



**Cromwell Valley Park Council, Inc.**  
**Minutes – March 13, 2023**

CVPC Board Meeting

Board Members in Attendance:

- In Person: Rick Childs, Bill Curtis, Kelly Emerson, Kate Joyce, Joe Rector, Mia Walsh, Abe Yoffe
- Virtually: John Canoles, Pat Novak
- Absent: Sya Kedzior, Kristin McFaul

Park Staff: Kirk Dreier

Membership in attendance:

- In Person: McKenna Cornell, Dave Votta, Keith Kridenoff, Deb Lee, Stacey Cruise
- Virtually: Denise Douce, Mike Mauro (volunteer Trails), Barb Newton, Joyce Stevens, Pat Maher, Kelly Goles

1. WELCOME FROM PRESIDENT – Abe Yoffe

- a. The President called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. The meeting was conducted online using GoogleMeet and in person. Everyone, both in person and virtually, introduced themselves and stated their roles in the Council or their relationship with CVP.
- b. Abe began with a presentation of the 2022 Year in Review. Some items of interest include:
  - 1) 589 members as of 3/13/23, our highest number yet.
  - 2) 3,600 of volunteer hours in 2022, with 2,530 by the Trails Committee
  - 3) Our financial summary for year-end 2022 was discussed. This includes 139% of Revenue vs. Budget, with expenses as 101% of budget.
  - 4) Social media showed a significant increase in followers from 2018 – 2022. We currently have over 4,000 followers on Facebook and 1,500 on Instagram.
  - 5) Abe reviewed some of our largest 2022 events, which included Arts in the Park, Migration Celebration and Holiday Open House. Kelly Emerson also added the park's work with school and scout programs and our outside programs, like various running clubs, walks and groups.
  - 6) CVP hired goats to help with the invasive species, specifically the removal of Kudzu, and we were pleased with their work.
  - 7) Naturally Smart book launched at the park, which was created by Stacey Cruise and Kimberly Lee.

2. GOVERNANCE

- a. Meeting Minutes: A motion was made and seconded to approve the February 2023 minutes. These have been approved and posted on the CVP website. <https://cromwellvalleypark.org/about-cvpc/park-council/>
- b. Finance, Kristin McFaul, Treasurer – Mia Walsh for Kristin
  - 1) Mia distributed financial documents January – March 2, 2023 prior to the meeting which were discussed briefly during the meeting. We are 69% funded in our total donation budget for 2023 with an overall funding of 67% of revenue.



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- 2) A Journal Entry was made adding Family / Couple Membership for 129 families which were included in CampBrain Summer Camp Registration. \$2,580 was removed from Summer Camp income and added into Dues income for 2023.
- 3) Restricted Funds need to be updated for the Balance Sheet from 2022.

c. Fundraising, Mia Walsh

- For 2022 year end, we received \$39,396 from a total of 419 donors. A detailed report was submitted as to the donation categories and how those donations were received.
- For the period of January 1 – March 9, 2023, we have received a total of \$6,149.25 from 85 donors in donations and \$4,135.00 from 170 donors for memberships.

d. No Reports submitted by Baltimore County Recs and Parks. Bryan Sheppard has not submitted this report to the Council. Kirk met with Rob Hendigus from Property Management from the County on the mowing scheme and Kirk is waiting for an update on this.

e. Background Checks – Everyone currently on the Board for tonight is current on the background checks. <https://resources.baltimorecountymd.gov/Documents/Recreation/backgroundreports/rosterreport.pdf>

f. Board Member Elections: Kim Shapiro from the Nominating Committee explained the voting and slate process and the split of the officers every other year.

1) Slate for Council Election

- President, Abe Yoffe
- Treasurer, Mia Walsh
- Director, Dave Votta
- Director, Deb Lee

A motion for the slate was made, seconded for voting, which was then approved unanimously.

2) Slate for Council Election

- Vice President, Joe Rector
- Director, Stacey Cruise

A motion for the slate was made, seconded for voting, which was then approved unanimously.

3) Abe thanked John Canoles, Kim Shapiro and Kristin McFaul for their many years of service to the park. We will miss you all greatly.

g. Finance, Rick Childs. No Update



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**3. MANAGEMENT**

**a. Park Staff Report –Kirk Dreier**

- 1) The Barnatorium will cease to be used for the educational programming due to assessment by the Property Management contractors of its compliance. A tent will be set up temporarily by Willow Grove Nature Center to work as a classroom until further assessment is made. With the large number of students coming through, we need to see the scope of work and plans for making space available for our School and Scout programming.
  - Ben Porter stated that the barn was a separate line item in the capital budget, different from that of the parking and street issues. Abe has spoken to Drew Emmer about the projects being split to ensure we have the most up to date information on what is scheduled for the park. He also stated that the building code may nullify the use of the barn permanently.
- 2) Maple Sugaring weekend brought 650 on Saturday and 700 on Sunday. The Park Staff ran out of pancake batter and syrup and had to get more for the number of people in attendance. It was our biggest group yet.
- 3) We have received an additional raptor cage from Marshy Point Nature Center and hope to acquire a screech owl from Kathy Wood at the Phoenix Wildlife Center. CVP will have to apply for a permit from the Federal government to obtain a raptor.
- 4) We have identified three potential staff members for Summer Camp and they are currently going through the official hiring process.
- 5) The Lutherville Garden Club has agreed to purchase 6 additional apple trees for the orchard.
- 6) The Sherwood patio (approximately 20' x 20') has been completed by the County with the contractor of Maxalea.
- 7) The Master Naturalist program will begin in fall 2023 and will be held on Saturdays. These will be split among the Nature Centers (Lake Roland / CVP). Trail Guide Training will begin on March 22 & 23<sup>rd</sup> and a kayak tour on Loch Raven reservoir on the 24<sup>th</sup>.
- 8) Ranger Laura will be attending the Town Hall meeting on March 15<sup>th</sup>, as well as CVPC President, Abe Yoffe, who will request additional funding for CVP's capital projects.
- 9) The Sherwood cottage was to have been bundled into the restoration capital project with the County and Kirk will verify that information. Gunpowder Valley Conservancy is interested in that space under a lease agreement and would be willing to fundraise to get the building into usage / code.
- 10) We do not have an update on the liner for the amphibian pond.
- 11) Providence Road entrance to the park has been closed for any parking at this time due to the litigation which has been ongoing. The area will be coned off from parking and Kirk has posted No Parking signs in that area.

**b. Leaseholder's Report – Talmar, Kate Joyce**

- 1) The greenhouse water has not yet been turned on and they have to hand water their plants. Kate is waiting for the County to take care of this major inconvenience.



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- 2) Kate will bring seedlings to the membership appreciation event to sell since they won't have an open sale of these like in years past.
  - 3) The veterans program begins next week. The success of the program is shown because they had approximately 30 applicants for 14 open positions.
  - 4) Talmar will be hosting a volunteer day on April 13<sup>th</sup>.
  - 5) Kate is looking for ramps for wheelchair access as their current ramps have been stolen. Kirk will ask Ben Porter if there are any in the County available.
  - 6) Kate is looking for someone to close the gates M-F starting immediately at \$10 per hour. Abe will post in his neighborhood message board. Kate mentioned that park signage needs to be corrected because some of the signs say the park closes at "dark" and some say the park closes as "sunset".
  - 7) Kate inquired as to the date for a deer cull which will be in the next few weeks.
- c. Friends of Sherwood – Mia Walsh
- 1) Shore Plastics in Greenspring Quarry quoted 4'x8' sheets of plexi 1/8" thick @ \$130 per sheet. The 4'x8' sheets 1/4" thick were \$210 per sheet. They also sell larger and smaller sheets in different thicknesses depending on the size you need. They do not install, nor did they have recommendations for an installer. Kirk said a diagram would have to be proposed to the County.
  - 2) Kirk has put in a maintenance request to remove the boxwoods and pachysandra. He has spoken to Halten Garden Club about the planting of replacement vegetation around the Sherwood Herb Garden. Kirk stated that a Citizen Generated Request needs to be submitted to do this planting. Abe suggested that we have volunteers do the planting and pick a "special volunteer day" to get all hands-on deck.
- d. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS
- 1) Buildings and Grounds – Rick Childs
    - The committee has been working in the kudzu corner to continue clearing out the invasive species. Kirk commented that the volunteers are removing other vines which serve as food for our wildlife and they need to be more selective in what they are removing.
    - Rick got a quote for cutting our fields at a cost of \$2,500 per day. The equipment is a grinder unit and it takes down all the wood and it mulches the items with the ability to cut down 4-6" trees. The cost of purchasing one of these would be \$100,000.
    - Orchard Project – Rick would like approximately \$200 annually to take care of the apple trees. This is already in the budget and does not require additional approval to do this.
    - Sherwood Barn – The lower level of the barn is very moldy because the water is going down off the roof. Rick suggested the rearranging of the downspouts to divert the piping and trench around the bottom part. The cost would be approximately \$300. These funds could come out of the Buildings and Grounds budget. Rick and Kirk will confirm with Ben to move this project forward.



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2) Programs – Kelly Emerson

- Gilchrist – June 4<sup>th</sup> – Steps of Hope event. This is a recurring event and doesn't need a PPI.
- Arts in the Park will move forward on this on a trial basis the same weekend of the Migration Celebration for 2-day joint event on September 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. Kelly will continue working on mission-appropriate vendors for the event, and will work on parking and the division of costs and expenses. Stacey Cruise asked a few questions, specifically about date conflicts with other events at other parks. Kirk explained the County's decision-making process.

e. Communications – Mia Walsh

- 1) Thank you to Dave for agreeing to take over Social Media postings starting on April 1<sup>st</sup>.
- 2) Mia attended a Network for Good webinar on Digital Strategies for Non-profits. We need to focus our shift on an entire "Digital Ecosystem" and received some hints on email strategies which will capture the attention of our membership.
- 3) We are using a combination of CampBrain emailing and Constant Contact, which is more easily to filter focused emails.
- 4) Mia is waiting for year-end financials to be completed to send out the Annual Report.

d. Volunteers –Pat Novak / Kim Novak

- 1) 136 hours were given by the committee this past month. Pat Novak will begin taking over the collection of the volunteer hours.

e. Membership – Kim Shapiro

- 1) Total memberships as of 3/1//23 is 589. This compares to 531 in March 2022. This is a very busy time for membership renewal; thank you to Mia and Kim for processing the work. This is also the largest number of memberships we have ever had as a Council.
- 2) Kim is now sending out paper reminders for membership renewal, totaling 250 vs. 350 in the past. This is due to many having already renewed on line, in response to our email blasts via CampBrain and Constant Contact.

f. Ad Hoc Committees:

- 1) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – No update.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Member Appreciation Event – Volunteer: Motion for Funding for April 22<sup>nd</sup> event. We discussed the cap for the event is 150. Abe had a motion to approve the funding of the April 22<sup>nd</sup> event with 150 people budgeted. This will celebrate our members, as well as the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the park and Earth Day.
  - Kim stated this event is long overdue to but celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the park.
  - Bill suggested increasing the motion to 4,000 in order to capture the additional costs in addition to the \$2,000 in the membership subcommittee line item. The motion was seconded and sent to



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voting with all approved, zero opposed, zero abstained.

- Fundraising – Raffle tickets, Silent Auction – it was suggested we do some additional fundraising to help cover the costs.
- Mia suggested that normally these motions for approval of out-of-budget items for a event of this size should be done well in advance of the vendor contracts being secured.

- b. Youth / Student Member on the Board. Sya suggested to have McKenna Cornell, a graduate student in Geography and Planning with an interest in Park Management, from Towson University to be added to the Board. McKenna has done a lot of work in urban planning. We will review the by-laws to see how we can make her an official member of the Board or if we must go in a different direction. Mia suggested we offer her a free membership to get her more involved in the park.
- c. Photo Calendar – Keith Kridenoff – spoke about a calendar about limiting submission to 5 people. Keith ran a poll in his group to see how interested people would be in purchasing a calendar. He said he would post it on his FB group.

6. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Sewer Line – Abe Yoffe – Abe was provided updated drawings and has been in contact with the DPW about this project.
- b. Capturing Memories – Kim Shapiro – Kim met with Wayne Harman, former Director of Rec and Parks and Bob Stanhope, the prior Manager of the park and they shared their memories of CVP. It was suggested that Wayne Harman should speak at the member appreciation event and how he sold the idea to Mayor William Donald Schaefer.
- c. Purchase Sound System for Events – Kirk Dreier – Not discussed
- d. Sherwood House history information Kiosk. Halton Garden Club no longer wishes to pursue this.
- e. Capital Projects Design – Abe will continue asking for updated plans on this project.
- f. Parking – We should have more formal parking plans for events. Kelly will move forward with Kirk and Rick outside of the meeting to address various options for planning.
- g. 2021 /2022 – Kristin needs to pull together the financial audit paperwork.
- h. March 15<sup>th</sup> – Town Hall 3<sup>rd</sup> District Budget Meeting – Abe will speak on the behalf of Cromwell Valley Park at this meeting.
- i. March 28<sup>th</sup> – Recs and Parks meeting with the Nature Council Presidents. Abe has a list of items to bring up with Ben Porter. He will present his meeting finding at the April Council meeting.

A motion was made to end the meeting, which was seconded and approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:21 p.m,

Respectfully submitted by Mia Walsh, Secretary 3/20/23

The next meeting will be held on Monday, April 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm at Sherwood House and virtually.



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**NOTES FROM THE COUNTY ON THE CAPITAL PROJECT:**

The Cromwell Valley Park Project is still in design with the design team working to finalize the 30% design documents.

Our consultant has been working on additional requests from the Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability as well as preparing submittals to the DNR, MHT, and MET.

The buffer delineations have caused significant delays to this project.

The current schedule we have received from Property Management shows a Construction Start of October 2024.

We are working to schedule a public information meeting where we can share the current concept and schedule.

In response to your concern below; the funds currently allocated are earmarked for road widening from the Willow Grove entrance to the Willow Grove Nature Center, parking expansion at the Sherwood House and Willow Grove Nature Center, and a new pavilion and path east of the Willow Grove Nature Center.