



Cromwell Valley Park Council

Meeting Minutes

May 13, 2024, 6:00 PM

● **COUNCIL MEETING ATTENDANCE**

- In-person: Abe Yoffe, Mia Walsh, Rachel Allshouse, Carl Gold, Bill Curtis, Kelly Emerson, Kate Joyce
- Virtually in attendance: Stacey Cruise (briefly)
- Absent: Joe Rector, Deb Lee, Rick Childs, Pat Novak
- Park Staff in attendance: Kirk Dreier
- Membership in attendance: None

● **WELCOME FROM PRESIDENT, ABE YOFFE**

- Call to Order & Adoption of the Agenda; Establish Quorum
 - Call to order: 6:03 PM
 - The meeting was hybrid via Google Meet and in-person.
 - The Agenda was adopted. A quorum was not present.
- Thanks to Carl Gold for helping with the memorandum of understanding (MOU) & to Kelly Emerson for attending the Recreation & Parks (R&P) Open Houses – Abe Yoffe

● **GOVERNANCE**

- Approval of April 2024 Minutes – Rachel Allshouse
 - Move this approval to next month because quorum was not established
- Treasurer's Report – Mia Walsh
 - Review Profit & Loss Statements and Budget vs. Actuals
 - See financial statements through May 6, 2024. Membership dues are at 115.05% of annual budget. Donations are at 108.68% of annual budget. Though we are only at 80.77% of General Donations, the Honor Garden donations put us over 100% of the amount budgeted. We are very pleased with this!
 - Continue to limit spending until the Reimagine Recreation MOU is signed.
 - Displays & Exhibit Budget: Expenses incurred in 2024 for the Hike Through History project, which was approved by motion several years ago. Thank you to Deb Lee for getting this project off the ground.
 - 2023 990
 - All financials were compiled and submitted using the 990 software on May 10th, 2024, prior to the May 15, 2024 deadline.

- In mid-April, we received a notice from the IRS with a penalty fee of \$1,210.93 due to the 2021 late submission of the tax report forms. After consulting with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) help line, they suggested we submit a letter to the IRS stating the reason for the lateness (submitted July 8th vs. May 15th) asking for an abatement of the fee. The letter was sent on April 3rd and we have not yet heard back regarding the status.
- Summer Camp
 - Expenses will begin soon (shirts, supplies)
 - Thank you to Ranger Anne and Ranger Mimi for 2nd Natural Wonders and Earth Skills Camp due to popularity of the July event. This camp is currently sold out as well.
- 2023 Financial Audit
 - President shall review financial audit provided by Deb Lee and Bill Curtis and share details with executive board.
 - Review of what was discussed at April meeting
 - Discussion about small purchases, approval to spend, do not need approval to spend if within budget
 - Thank you to Deb Lee and Bill Curtis for putting audit together
- Donations/Fundraising
 - Hit 100%+ of our annual budget for memberships and donations as of May 2024 and are very pleased with the support from the community.
 - In April 2024, received \$2,238.00 in membership and donations from 51 donors/members. \$1,412 of that amount was for memberships from 46 donors.
 - ACTIVITIES OR ITEMS FOR THE UPCOMING MONTH
 - Ordering new remittance envelopes is on hold until mailing address is resolved
 - Order plaques for Adirondack chairs in the Honor Garden. Order Dr. Lake and Phil Tupper's name plates. Additional native plant signage?
 - Follow up on Chimney Swift Tower Project and additional Bluebird Boxes. Emails have been received so that work order can be submitted for the concrete pad.
- Background Checks- Abe Yoffe
 - Everyone up to date
 - No one's background check expires before June 2024
- Bylaws revisions – Abe Yoffe
 - Wait until June meeting when ten members present
 - Definition of quorum vs. presence at May meeting (8 total)
- New Committee Chair Structure – Abe Yoffe
 - Ideally, different chairs for each committee. Some people are currently

doing double duty.

- Communicate to membership about committee chairs and openings.
- 8 Committees in total (Executive, Governance, Finance, Fundraising, Buildings and Grounds, Programs and Events, Communications, Volunteers)
- Suggestion to promote membership and attendance would be to greet people on weekends and invite them to future meetings. Good opportunity to discuss our mission and what we do.

- **MANAGEMENT**

- Park Staff Report – Kirk Dreier

- Kirk Dreier's first meeting back
- New scat exhibit started in March, completed in April, put on wall in May
 - Borrowed idea from Marshy Point Nature Center
 - Located on the outside bathroom on kitchen side of Willow Grove Nature Center
 - You see a box with rubber scat. When door is opened, you see a picture of the animal that left it
- Fairy Festival at Rocky May 4th and 5th
 - Ranger Breena was Earth Skills Fairy
 - County-wide program with involvement from Spoutwood Farm
 - Weather was freezing, rainy, windy, miserable
 - Most of division's staff involved
 - Ranger Kirk parking direction from main gates
 - Other projects that may involve most county staff are Juneteenth and the Colonial Market Fair
- Hydrant Repair
 - One above ground hydrant that was out of commission for 3-4 years has been repaired
 - Will enable water for outside events (close to the flag) and to water the honor garden recently expanded
 - Mr. John Lehman Sr's company installed the new line and equipment (who is also working on Sherwood's new furnace system)
- Fort McHenry School Program April 25th
 - Ranger Kirk and Ranger Breena participated
 - Educational station rotation for students
 - Presented on indigenous groups in the area before Fort was built
What they hunted, gathered, tools
 - Encouraged students to use multiple senses
- TALMAR and community garden slated to get water system or upgrade water system
- Night out with Nature (NOWN)

- 11 participants
- Well received/enjoyed
- Sandy Macon was the hostess for the evening at Sherwood
- West Towson Elementary School Outreach Program
 - Ranger Laura and Ranger Grace
 - Bluebird Boxes
 - 375 students served
- Ranger Breena received Purchasing Card (P-card) training
 - will be receiving county credit card
 - In response to Reimagining R&P
 - Ranger Kirk no longer only one who can do this
- Waiver updates
 - Merrick Family reunion canceled
 - No response yet from Bob Smith about Gilchrist's waiver
- Fall Harvest Festival and Towson Art Collective; recommendations and potential concerns
 - Discussion of all-staff vs. all-council program and how proceeds will be impacted
 - MOU is not finalized to determine sharing of revenues & expenses
 - Discussion of partnered event vs. piggybacking event
 - Will July 1 date and MOU specifics override previous plans?
 - Ranger Kirk waiting on clarification. An all-Council Event would benefit Cromwell Valley Park Council (CVPC). He was told no more "piggy backing". Still waiting for an answer of would this be the case if CVPC holds event solely?
 - Discussion about differences between a partnered event and a council-only event. Where is the line for park staff regarding planning, setting up?
 - The question is what events/activities do we want to run without county partnership? Decisions need to be made quickly.
 - Agreement to have separate discussion about this.
- Leaseholder's Report - TALMAR - Kate Joyce
 - Director of Therapeutic Recreation is resigning
 - June 6th last day
 - Goodbye lunch 5/20 at 11:30 am. Good opportunity to meet, establish communication, partner with other programs
 - CVPC will be invited on a tour of TALMAR
 - Learn what is happening
 - Kate Joyce will send email to find a date that works for most
 - Received Weinberg grant for veteran program
 - Will receive check in June
 - TALMAR listed in Department of Aging publication, Time of Your Life
 - Got frost free hydrant inside greenhouse

- pictures taken of all pipes/wire. Will be helpful for future plumbing work and maintenance.
 - Will allow for water in greenhouses after it gets turned off
 - Deer fence continuously being repaired
- Friends of Sherwood Report – Mia Walsh
 - No report
 - Activities/Items for Upcoming Month: Determine cohesive messaging for signage in this area, rather than adding or replacing individual plaques. Consider discussing Native Plants and Shrubs in addition to the donors and supporters of the Honor Garden enhancement project.
- Standing Committees
 - Building and Grounds - no report
 - Programs - Kelly Emerson
 - Highlight - In the process of the Baltimore County Recreation & Parks (BCRP) open houses, of which I was able to attend ¾, I had the opportunity to begin a conversation with Cortney Weinstock, deputy director R&P directly about events in the park, and how we might best move forward with current planning
 - Met again May 8th to further this conversation. The conversation was very positive and It is clear that the CVPC can continue to run events, have access priority for dates and collect its own fees
 - The Council can continue to host and partner with outside organizations like Towson Arts Collective (TAC)
 - The council can also continue to co-partner with park staff on events like the Fall Harvest Festival
 - The Council can continue to host and partner with outside organizations like TAC
 - We will want to clearly define what kinds of events we want to move forward with and clearly delineate boundaries
 - Discussion of the chain of command within R&P
 - Discussion of broader Projects, Proposals & Initiatives (PPI) application process in the past and council's purview/input on future events.
 - What does that look like? What is our role in running/managing park events vs. supporting/advocating for the park
 - CVPC input on non-council events may be more complex
 - Gilchrist - June 9 update
 - All needed paperwork submitted to Debbie
 - Requested waiver as per BCRP guidelines and awaiting response

- Park staff has approved use of the white tent
- Discussion about waiver process
 - Consider a shortlist of organizations who do/do not have to go through the waiver process.
 - County has not specified the waiver process/timeline. Currently states “Hold for permit processing and additional discussion.”
- Merrick Family Picnic
 - Mary Anne Pinkard shared they are not certain that they will be able to move forward. The process took too long for them to plan and some family members are now unable to attend. There is a possibility of future events.
- Fall Harvest Festival
 - Planning in full swing - most recent planning document to be shared
 - Current focus securing vendors and marketing
 - Have food vendors
 - In conversation directly with Cortney Weinstock regarding permits/fees/structure
 - TAC advertisement is out
 - Consideration of what activities are co-sponsored vs. council-sponsored. Look at finances and keep all options on the table for now.
 - Define line of support from park staff with or without it being a sponsored event
 - Agreement to have a separate conversation about details
 - Direct answers needed
 - Feedback in writing
 - What is in the MOU will be the final say
- NEW PPI to submit: Chesapeake Shakespeare Company (CSC)
 - Proposes to bring their Shakespeare Wagon to Cromwell Valley Park (CVP) and perform A Midsummer Night’s Dream free to the public as part of a grant from the State of Maryland and the National Endowment for the Arts
 - Park staff verbally approved date. July 20th from 7-10pm
 - CSC would like a rain date of July 21st
 - Specific location tbd based on meeting with CSC, park staff and council reps
 - Discussed lawn as most accessible and flat space
 - Mobile wagon needs nothing except space and parking for approx 75
 - They will clean up trash
 - Open to the idea of vendors
 - Certificate of insurance would be needed (Ranger Kirk)

- Communications – Mia Walsh
 - May and June programs are on the website and Facebook.
 - July programs added to Facebook, but not website.
 - **Should CVPC add July programs to the website, for which the revenue is being collected by CivicRec, WITHOUT CVPC having a MOU?**
 - Printed Newsletter
 - Summer newsletter ready to go to print
 - July calendar is in the printed newsletter, without instructions on how the community can sign up for them (CivicRec website).
 - Baltimore County will no longer be paying for the postage for these newsletters (or until June 30, 2024?)
 - We applied for reduced postage for non-profit marketing
 - Looking for feedback from CVPC on:
 - Kirk: Will the county pay for the postage if we promote July/August programs?
 - Should we continue with a printed newsletter this year? (We have the funds in the budget).
 - Consensus not to make any changes.
 - Keep paper for now
 - Should we promote CivicRec programs, without the Council having a MOU with the County if they are not paying for the printing or postage?
 - Feedback that as an Executive Board, we exist to support the park and park initiatives
 - Keep calendar for now
 - **Coming Month:** Continued work on Membership Renewal Communications as many expired on 3/31/24. See Membership
 - **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 and the Summer Newsletter.
 - **Pat Novak** for adding July program registration information on Facebook.
- Volunteers – Abe Yoffe on behalf of Pat Novak

Last Name	Hours	Category/Event
Allshouse	10	Emails, notes, meetings, document review.
Childs		

Last Name	Hours	Category/Event
Cruise	17.5	Wrote an article for the upcoming newsletter, Researched the Land Acknowledgement Process, distribution of NOWN. Family time at CVP, Planning Committee Meeting and etc for the Fall Harvest Festival
Curtis	6	Critter Cam
Emerson	42	meetings, fall harvest planning, MOU prep, historical documents organizing
Gold	24	Revising MOU, researching and writing articles for newsletter, email, trail guide, guiding hikes
Lee	15	Board meeting, hike through history project, fall festival planning, Weed Warriors
Novak	15	NOWN, Board meeting, Facebook posts
Rector	12	Office visits, Park visits, trails
Reed	8	Board meeting, trail maintenance
Schroeder	2	Spring Planting, Habitat Explorers
Shapiro	20	Communications, Membership, General Administration
Walsh	30	Social media, website, membership/deposits, tax, summer camp, meetings, letters, grants, minutes, reimagining, Children's Garden Club, MOU review/notes, quickbooks, email (added to report 5/14/24)
Yoffe	16	meeting prep, minutes review/edits, emails about various topics, meeting with other Nature Council leaders to discuss Reimagining/MOU
Non Council volunteers	15	events committee

232.5 Total hours

- Finance – Rick Childs
 - Nothing to report
- Membership – Mia Walsh on behalf of Kim Shapiro
 - Memberships continue to come in. Fifty thank-you notes with membership cards went out in March. Growth of membership through the membership 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. **Invitations to renew to current members who have not already done so will be included in the summer edition of the CVPC newsletter.**

- **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. Thanks to Dave Schroeder for including membership appeals in CVPC newsletters.

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CURRENT MEMBERSHIP DATA:	
Total memberships	
as of 5/04/24:	443
Last report (Apr.)	404
Lifetime:	16
Patron:	6
Sustaining:	27
Contributing:	39

- **OLD BUSINESS**

- Protection of dining room walls
 - Picture of stanchions shown. Small sections of wall need to be protected.
 - Base of stanchions sticks out from the wall. If trying to protect paper, block off entry.
 - Needed most for events when people use the room. Good to have.
- Chimney Swift Towers – Carl Gold
 - See Governance
- County Grant Request re: footbridges over streams – Abe Yoffe
 - County grant writer wanted support from neighborhood associations. Abe reached out to two local organizations and will follow up. Due in two days.
- Clean up of Betty’s Pond
 - Ranger Kirk met with the Department of Environment.
 - Initial assessment indicated it shouldn’t be touched because it is wetlands
 - Earthen dam is broken down a bit. Discussed raising it to raise the water level to help organisms in the food chain. He will follow up and learn more.
- “Hike through History”- posts for Quick Response (QR) code plaques - Mia Walsh on behalf of Deb Lee
 - Posts are to specifications. About half of the posts already in place are rotted.

- Question of replacing some vs. replacing all posts
 - Decided to replace them all.
- **NEW BUSINESS**
 - MOU with the County/R&P - Abe Yoffe & Carl Gold
 - Communication to membership about changes
 - Met with other nature council leaders
 - Discussion about thoughts, initial draft of MOU
 - Pull everyone’s comments together and making master document
 - Thursday, May 16 - Confirm attending meeting at Irvine Nature Center
Kelly, Mia, Abe planning on going
 - Focus on county approval process of events
 - Timelines - needed for events that happen in this park
 - Visibility of process. Some sections are not filled out.
 - Kelly Emerson gave kudos to Abe Yoffe regarding the budget letter. The more signatures the better to indicate our attention.
 - Motion to approve United States Post Office Box -Mia Walsh
 - “Rent” an address here
 - Further discussion needed to consider how we occupy space and the council's presence in Sherwood building. Inventory what council owns, where it is, etc.
 - Concerns about mowers damaging the bottom of fencing
 - Need to properly edge/weed whack
- The meeting adjourned at 7:50pm.
- Submitted by Rachel Allshouse, Council Secretary