



## **Cromwell Valley Park Council**

### Meeting Minutes

September 11, 2023, 6:00 PM

#### **Council Meeting Attendance:**

1. In-person: Abe Yoffe, Mia Walsh, Rick Childs, Deb Lee, Kelly Emerson, and Carl Gold
2. Virtually: Pat Novak, Bill Curtis, Stacey Cruise, and Joe Rector
3. Absent: Kate Joyce
4. Park Staff: Kirk Dreier
5. Membership in attendance: Mike Mauro
6. Special Guest Presenters: Drew Emmer from Baltimore County Parks and Rec and Eric Duce from the Department of Environment Protection and Sustainability

#### **Welcome from President Abe Yoffe**

- The President called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM. The meeting was hybrid via Google Meet and in-person. The Agenda was adopted, and a quorum was present.
- The President introduced Drew Emmer from Baltimore County Parks and Rec. Drew presented the following update on the capital project design:
  1. A code analysis was conducted to make the Barnatorium a classroom space with a bathroom added
  2. The design team is working on a path leading to the Barnatorium
  3. The design plan included 86 parking spaces in the upper section of the lot and 46 parking spaces in the lower section
  4. Planning for 69 parking spaces on the Sherwood side
  5. The Historic and Environmental Trust and the Department of Natural Resources approved parking
  6. Options for paving and grading for the Willow Grove entrance are needed. The pavement in place now is maintenance-intensive
  7. Sixty percent of the planning will be complete by November, and 100% will be finished by the spring of 2024
  8. Twelve months for permitting, eight months for public bidding, and twelve months for phased construction
  9. There are no attorney fees for permitting.

10. Colimore is the architect, and Carroll Engineering provides civil and design engineering.
- The President introduced Eric Duce from the Department of Environment Protection and Sustainability. Using a PowerPoint, Eric presented an update on using goats to maintain the kudzu, an invasive species growing in the park.
    1. The Kudzu plot at the Sherwood trail is nicknamed “weed that ate the south.” Kudzu doesn’t like shade and will continue up the canopy of a tree.  
Grows 6-9 feet per day. Kudzu has three leaves, and two leaves are asymmetrical. The stem is sticky with hairs, and the flower is purple.
    2. Goats are effective and can digest what is toxic to many other animals. Goats will not eat Asiatic Bittersweet.
    3. Goats strip the leaves but don’t eat the stems.
    4. First Goat treatment in 2022. Weed Warriors also worked to hand-pull Kudzu.
    5. Second goat treatment in 2023. Weed Warriors pulled and cut down Kudzu beyond the fence and were too high for the goats to reach. The goats were on site for three weeks. After regrowth, it was apparent that the e biomass was much less. Mowing reduces biomass.
    6. Goats are effective if there is follow-up use in the Park
    7. Weed Warriors effectively helped install the electric fencing to contain the goats
    8. Treatment to eradicate Kudzu takes ten years. The goal is to damage the Kudzu so that viable seeds are not made. A systemic spraying of the roots is also needed.
    9. Conclusion – Integrated Pest Management toolbox – goats + mowing + manual labor and timing is essential
  - The President introduced volunteer Mike Mauro, who presented the following information regarding the apple orchard.
    1. There is a Kiosk in the orchard. Proposing a more interactive display and putting up laminated visuals and information highlighting the history of the orchard, fun facts, and the types and the 13 species of apples grown.
    2. Adding a QR code provides visitors with detailed information and is a way to interact with visitors speaking various languages.
  - Pat Novak presented the Shining Star Awards to Council President Abe Yoffe and to volunteer Mike Mauro.

## **2. Governance**

### **A. May, June, and July Meeting Minutes were approved. Stacey Cruise:**

### **B. Treasurer’s Report: *Mia Walsh***

- Bill Curtis and Joe Rector performed an audit review for 2021 and 2022. Despite the disorganized paperwork and backup documentation, neither auditor found areas of financial concern. Year End 2022 open items: Worked with prior Treasurer on 9/9/23 and was able to balance 2022 with a \$2.00 discrepancy. The prior Treasurer will submit the final numbers so that the 2022 990 may be resubmitted with accurate numbers.
- The P&L statement and Balance Sheet are submitted as part of this report. Items to note are: We are 111% of our dues budget and 173.55% of our donation budget. Finance Committee expenses are 760% of the budget because the QuickBooks software was not in the budget.

- We should expect significant costs in Summer Camp expenditures, including payroll, which we have yet to receive requests from the County. The B & G Committee has expenditures for which donations were received. Though they have spent above their budget, funds were specific for B&G projects.
- The Treasurer motioned to purchase two certificates of deposits (CDs) totaling \$40,000 with Bank of America.  
**Motion passed unanimously**
- The Treasurer presented the details for a proposed Honor Garden with seating as a memorial: This is an \$1800 investment. The garden includes solar water features (self-watering), mulch, redwood, dogwood trees, and a plaque. The project could be completed in-house.
- The budget process will start next month. There will be an Executive Board meeting to draft it before the presentation to the rest of the Council.

**Background Checks: Abe Yoffe**

- All Directors have current background checks.

**D. Approval of new Director**

- The Council approved Carl Gold, and the President welcomed him to the Cromwell Valley Park Council.

**3. Management**

**A. Park Staff Report: Kirk Dreier**

- The staff finished the last two camps without incident. The camps were a fun summer and had the best staff.
- Ranger Laura went to the Ag Center and provided on-site bee-keeping programs for the Ag Centers.
- The Borneo Crossbow workshop went off without a hitch.
- The county's screen on the green presented (Jurassic World Dominion) here at the park in September, and we had 80 people attend, with Ranger Breana being the staff member who was there.
- The draft of our winter calendar is complete.
- Ranger Anne went to the Pickers Gill Retirement Community on the 8th and spoke to 14 residents about what we do here and what's happening, such as (adult garden club, Senior Stroll, Bird watching, etc.)
- Fall field trip requests began on the 5th, and we already have 17 field trips scheduled for Oct – Nov.
- Pollywogs start Tuesday and Wednesday for six weeks and go through Tuesday, October the 17th, and Wednesday the 18th.
- The county truck is due for maintenance on Wednesday to the Liberty Road maintenance. The maintenance will take place on Thursday the 14th
- Wayne and the crew will be setting up for parking on Wednesday this week. That includes the archery wall, Apple press on Thursday, and Friday's tents, tables, and chairs. Staff and volunteers will set up the two-pole tent next to the big top that has been up all summer for TAC.
- Debbie has been updating signs for vendors, etc. Staff will dig pits for the apple butter making and the campfire pit

- at Sherwood for the members' picnic.
- The sandwich boards and other banners have been placed at the entrances and on the road, advertising the Migration Celebration.

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

No Report

**C. Friends Of Sherwood Report: *Mia Walsh***

- The Herb Garden project was completed on September 6, 2023,

**D. Standing Committees-**

**1) Building and Grounds: *Rick Childs***

- Removal pine trees
- Either the bride or groom's tree is lost, and a contractor must do the removal.
- The mowing plan is firm
- Habitat cutting is scheduled for February and April
- Clarification is needed regarding the memorials in the Park

**2) Programs: *Kelly Emerson***

- No PPIs to report
- Kate Joyce's October 21st event does not need a PPI
- Volunteers are still needed to manage parking for the Migration Festival/Art in the Park events on September 16th and Art in the Park on September 17th
- Event volunteers under 18 years must sign a waiver
- Volunteers check in at the Welcome tent
- Directors are asked to volunteer during the Members Appreciation event, featuring live music and food.

**3) Communications: *Mia Walsh***

- Congrats on the mailing of our Fall 2023 Newsletter. Dave did a fantastic job with the layout and obtaining the content for the newsletter.

**4) Volunteers: *Pat Novak***

The tally of reported August volunteer hours:

Last Name	Hours	Category/Event
Childs		Not reported
Cruise	7	Board meeting minutes, visit with grandson
Curtis		Not reported
Emerson	30	Volunteer organization
Gold	4	Newsletter article, review of bylaws, small group hikes
Lee	7	Weed Warriors, wallpaper project
Novak	20	Facebook, trophies for Shining Star
Rector	2	Park business
Shapiro		Not reported
Walsh	37.75	Treasurer, Website, social media, Goats funding, Kingman memorial service, picnic registration, donations, membership
Yoffe	8	Board business
Votta		Not reported
<b>Total</b>	<b>115.75</b>	

5) Finance: *Rick Childs*

Membership: Finance sub-committee: *Kim Shapiro*

- **CURRENT MEMBERSHIP DATA:**
- Total memberships as of 9/5/23: 498
- Last report (Jul.): 477
- Lifetime: 13
- Patron: 4
- Sustaining: 24
- Contributing: 29
- Recent donors through membership: M&M Beck, E&J McCann, Kristel Donner

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Sept. totals	336	340	404	416 (Oct.)	<b>498</b>

**4. New Business**

No New Business

**5. Old Business**

**A. Proposed changes to committee structure: *Kim Shapiro***

- A dedicated meeting will be scheduled to discuss the proposed changes.

**B. Baltimore County Department of Rec and Parks: *Deb Lee***

- On September 7th, a community input meeting was held by Balt. Co. Dept. of Recreation & Parks (BCDRP). The leadership team from BCDRP, including Director Bob Smith and Deputy Director Cortney Weinstock, led the discussion with the assistance of a recreation and parks consultant, Jayne Miller. Baltimore County government and community leaders were present, as well as approximately 30 citizens.

**C. Review of the Council insurance policy and umbrella coverage**

- The President requested that Carl Gold conduct a review.

**D. Night Out With Nature: *Pat Novak***

- "A Thin Green Line": Tales from a Mason/Dixon Game Warden program on Wednesday, September 27th at 6:30 p.m.

**E. Plexiglass on dining room walls: *Deb Lee***

- Update pending

***Motion to adjourn at 8:29 pm***

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Stacey Cruise  
Council Secretary*