



## **Cromwell Valley Park Council**

### Meeting Minutes

April 8, 2024, 6:00 PM

#### ● **COUNCIL MEETING ATTENDANCE**

- In-person: Abe Yoffe, Rick Childs, Rachel Allshouse, Kelly Emerson, Carl Gold, Bill Curtis, Kate Joyce, Deb Lee
- Virtually in attendance: Pat Novak, Stacey Cruise, Joe Rector
- Absent: Mia Walsh
- Park Staff in attendance: Breena Doyle
- Membership in attendance: Raymond Reed

#### ● **WELCOME FROM PRESIDENT, ABE YOFFE**

- Call to Order & Adoption of the Agenda; Establish Quorum
  - Call to order: 6:01 PM
  - The meeting was hybrid via Google Meet and in-person.
  - The Agenda was adopted, and a quorum was present.
- Welcome to newest board member Rachel Allshouse – Abe Yoffe

#### ● **GOVERNANCE**

- Approval of March 2024 Minutes – Stacey Cruise
  - An amendment to March 2023 minutes was requested to include information about fee waivers. Notes will be revised and re-sent by Rachel Allshouse.
- Treasurer's Report – Abe Yoffe on behalf of Mia Walsh
  - Review Profit & Loss Statements and Budget vs. Actuals
    - See financial statements through March 31, 2024. Membership dues are at 95.5% of annual budget. Donations are at 87.8% of annual budget.
    - We have begun to see movement in Summer Camp Cancellations and beginning to fill the vacancies.
    - We continue to limit our spending until the Reimagine Recreation MOU is signed.
    - What were specific expenses in lines 305 and 307?
      - *Post-meeting note: Line items received 4/22/24*

CROMWELL VALLEY PARK COUNCIL

Profit and Loss Detail  
January 1 - April 22, 2024

DATE	TRANSACTION TYPE	NUM	NAME	CLASS	MEMO/DESCRIPTION	SPLIT	AMOUNT	BALANCE
Ordinary Income/Expenses								
Expenses								
C								
Park Staff								
305 Equipment Maintenance								
03/19/2024	Expense			Expense	Repair of Mowers	Bank of America - Checking	536.14	536.14
Total for 305 Equipment Maintenance							\$536.14	
307 Computer Maintenance & Part								
01/08/2024	Expense		Micro Electric	Expense	HDMI Cord for Projector / Laptop	Bank of America - Checking	37.09	37.09
02/14/2024	Expense		Amazon	Expense	Printer Cable	Bank of America - Checking	19.98	57.07
Total for 307 Computer Maintenance & Part							\$57.07	
Total for Park Staff							\$593.21	
Total for C							\$593.21	
Total for Expenses							\$593.21	
Net Income							\$ -593.21	

- 2023 990
  - All financials are compiled and ready for submission. Kristin McFaul, prior Treasurer and CPA, has agreed to review the documents prior to submission for 4/15/24 tax deadline.
  - Appeal letter sent for late taxes. Fined from 2020.
- Donations/Fundraising
  - Memberships and donations have been at a high level, with multiple reminders being sent through CampBrain, ConstantContact and the Spring newsletter.
  - In March, \$4,809 was received from 121 donations through 101 donors.
  - Thank you to the Trails Committee for installing the Dr. Alan Lake bench.
  - ACTIVITIES OR ITEMS FOR THE UPCOMING MONTH
    - Order new remittance envelopes. Will put on PayPal and Venmo QR codes on the envelopes this year to cater to the younger generation.
    - Order plaques for Adirondack chairs in the Honor Garden.
    - Follow up on Chimney Swift Tower Project and additional Bluebird Boxes
- Financial Audits and Suggestions - Financial audits were completed by Bill Curtis & Deb Lee. They were mostly in good order. Recommendations will be discussed later.
- Board of Rec & Park certification deadline pushed until the end of the year
- Background Checks- Abe Yoffe
  - Everyone up to date
  - No one's background check expires before June 2024
- Bylaws revisions – Abe Yoffe
  - Submitted to the Board of Recreation and Parks

- Initial review looked good. No issues.
    - Next steps? Voted on at a future meeting? After approval, we vote to approve and adopt?
  - Committee Chair Elections – Raymond Reed
    - The following Standing Committee Chairpersons were voted upon and elected. These positions have no term limitations and are voted upon annually:
      - Finance = Rick Childs
      - Grounds = Rick Childs
      - Programs = Kelly Emerson
      - Communications = Mia Walsh
      - Volunteers = Pat Novak
    - New bylaws might change how positions look in the future
- **MANAGEMENT**
  - Park Staff Report – Breena Doyle
    - Kirk Dreier will be back next week. Start with ½ days
    - Chimney Swift Project officially approved
      - County has asked for work order for concrete pad. Need size/thickness measurements. Request for mounting bolts in concrete.
    - Captain Jim:
      - Re-built the mailbox stand
      - Maintained benches for field trips
      - Fun exhibit about scat
    - USDA came 3/19 and 3/26. 44 deer total were culled
    - Large tent installed on other side of Willow Grove on 3/22 for field trips. Has been bought by county. Here until barn is ready to be used.
    - Trail Guide Training at Rawlings Conservatory
      - large success
      - huge turnout and new faces - 30 people
    - 4/1 - John from Marshy Point cleared out Beech tree
    - Receiving outreach requests from various places
    - Spring field trip season until end of May
  - Leaseholder’s Report - Talmar - Kate Joyce
    - VA Farms Program started
      - 14 veterans twice a week
    - Produce has been sold through CSA or Farm Stand in the past
      - Because of deadlines, limited participation available
      - Proposed idea of a farm stand on driveway or in park
        - No cash.
        - Hire someone to be there for troubleshooting
        - Start with talking to Kirk Dreier. Plan a presentation for



Stone is wet in channels.

- 14-15 Trail Crew volunteers
  - Looking for other projects
  - In Spring, they go along trails with loppers/cutters to scale back
  - People coming 1-3 days a week.
  - Wayne gets names and is contact
  - Projects that don't involve direct supervision?
- Any updates about erosion, sewer line, park renovations?
  - Capital projects - emailed last week. Still working through approval. Will it be submitted for us to review before going out for contracts? Will share as it is going through process. Open to comments?
- Programs - Kelly Emerson
  - PPI's and upcoming events requiring approval
    - In flux until we have MOU.
    - No updates since last month.
    - Merrick family reunion June.
    - Gilchrist coming.
      - Correction-Gilchrist has not yet paid. Either planning to pay or requesting a fee waiver.
    - We maintain a positive relationship with Halten Garden Club.
  - Fall Harvest Festival – September 28<sup>th</sup> – planning
    - One day event
    - Committee active and ongoing. Meet 2/week (in person and virtual)
    - Kim Shapiro joining in
    - Council will receive planning documents
    - Priorities #1-Marketing (first print date might be this Friday)
    - Priority #2-Food. Dream list of vendors? Go from there.
    - Goal to be done with planning in June.
    - Potential 50/50 (county/council) split of revenue and expenses. Besides that, planning as usual
      - Most of revenue comes from donations for parking
      - Will have to be negotiated
      - Look closely at event
      - Split with Arts Council (wine vs. parking)
    - Clearly define who is responsible for what (council vs. park)
  - Communications – Abe Yoffe on behalf of Mia Walsh
    - Continued populating CampBrain with May and June programs, as well as the website.

- Use our registration until June. County in July.
- Thank you to Pat Novak for putting May and June programs on Facebook.
- Utilized personalized ConstantContact emails regarding membership expiration dates and renewal.
- ACTIVITIES OR ITEMS FOR THE UPCOMING MONTH
  - Continued work on Membership Renewal Communications as many expired on 3/31/24.
- SPECIAL RECOGNITION:
  - Kim Shapiro for her weekly eblasts and sending out membership letters and cards.
  - Dave Schroeder for his work on flyers for Night Out with Nature.
  - Pat Novak for adding May and June program registration information on Facebook.

■ Volunteers – Pat Novak

Last Name	Hours	Category/Event
Allshouse	4	Meeting with former secretary, onboarding with email, organizing files, familiarize with past notes and tasks
Childs	213	15 volunteers
Cruise	5.5	Minutes, family time
Curtis	10	Critter Cam, Fiscal review, meetings
Emerson	15	Meetings, paperwork, phone calls, volunteer training
Gold	27	Trail Guide Training, guided hikes, research, writing articles Coordination with other councils, strategy sessions ,witness interviews
Lee	8	Board meeting, Fall Festival Meetings, Hike Through History project, wallpaper project
Novak	10	NOWN, Facebook
Rector	10.5	Meetings, site visits, administrative
Reed		
Schroeder	20	Newsletter, NOWN ,Maple Sugaring, Weed Warriors. Trail Guide Training
Shapiro	22	Membership, Communications, Meeting and prep
Walsh	33	Summer Camp, Financial statements, memberships, events, website, social media, honor garden, reports

Last Name	Hours	Category/Event
Yoffe	16	Estimated, meeting prep, emails and phone calls

- Regarding volunteer hours
  - Included Dave Schroeder in April hours. Should he continue to be included? Consensus is yes.
  - Hours reported to Pat Novak should be hours associated with Board duties. Break out personal hours from Trail Crew.
  - We keep record of volunteer hours. Submitted to the county on a monthly basis.
- Night Out with Nature
  - Big success. About 25 people.
  - Gunpowder advertised, which helped.
  - Debbie Trout and Trail Crew helped tremendously with set up
  - May 10, 2024 next event. We have fliers. Put in libraries and other public places.
    - Board encouraged to put out fliers in the community as well.
    - Dessert is presented before the talk
- Finance – Rick Childs
  - Nothing to report
- Membership – Kim Shapiro
  - This April, membership for the first time immediately following “expiration day” topped 400. It also shows that over 240 memberships were not renewed before 3/31.
  - Memberships continue to come in. Over 90 thank-you notes with membership cards went out in March. Growth of membership through the coming year will likely show impacts of changes within the County registration and funds-handling systems.
  - Coming month: Continue to send out thank-you cards/membership cards to renewing households. Mail out invitations to renew to current members who have not already done so.
  - Recognition: Thanks go to Mia for gathering membership data from all of the sources, mail-in, website and CampBrain, inputting membership data into CampBrain and forwarding records of membership purchases.
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**CURRENT MEMBERSHIP DATA:**

Total memberships  
as of 4/04/24: 404

Last report (Mar.): 649

Lifetime: 16

Patron: 5

Sustaining: 24

Contributing: 34

- Membership may be impacted with coming changes. Consider outreach strategies. Consider messaging about benefits to be a member besides discounted programs.
  
- **NEW BUSINESS**
  - Policy for check requests re: requestor & authorizer – Abe Yoffe
    - In audits, should check request form and authorizer be the same person?(40% of items). If this is okay, just have an authorizer. Is there a need for a requestor?
    - Checks themselves have to be signed by two officers.
    - Debit Card - monthly summary. Joe, Mia, Abe have access to it.
    - President authorized to use up to the amount of each budget line item.
    - Review form to see if changes need to be made.
    - Policies and procedures document from 2009. Is this the most recent? What do bylaws document reference? Bylaws may not reference policies and procedures. Review this document too.
    - Results of prior review. “Best Practices of Nature Councils” document. Where is this document? Consider this in discussion with FAQ document and discussion with Corey Johns.
  
- **OLD BUSINESS**
  - Protection of dining room walls- Deb Lee
    - Abe and Deb will review stanchions after meeting
  - Chimney Swift Towers – Carl Gold
    - Give county information on size and dimensions. Down below frost line.
    - How tall? Exposure in wind?
    - Approval included location.
  - Community Generated Request re: footbridges over streams – Abe Yoffe
    - At Town Hall, Sam O’Neil wanted to help
    - Held Virtual meeting. Suggestion to submit a grant request.



- County Grant Writer - apply to do trails assessment (county contractor). Focus on location of stream crossings. County submitting for the grant.
      - Begin process of applying. Estimated cost?
      - Oregon Ridge as example.
      - Need for 2 across Towson Run. Maybe a third?
      - We would have to match 20% of cost. We would be considered a partner.  
*Post-meeting note: we discussed with the County that they would match 10% and we would match 10%*
    - Clean up of Betty's Pond
      - No new information
    - QR Code audio project- for audio files on the "Hike through History" - Deb Lee
      - Draft presented at meeting
      - 20 in total.
        - Proofed names
      - QR is live
      - Wooden posts to mark each location.
      - Still within budget
        - Purchased annual subscription to QR generator
        - Still have 30 to use (20 for this project). We will always have 50. Can add/delete at our discretion.
          - Suggestions to use extra codes: Trail map in phone, donations in parking lot, orienteering course, geocaching
        - Gave 10% discount. Ongoing expense \$162 a year
        - Do we want to add a credit card to the account so payment doesn't lapse?
      - Questions:
        - Where exactly should 20 posts go? Handout? Ask Mia.
        - Cut posts at 45 degree angle. Trails Crew can complete job
          - Post hole digger. No concrete, no metal post anchors needed.
          - Order signs with holes in. Make sure material that won't rust. Aluminum? Do signs come with screws? If not, need to order screws.
          - Trail Crew needs map
          - Where to store posts? Sherwood Barn suggested.
- **OTHER**
  - Reimagining meeting last week
    - Listened to our concerns
    - Draft for MOU soon. Supposed to be this week.
    - Leaders would meet first to discuss main parts and send comments back
    - Meetings with county about our part specifically
    - Certain items will have to be customized as addendum
    - Maryland Public Information Act. Who would file?

- [https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/pages/opengov/pia.aspx#:~:text=Maryland's%20Public%20Information%20Act%20\(PIA,%2C%20county%2C%20or%20municipal\).](https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/pages/opengov/pia.aspx#:~:text=Maryland's%20Public%20Information%20Act%20(PIA,%2C%20county%2C%20or%20municipal).)
  - Advocate to maintain mailing address
  - Oregon Ridge changing name to “Friends Of”
    - Is that something we’re interested in doing before MOU finalized?
    - People didn’t understand what a nature council was. “Friends of” connects to public more. Distincts us from county organization.
  - Inventory of equipment that is stored on grounds
    - In MOU state that we can store our equipment here
  - Request in MOU that what civic rec collects from nature councils, it uses for nature councils
  - Kelly Emerson has Google Doc collecting these concerns to be resent.
  - Will we need to redo bylaws after MOU? Consider structure of organization. Will that change?
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- The meeting adjourned at 7:29pm.
  - Submitted by Rachel Allshouse, Council Secretary