements. Kristin will be adding a new line item to separate project-specific or targeted donations and we will look at the new format at August's meeting.

2. MANAGEMENT

- a. Park Staff Report – Kirk Dreier
 - 1) Kirk noted that the Baltimore County F21 budget was approved without any cuts in funding for the Department of Recreation and Parks, with \$75,700,000 allocated to the department. Many of the open positions for nature centers will move to merit positions, but the staff will have to reapply for their positions under the merit status.
 - 2) Kirk thanked Debbie Trout for filling in for the open position when Susan retired. He is still waiting for Human Resources to open the interviewing to fill this position.
 - 3) Rain damage occurred throughout the park this past week, specifically relating to the tributaries coming from



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Cromwell Bridge Road. BC Property Management was on site 6/14/21 to review all the damage, especially with the stream crossings, the asphalt and the pipes with the run-off water. EcoTone did work on the swales next to the Sherwood Bridge as part of routine maintenance of Property Management, which included the installation of large rocks. These were dislodged during the rain and Kirk needs to contact Property Management to have them address this issue as well. Finally, Rick Childs noted there is a lot of erosion from the temporary stones of the parking lot and loss of hiking trails near the bubbling brook due to the storm damage.

- 4) The apple tree near the Sherwood courtyard was also partially uprooted by the heavy rains. Kirk and Rick spoke about pulling the tree back up and securing it with roping in order to save the tree.
 - 5) “Chef” Ranger Edwin was in charge of the Cicada Crunch program which Councilman David Marks attended with his daughter. It was a great success.
 - 6) Kirk will be assisting Ranger Breena at the Benjamin Banneker Museum for the Juneteenth celebration. This will include music, storytelling, dance troops, food and more.
- b. Leaseholder’s Report – Talmar, Kate Joyce
- 1) Talmar also sustained damage from the heavy rains, including a flooded breezeway, tool shed and trailer. Kate would like to be a part of any discussions with Property Management about the flooding.
 - 2) Talmar submitted a PPI document for a picnic to be held at the end of the summer (see Programs e. 2. Below)
- c. Friends of Sherwood – Mia Walsh – No Report
- d. Buildings and Grounds – Rick Childs
- Burdyke Gazebo Project- There are few remaining items with the flooring (loose boards) and the contractor will come out and to repair. Abe is looking into a picnic table and simple metal furniture for the inside of the gazebo. Joe Rector will have a few of his workers look at that to see if any additional angles can be added to the top of the gazebo. Joe mentioned that the grill location should be relocated because it is too close to the trees. As a reminder, Joe stated that the staining of the wood will be completed in 3-5 months (which is standard) and is included as part of the contractor’s bid.
 - Bench Location Map - A meeting was held to discuss additional bench locations and Abe showed the map via Zoom. Benches will be placed on either side of the entrance area of the gazebo. Rick stated that we can install newly donated benches to replace some of the older ones that could be used in other places (like forests and trails). Wayne and Rick will identify ones that can be moved into other areas and will provide Abe those locations for an updated map. Bill Curtis mentioned that the area by McFaul’s and the Gunpowder River could be another spot for a bench. If we run out of spaces for benches, Kirk stated that perhaps funds could be used for an exhibit about the Gunpowder River or for additional taxidermy animals to be added to the Nature Center.
 - The riding mower has an issue with the cutting blade and will have to be repaired.
- e. Programs – Kelly Emerson
- The Baltimore Road Runner event has been approved and they need to submit their insurance and their waivers. Bart Rein would like to meet with Kirk about parking and Debbie is helping coordinate that effort.
 - Talmar submitted a PPI for a picnic on September 25th. Parking spots will be sold in advance for those arriving by car and will rotate in 2-hour blocks. They will need a permit for beer and wine. Discussion ensued that people may not be blocked from pulling in as it is a public space. A motion was made and voted



**Cromwell Valley Park Council, Inc.
Minutes – June 14, 2021**

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upon. Two members abstained and the remaining approved. The motion was passed.

- Baltimore County Directive A14 states that commercial activities can not be held in the park for commercial benefits. We are declining requests for additional yoga organizations and others which we have been receiving throughout the last few months.
- Marlene Riley, Towson University, would like to hold events through the County through Baltimore County Department of Aging at Cromwell Valley Park. She is asking Kirk to schedule a fall date for her so his staff can train the volunteers on how to hold additional events on her own.

f. Membership – Kim Shapiro

- Kim has the total memberships at 376 as of 6/14/21, which was up from 350 last month. New high level donors were listed in her Membership Board Report, which was distributed with the final agenda.
- May 7th – June 12th - 47 donations or membership renewals were entered into CampBrain fundraising system, with a total value of \$1,395.00 and included 38 unique donors.

g. Communications – Mia Walsh

- The Communications Committee met on 5/26/21 to discuss the printed calendar, newsletter and other communications methods:
 - ◇ We will be combining the newsletter / calendar into one 11 x 17 sheet, double sided. Page 1: Message from President / Kirk (each twice a year) Page 2: Articles from John, Breena, Laura etc Page 3: Condensed calendar material with links to full descriptions on-line and Page 4: Sign up / opt in message for digital / QR code / Read More Here and raising money.
 - ◇ Front banner signage: Topics to be featured – Hiking Trails “Lose Yourself at CVP”, Birds / Wildlife; Lime Kilns (new audio tour!), Nature Center pictures
 - ◇ Kim and John are researching costs and benefits of moving to an email marketing platform for improved capabilities to create attractive emails to the community and capacity to design newsletters for email distribution.
 - ◇ Top Social Media posts from May 7th – June 12th: Councilman Marks eating cicadas, frog eating cicada and the coyote pair video.
- Annual Report: The annual report was mailed to all high level donors and VIP supporters. The annual report may be found on the website under Park Council or using this link:
<https://cromwellvalleypark.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/CVP-2020-Annual-Report-11-x-17-FINAL.pdf>
- Mia added a new Director’s Blog section to the website for all of John Canoles’ interesting articles he writes for the biweekly blasts. New posts will be shared Monday mornings on social media to start the week and may also be included as a “re-run” on the biweekly blasts.

h. Volunteers – Kim Shapiro for Michelle and Pat

- Kim will continue doing the volunteers report until Pat Novak is recovered from her recent health issues. 107 hours were submitted by the Board for May 2021.



**Cromwell Valley Park Council, Inc.
Minutes – June 14, 2021**

CVPC Meeting via Zoom

5. NEW BUSINESS –

- 1) An event in place of the Fall Harvest Festival - Kim Shapiro
 - A full motion was submitted regarding an event in lieu of the Fall Harvest Festival, which includes moving the date to Saturday, September 18th. The new event would focus on fall hawk migration, guided hikes, bounty of the meadow. The event would be called the “Migration Celebration”. Kirk suggested that Phoenix Wildlife center perhaps could bring their American Kestrel or their Black Vulture, or Kathy Wood who brings raptors. Please see entire motion at bottom.
 - A motion was made by Kim Shapiro and seconded by Bill Curtis and approved unanimously.
 - Kelly and Kim will take care of notifying our vendors and past participants.
- 2) Chimney Swifts - John Canoles John shared an article about chimney swift roosting towers <https://marylandbirds.org/chimney-swifts> as part of a conservation program because there aren't suitable nesting habitats anymore. John discussed the installation of a tower and kiosks with educational signs as a possible installation at Cromwell Valley Park. A favorable discussion ensued and John said that he would reach out to them to find out more information of how we can get one or two installed at Cromwell Valley Park.

6. OLD BUSINESS -

- a. Mailbox at Sherwood – Abe will order a new one as a replacement.
- b. Recognition of Susan Dorsey - John Canoles purchased a tree and we will recognize Susan in the fall. The Council extended a scholarship to her granddaughter for Summer Camp as a thanks of her many years of service to CVP.
- c. Relief Sewer Line Project – Abe shared the notes from the meeting, which was held on-site with the Department of Public Works. The minutes from the meeting were also distributed to all Board members prior.
- d. Status of Capital Improvements at CVP – Baltimore County acknowledged they are working on this, and the Council requested follow up information from Kirk. Abe will provide a reminder to Kirk on this so we may have an update at the August meeting.
- e. Citizen Generated Form for Bridges – Kirk followed up with Bob Smith and Bob does not want outside contractors to work on this. Abe will work to see if he can get a meeting with Bob Smith to see how we can work collaboratively on this project. The need is great.

Commented [1]: We talked about this at the May meeting, not during the June meeting

Abe asked for a motion to adjourn, which was provided and seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:11 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 9th at 7:00 p.m. – This is an Executive Board meeting closed to the Board only.

Respectfully submitted by Mia Walsh, Secretary, 7/1/21



**Cromwell Valley Park Council, Inc.
Minutes – June 14, 2021**

CVPC Meeting via Zoom

2021 CVPC Meeting Dates

Approved at November 9, 2020 Meeting

MEETING LOCATION: REMOTE via ZOOM or SHERWOOD HOUSE

| DATE 2021 | MEETING | Open to Public? | Time |
|---|--|------------------------|-------------|
| Monday, January 11 | Executive Board Meeting | Yes | 7:00 p.m. |
| Monday, February 8 | Executive Board Meeting (closed to Board only) | No | 7:00 p.m. |
| Monday, March 8 | Council Meeting (open to Public – Annual Meeting) | Yes | 7:00 p.m. |
| Monday, April 12 | Executive Board Meeting | Yes | 7:00 p.m. |
| Monday, May 10 | Executive Board Meeting | Yes | 7:00 p.m. |
| Monday, June 14 | Executive Board Meeting | Yes | 7:00 p.m. |
| Monday, July 12 | No Meeting | | |
| Monday, August 9 | Executive Board Meeting (closed to Board only) | No | 7:00 p.m. |
| Monday, September 13 | Council Meeting | Yes | 7:00 p.m. |
| Monday, October 18 th (10/11 is Columbus Day) | Executive Board Meeting | Yes | 7:00 p.m. |
| Monday, November 8 th | Executive Board Meeting (closed to Board only) | No | 7:00 p.m. |
| Monday, December 13 th | Executive Board Meeting | Yes | 7:00 p.m. |



**Cromwell Valley Park Council, Inc.
Minutes – June 14, 2021**

CVPC Meeting via Zoom



Cromwell Valley Park Council

Executive Board Listing

Effective April 12, 2021

| OFFICERS | Name | Email Address | Term |
|--|-------------------|--|--|
| President | Abe Yoffe | President@cromwellvalleypark.org | April 2021 – March 2023 |
| Vice President | Kim Shapiro | vicepresident@cromwellvalleypark.org | April 2021 – March 2022 |
| Treasurer | Kristin McFaul | treasurer@cromwellvalleypark.org | April 2021 – March 2023 |
| Secretary | Mia Walsh | mia@cromwellvalleypark.org | April 2021 – March 2022 |
| DIRECTORS – Members at Large | | | |
| Director | Sya Buryk Kedzior | syakedzior@gmail.com | April 2020 – March 2022 |
| Director | Bill Curtis | curtiswbc@gmail.com | April 2020 – March 2022 |
| Director | John Canoles | espijc@aol.com | April 2021 – March 2023 |
| Director | Joe Rector | Joe.rector@cromwellvalleypark.org | April 2021 – March 2023 |
| STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS | | | |
| Finance | Rick Childs | rikchilds@aol.com | Current membership year – voted annually * |
| Building and Grounds | Rick Childs | rikchilds@aol.com | ^ |
| Programs | Kelly Emerson | emersonkel@yahoo.com | ^ |
| Communications | Mia Walsh | mia@cromwellvalleypark.org | ^ |
| Volunteers | Pat Novak | pnovak8525@aol.com | ^ |
| LEASEHOLDER REPRESENTATIVE | | | |
| Talmar | Kate Joyce | katejoyce@talmar.org | |

ARTICLE VII Executive Board

Section 1 - Members

The Executive Board will consist of the Officers, Directors, Leaseholder representatives, and the Chairpersons of the Standing Committees.

***Section 4 - Chairpersons**

All standing committee chairpersons shall be elected by the current Executive Board to serve for the current membership year. The elections shall take place at the Executive Board Meeting subsequent to the Annual Meeting. If a standing committee chair position is vacant due to resignation or termination, the President shall appoint a chairperson to fill the remainder of the vacant term.

President, Treasurer – elected in odd-numbered years / two directors in odd-numbered years
Officers, Directors, Leaseholder Representatives and Chairpersons of the Standing Committees

Cromwell Valley Park Council: All members who have paid dues for the current year.



**Cromwell Valley Park Council, Inc.
Minutes – June 14, 2021**

CVPC Meeting via Zoom

CVPC Board Meeting – Motion

Submission date – June 3, 2021

Motion: For 2021, due to uncertainties with status of the COVID pandemic restrictions and the reduced availability of park staff for planning, replace the traditional Fall Harvest Festival event held the second weekend of October with an event that is potentially less complex and can be managed in compliance with COVID safety guidelines. The proposed event is focused on hawk migration, an occurrence of considerable interest at the park, with guided activities of timed hikes and meadow habitat exploration. The date of choice is Saturday, September 18th, chosen to favor high migration activity and avoiding competition with Marshy Point’s event plans.

Committee submitting the motion: Ad hoc fall event planning committee (formed after the May board meeting)

Presenter: Kim Shapiro

Rationale: Although great strides have been made these past few months with vaccination against COVID, by the fall, a segment of the population will likely remain unvaccinated and there will be lingering concerns regarding exposure. Another consideration is the recent loss of staffing resources for planning, with Susan Dorsey’s retirement, Breena Doyle’s temporary reassignment, and Kirk’s Acting duties across the county’s nature parks. The Fall Harvest Festival draws the biggest crowds, and an event of that magnitude will provide challenges to comfort levels honed over a year of COVID safety requirements. We are proposing a change that will be designed to allow for better management of visitors’ exposure, but also one that shares the unique attributes of our park – the Hawk Watch.

Pros:

- The Hawk Watch is a regular annual occurrence.
- It draws a number of interested and knowledgeable participants who may be willing to share their insights with visitors.
- It is a space-friendly outdoor activity.
- It occurs at a time of year when it is comfortable to be outside.
- The subject can be amplified through exhibits by raptor experts and photographers.
- The time of year allows for hiking and insect habitat exploration in the park fields.
- Costs and vendor involvement will be minimal, so cancellation could be accomplished without significant losses.

Cons:

- We will not have the usual level of involvement of the staff in planning, although Kirk feels he can provide some help in programming.
- Level of attendance will be unpredictable.
- Volunteer participation will be considerable.
- It is new for us, so we don’t know what we don’t know.



**Cromwell Valley Park Council, Inc.
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Event Proposal and Discussion

Decisions for presentation to the board:

Rather than holding a traditional Fall Harvest Festival this year, due to staffing and lingering COVID threat, we propose an alternative focused day of activities featuring strengths at our nature park. The activities should take place during one day (proposed as 9/18), focusing on hawk migration and additional nature activities. We will use this time to revisit the theme for 2022 and future years' festivals.

Benefits:

- will not involve the traditional load and complexity of outside vendors
- will not incur significant upfront expenses should we need to cancel due to COVID flareup
- will match the natural bounty of our park at that time of year (migration, meadow richness)

Considerations:

- will still need programming help from staff (Kirk feels he can allow some time for this.)
- will still require lots of volunteer planning, but perhaps more manageable than full-blown FHF

At the **board meeting on May 10th**, we had a discussion on the pros and cons of holding a Fall Harvest Festival at Cromwell Valley Park, as is our tradition.

At that meeting, some considerations were aired:

- our wish to hold a celebration for the community, an opportunity missed due to COVID restrictions in 2020
- the loss of important staff folks that have typically been heavily involved in planning, i.e. Susan and Breena, Kirk's acting director role
- the burden on volunteers to pick up slack in areas typically handled by staff
- the lingering potential for issues with COVID-19 and lagging vaccinations, particularly among children, to impact activities

Enough board members had been positive about providing some type of celebration in the fall, likely in some ways different from the traditional Fall Harvest Festival event, due to the potential of COVID-19 to be a lingering threat.

A smaller group would meet to flesh this out. At this meeting were: Abe, Kirk, Bill, John, Kelly, Breena, Kim

Meeting details:

Susan has provided a binder of past efforts and needs for the traditional event that would be a good guide.

Work for FHF includes:

- inviting vendors (sending info and tracking signed commitments)
- arranging food vendors (e.g. Charcoal Deli)
- arranging for chairs and tables
- planning grounds crew setup
- planning for staff activities

Some traditional elements may, however, need to be dropped, such as haystack scramble and providing samples for snacking or tasting due to lingering concerns for non-vaccinated visitors.

Kim asked if a full complement of staff would be available for the festival day, and Kirk said that it would be.



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Minutes – June 14, 2021**

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What other nature parks in the system are planning

Marshy - a fall event last weekend of September
Ag Center and Oregon Ridge are also planning some form of celebration.

Considering a different approach:

Use an activity that is specific to our park and has a footprint already – the Hawk Watch. Event timing would be advanced to match the peak migration of hawks. Other benefits of timing are the presence of meadow bounty enabling learning activities in the meadows. It is also a good time for guided hikes on the trails.

Ideas for activities include:

- hawk watch experience (continuous)
- craft making (continuous)
- guided hikes (hourly)
- nature photographers' exhibit
- migration route exhibit
- Native American activities
- insect discoveries (meadow)
- food truck (perhaps not, since may not be enough attendance)

Potential exhibitors / friends / talk leaders might include:

- Patterson Park Audubon Center
- Chesapeake Audubon
- Natural History Society of Maryland
- Baltimore Bird Club
- Lights Out Baltimore
- Lights Out Towson University
- Maryland Ornithological Society

Find another name for the event.

Making noticeable changes to the visitors' experience, but still call it a Fall Harvest Festival, will risk significant disappointment on the part of visitors. Proposed – End of Summer Migration Celebration or just Migration Celebration. Purposely absent is the word “festival”.

Choosing an appropriate date:

Due to the focus on nature and hawks, the date should be moved up to September when hawk migration is strong. We picked a target date of Saturday, Sept. 18th. This date would not conflict with the event being planned at Marshy Point for the celebration of fall.

Kirk said that he and Laura would put some time into thinking up appropriate programs for a nature-focused, hawk-focused celebration.

Committee moving forward - Kim will coordinate
Kelly, John, Abe, Mia, Pat/Michelle (Volunteers)

We will be grateful for whatever help/participation that we can get from the staff, knowing that they are



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stretched thin.