



Cromwell Valley Park Council, Inc.
Council Meeting Minutes: June 12, 2023
6:00 PM

Council Meeting Attendance:

1. In-person: Abe Yoffe, Mia Walsh, Stacey Cruise, Bill Curtis, Rick Childs, Dave Votta, Kelly Emerson, Deb Lee, and Kate Joyce
2. Virtually: Kim Shapiro and Pat Novak
3. Absent: Sya Buryk Kedzior and Joe Rector
4. Park Staff: Kirk Dreier
5. Membership in attendance: None
6. Special Guests: Laurie Taylor Mitchell and David Davenport

1. Welcome from the President: Abe Yoffe

- The President called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM. The meeting was hybrid via Google Meet and in-person. The Agenda was adopted, and a quorum was present.
- The President welcomed and invited Laurie Taylor Mitchell and David Davenport to present to the Council on invasive plant species.

Special guests Laurie Taylor- Mitchell and David Davenport, leaders of CVP's Weed Warriors,

presented an appeal to the Council. The Weed Warriors' role is crucial in preserving the health and biodiversity of wooded areas in the Park. Their efforts to remove invasive species prevent these non-native plants from overtaking the essential native plants contributing to the Park's ecosystem. Apart from removing invasive species, they also support the growth and maintenance of native plants. This work involves planting new native species and ensuring the existing ones thrive, creating and sustaining habitats that support the Park's wildlife. Laurie reported non-native plant species are a significant threat to the wooded areas of the Park. These invasive plants have taken over certain sections, causing harm to the sustainability of those areas. They are so powerful that even mature trees cannot withstand their impact. Invasive vines cover mature trees, depriving them of sunlight, competing for soil nutrients and water, and even causing disfigurement and breakage of tree limbs due to their immense weight. Furthermore, invasive plants negatively impact and displace nesting birds and other animal habitats, destroying the native vegetation required for food, safety, and breeding. The Weed Warriors is a small group of volunteers and cannot manage the rapidly spreading nonnative plants on the 460 acres comprising the Park. The possibility of losing the Park to various invasive plants is a grim reality. Laurie discussed two possible solutions:

- Hire a biologist to assess and study the property to develop a pilot program to restore and maintain sections of the Park. Vanessa Beecham from Towson State University is a resource.
- “Adopt a Plot” Individuals or groups would be responsible for reducing the number of invasive plants and planting native plants on their designated plots. This suggestion can potentially be rich hands-on learning or community service experiences for schools, study groups, and Scouts.

Topics for discussion and action: Inform Baltimore County regarding the critical state of the Park due to invasive plants. Investigate how the County can assist with controlling them. Develop an invasive species public awareness/education campaign aiming for it to be County-wide. Review the annual deer culling practice and its effectiveness on the Park property and outside areas.

2. Governance

Abe announced Sya Kedzior's immediate resignation from the Council and is currently seeking a candidate to fill this vacancy. Also, a volunteer is needed to take over the newsletter's publication.

A. May 2023 Minutes: *Stacey Cruise*

The Board Secretary needs clarification from Kate Joyce regarding the Lease Holder's report from April to proceed with submitting the May 2023 minutes for approval.

B. Treasurer's Report: *Mia Walsh*

- Profit and Loss Statements and Budget vs. Actuals through May 2023
- Donations/Fundraising
- Financial backup documents for 2021-2022 (required for the annual audit) are received and forwarded to Bill for review.
- Completing the resubmission of the Tax Form is pending.

Background Checks: ***Abe Yoffe***

- The background check for one Director was recently renewed.

3. Management

A. Park Staff Report: *Kirk Dreier*

- May was filled with our last school programs. The challenge was doing these in the "tentatorium," as the Barn was off-limits as a classroom. We had 11 schools with approximately 332 Children and adults, while we also had Balto County public schools at the Sherwood Barn during the same period. They brought in over 1300 kids.
- The big tent in front of the center will be there sometime this month when it comes down. Summer Camp will be a challenge for sure without the "Barnatorium." You can assume that the Nature Center during the week will be completely overtaken by summer camp and staff for nearly the entire summer. Summer camp for the little ones begins on the 20th, as we are closed for Juneteenth.

- We have just finished the last of our Seasonal Naturalist training, and we will have a great group of staff. All three of them are from Towson University; they are Jenna, Olivia, and Delaney.
- Ranger Breena has been training Delayna, our new intern with animal care at CVP, and Joe Rector recommended her. A new beaver mount was delivered by Capn Jim Gephardt this month, and It looks great. A bonus is that Jim gave back \$1000 despite the 90 hours he put into making it so that that can go back into the Exhibit budget.
- The last of the Apple trees went into the orchard as a memorial tree for JoAnne “Bird” Reedy, the sister of a friend from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. Jim Kelly has been taking care of the trees that were put in and training Mike Mauro in the art. He will take over for Jim in the future with the care of the orchard. The Gilchrist event went off without a hitch, though some things could have been

B. Leaseholder’s Report: (Talmar): *Kate Joyce*

No Leaseholder’s Report

C. Friends Of Sherwood Report: *Mia Walsh*

No Friends of Sherwood Report

D. Standing Committees-

1) Building and Grounds: *Rick Childs*

- All equipment for the Park and Talmar was serviced this month.
- The “Gator” requires special handling to start.

2) Programs: *Kelly Emerson (Abe Yoffe reported)*

- Migration Festival and Art in the Park

During the last meeting, the Committee reviewed vendor practices and questioned the origin of the 15% donation requirement imposed by the Council on vendors based on their gross sales during CVP events. It was clarified that Baltimore County mandated this practice for vendors selling

goods on Park property. A recommendation to assess 10% of the vendors' profits instead was shared. Only vendors selling goods are required to donate a percentage, and it is customary for Art in the Park vendors to donate to the Council. The Committee is examining the requirement for vendors selling goods during the Migration Festival, but educational vendors are exempt. In addition, the Committee is discussing the possibility of determining a flat rate and/or table fees. The Council unanimously voted to delegate decision-making power to the Committee regarding these matters.

- Member Appreciation Event

The rescheduled date for the Membership Appreciation Event is Saturday, September 23rd.

3) Communications: *Mia Walsh*

- No Communications Report

4) Volunteers: *Pat Novak*

- The updated tally of reported May volunteer hours and estimates of known activity for board members is shown below.

Last Name	Hours	Category/Event
Childs		
Cruise	7	Meeting minutes, Park visit
Curtis	8	Council business, Critter Cam
Emerson	12	Working with volunteers, Board business
Shapiro	12	Membership and By-laws
Lee	1.5	
Novak	6	Bd mtg, Facebook posting of events
Rector	4	Tying up loose ends for celebration
Walsh	34.25	Garden Club, Membership, Treasurer, Summer Camp, Website, Social Media, Kingman estate+donations
Yoffe	25	Meeting preparation, Migration Celebration planning, equipment purchases, emails about various topics
Dave Votta		On vacation

Last Name	Hours	Category/Event
Total	109.75 hours	

- A Night Out with Nature: **Pat Novak**

Night Out With Nature dates are September 27th, October 25th, and November 29th. Pat is waiting for confirmation from the speakers.

5. Finance: Rick Childs

- Waiting for the recently held Gilchrist Event numbers.

6. Membership: Kim Shapiro

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP DATA:

Total memberships
as of 6/8/23: 468 (377 June 2022)
Last report (Apr.): 388
Lifetime: 12
Patron: 4
Sustaining: 22
Contributing: 28

4. New Business

A. Proposed changes to committee structures. Abe Yoffe

- These recommendations are to update the current practices for formulating and managing committees. Baltimore County must approve by-law changes.

Topics for further discussion and/or action: 1. Do membership and volunteer responsibilities belong on the same committee? 2. Clarify the different categories of volunteers. 3. Invasive work could be a sub-committee.

B. Abe proposed purchasing a TV and video conferencing equipment for the Sherwood House.

Motion: Abe Yoffe, President, makes a motion to spend \$750 to purchase audio-visual equipment to be used for presentations and video-conferencing at Council meetings, and for other purposes required by park staff.

- **Cost Breakdown:**
- TV Stand- \$163 <https://a.co/d/9np5mT5>
- TV- \$260 <https://a.co/d/aMGwunY>
- Video Conferencing Tech- \$300 <https://a.co/d/1aPAxLk>
- **Total: \$723 + allowance for shipping = \$750**
- **Proposed Source of Funds / Budget Modification:** Cash on balance sheet
- **Program or Committee Submitting Request:** N/A
- **Presenter of Motion:** Abe Yoffe
- **Rationale:** Even though we have returned to in-person meetings, there are still several virtual participants at each Council meeting. This will make it easier for them to see and hear everything happening in the room. In addition, it will be much easier for in-person participants to see information being presented.
- **Pros:** Greater connectivity and improved meeting experience
- **Cons:** Someone must be a little bit tech-savvy to make sure it's set up correctly. Potential risk of theft and/or loss of components.
- **Alternatives Discussed:** N/A

The motion passed.

Topics for further discussion and/or action: 1. Determine procedures for outside groups to use the equipment, including a possible fee to charge. 2. Best way to store the equipment for safekeeping.

5. Old Business

A. Plexiglass on dining room walls: ***Abe Yoffe reporting***

- No report provided

B. 2021/2022 financial audit: ***Abe Yoffe reporting***

- The financial audit is in process.

Motion to adjourn at 7: 56 p.m.

***Respectfully Submitted by
Stacey Cruise
Council Secretary***