



Cromwell Valley Park Council (CVPC)

Meeting Minutes

June 8, 2024, 6:00 PM

- **COUNCIL MEETING ATTENDANCE**
 - In-person: Abe Yoffe, Joe Rector, Deb Lee, Rachel Allshouse, Carl Gold, Stacey Cruise, Rick Childs, Kelly Emerson, Kate Joyce
 - Virtually in attendance: Mia Walsh
 - Absent: Pat Novak, Bill Curtis, Kim Shapiro
 - 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: 6:04 PM
 - The meeting was hybrid via Google Meet and in-person.
 - The Agenda was adopted. A quorum was present.
 - Thanks to Kelly Emerson & Rachel Allshouse for taking an inventory of CVPC's possessions in the Sherwood House.

- **GOVERNANCE**
 - CVPC approved June 2024 Minutes – Rachel Allshouse
 - Treasurer's Report – Mia Walsh
 - Review Profit & Loss Statements and Budget vs. Actuals
 - 2023 990
 - Regarding the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) penalty fee of \$1,210.93 (2021 late submission), we received notice on June 26th that the penalty and fee are removed. We do not have to pay any money for this penalty.
 - Year-To-Date 2024
 - 17% over budget for membership dues. 12% over budget for annual donations. Do not anticipate seeing a further increase until December.
 - Begin working with Staff to see what they would like added to CVP in 2025.
 - Arts in the Park and Fall Harvest Festival
 - Ongoing discussions with Baltimore County Recreation and Parks (BCRP) regarding how the event will be a "partnered event", including the splitting of income and expenses.
 - As the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) discussions are not closer to being resolved, we must take cautious attention to spending in this arena so as not to lose money.
 - Budgeted \$3,500 for income and \$2,500 for expenses.
 - See individual sections on agenda for detailed 2024 spending.

- Summer Camp
 - The County is requesting \$12,800 in Summer Camp Staff salaries for 2024. The County provided two conflicting reports as to what the credit balance is in the Gifts and Grants G/L account for CVP. (\$5,281.73 vs. \$1,847.70).
 - Given the inconsistencies of the County accounting provided, the Treasurer went through a thorough review of the charges placed on CVPC starting in Fall of 2022 and found the Council was overcharged for staff salaries. (A separate report was submitted to the President and will be sent to the Board separately.)
 - The President has requested a separate meeting on Thursday, July 18 at 9:00am with Park Staff and Management to review the audit.
- Displays and Exhibits
 - In July 2023, Jim Gephart donated \$1,000 towards the Displays and Exhibits Line Item for his generous contributions to the park's displays. During 7/1/23-6/26/24, \$1,348.49 has been spent, with \$389.11 spent in 2024. This **does not include** the \$1,054 which was approved out of budget for the Hike Through History project.
 - The CVPC will need to decide future payments for the Displays and Exhibits after 7/1/24, when BCRP is taking over park expenses. **Staff should check with the Treasurer before making purchases.**
 - Spending log provided in the agenda.
- Children's Garden and Adult Garden Club
 - For Winter (Jan-April 2024) and Spring (May-June 2024) registration fees in CampBrain, we received \$2,194.00 in fees. From Fall 2023 through 6/26/24, we spent \$2,161.43 on Children's Garden expenses, NOT INCLUDING the \$700 grant from Pauline Ryder, which was spent by Anne Wedgeworth on 4/10/24.
 - **It is the Treasurer's recommendation that we no longer permit more expenses for the Children's Garden to be paid for by CVPC.**
 - Note that if Ms. Ryder continues to make a donation in honor of her sister, Anne Wedgeworth, 100% will be spent at the wish of Ranger Anne towards any CVP garden or purchases she requests.
- Donations/Fundraising
 - Donations and Memberships continue to slow in this period.
 - A 2024 fundraising snapshot was included in the agenda
 - 371 donors, 462 donations, \$24,760.01 value of donations
 - ACTIVITIES OR ITEMS FOR THE UPCOMING MONTH
 - Order new remittance envelopes. Will put PayPal and Venmo QR codes on the envelopes this year. (ON HOLD UNTIL THE MAILING ADDRESS ISSUE IS RESOLVED.)
 - Order plaques/name plates for Adirondack chairs in the Honor Garden. Additional Native Plant signage?
- Background Checks- Abe Yoffe
 - Everyone is up to date. The next expiration date is mid-August.

- New Committee Structure & Participation – Abe Yoffe
 - An Email was sent to membership asking for involvement in this process. One response to date. We can make another push with the goal of putting this in place at the annual meeting in September. Members present at the board meeting were encouraged to use word of mouth to help get people involved.
- **MANAGEMENT**
 - Park Staff Report – Kirk Dreier
 - Summer camps are going okay even with the heat.
 - Director Stacey Cruise provided positive feedback for Camp Chickadee.
 - Shared a binder of rewritten, detailed agendas for each level of camp this year.
 - Each level has a cute name. Involved extensive planning. Includes information for parents, theme names, information for staff planned out minute by minute, and flexibility embedded into each agenda.
 - A new Wild Seed Exchange exhibit is being finished
 - The box is large with shelving inside where individually packed seeds will be enclosed. Pawpaw, licorice seed, and cup plant will be stored.
 - Ranger Anne is working out “rules” for taking and leaving seeds.
 - Project was mostly funded by the County, but CVPC paid for some materials. Structure built by Captain Jim. Not finished yet, but will be at the Nature Center. Similar to the “Seed Exchange” at Oregon Ridge.
 - Sherwood water system has been upgraded with a UV light to be the solution to any bacteria in the water and well issues which has been a yearly chronic issue.
 - Ranger Kirk’s fingers crossed because when it’s been addressed in the past they typically chlorinated the well which then takes days to clear.
 - The Polaris vehicle is back but still having issues. Suspected electrical concerns that might need to be addressed by the dealer.
 - The Kubota was borrowed for the fourth of July holiday at Rocky Point and Miami Beach parks. The vehicle was used for the mountains of trash. Hopefully they disinfect it! Ranger Breena was sequestered there for parking duty.
 - Seasonal Naturalist Training was the first 7 days of June. Recruits got basic framework for environmental education, day camps, weekend staff, seasonal training. The age minimum for this is 18.
 - Juneteenth was held on 6/15 at Banneker Museum. It was a nice event, but they didn’t have the advertising needed to make the event more widely known. Hopefully that will be better next year.
 - Moana movie showing at the park 6/5. 40 people showed up. Thanks to Mia Walsh for posting it to the CVPC website.
 - As of 7/1 all programs have to be on CivicRec to access and sign up for them. There were no takers for either of this past weekend’s programs. Unknown if that was due to the heat or CivicRec (or both).
 - CVPC has the calendar and link to CivicRec on the website’s homepage.

- CVP will have second bilingual stream hike with Paola from Holt Park. She led one last year and we had several families come. We hope to repeat that.
- Collaboration with other facilities continue, such as Marshy Point Nature Center and we cut a hickory tree for the January bow course.
- Bob Smith will reschedule tomorrow's webex meeting. It has been canceled.
- An inquiry was made about additional funding from the county. Ranger Kirk shared potential changes; taking away Mondays, another activity coordinator, and park staff asked to stay open until nightfall. There are concerns from staff about staying open until nightfall such as CVP's system not tied to police.
- Leaseholder's Report - TALMAR - Kate Joyce
 - TALMAR is still operating without a lease. There is a concern that this is not being addressed by BCRP, despite continual efforts.
 - 14 veterans completed the Beginning Farmer Training Program.
 - Thank you to Kelly Emerson for chairs to elevate the event.
 - 11 veterans enrolled in the Advanced Program, which will run for 15 weeks.
 - Sky is the Limit Camp was canceled. Kate Joyce reached out to see if TALMAR can help, but has not heard back. Jessica Cook Thomas oversees therapeutic recreation, recreation centers, and special events.
 - Watering every day due to heat.
 - Farm stand is running Wednesdays. Eggplant and peppers are abundant.
 - Participating at a fundraising event at Union Craft Brewing on 7/10 from 4:00-10:00pm. They will donate \$1 for every beer/burger they sell.
 - TALMAR hit goal for participants last fiscal year with 300 unique individuals.
 - Participation for TALMAR traditionally is annual (not daily). Starting July 1, they are also counting daily.
 - No word from Baltimore County on Farm Stand location on CVP grounds.
 - There is a lack of communication. Consideration of TALMAR using a food vendor permit as a way to sell food on grounds? Ranger Kirk will ask.
- Friends of Sherwood Report – Mia Walsh
 - No updates
- Standing Committees
 - Building and Grounds - Rick Childs
 - The old gator continues to have problems.
 - Used in field work to manicure trails and maintain weeds over paths. Without AC, this has been difficult in recent heat.
 - Consider buying new instead of continually repairing old one.
 - Mia Walsh asked for a target for equipment/pricing and can look into available funds (money in budget, donation money, lawnmower fund, trails committee fund, option to fundraise). Potentially \$13,400 available.
 - Rick Childs will discuss the Building and Grounds Committee with members to gauge interest of serving on the committee.
 - Acknowledgement that volunteers work very hard. Traditionally they work twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but often work on other days. Sometimes more than 10 people are observed working. Ranger Kirk shared that visitors stop and compliment the maintenance regularly.

- Events and Programs - Kelly Emerson
 - PPI's and upcoming events requiring approval
 - Nothing new, but will check in with Debbie Trout.
 - Fall Harvest Festival - September 28th - planning
 - An email was sent on 7/7 providing a detailed, full update of planning for this event.
 - A meeting with BCRP will be held on 7/11 at 10:00 am.
 - Invited individuals: Kelly Emerson, Carl Gold, Mia Walsh, Abe Yoffe, Kirk Drier, Breena Doyle, Cortney Weinstock, Ben Porter.
 - Notes from May meeting included in July agenda. What is the desired outcome of the meeting?
 - A copy of the Fairie Fest agreement and Carl Gold's comments were provided via email on 7/7.
 - Current focus, securing vendors and exhibitors.
 - Help needed. Need to finalize, focus on marketing.
 - The CVPC was asked to review the action items list emailed on 7/7 and share thoughts/feedback with Kelly.
 - Next meeting Friday, 7/12 at 11:15.
 - Kelly Emerson has been researching past corporate relationships and potential new ones for sponsorships.
 - Set up a meeting with Mia/others to discuss best structures.
 - Debbie Trout is working on Towson ArtsCollective's (TAC) paperwork. Kelly Emerson will update this.
 - TAC will need an additional tent.
 - Looking into private funding.
 - Suggestion that the council consider obtaining a tent so we are not reliant on BCRP.
 - Initial estimates for purchase range from \$800-\$6,000 for a 20x30 pole tent.
 - Other considerations-installation method.
 - Chesapeake Shakespeare Company (CSC) - July 20 (rain date July 21)
 - <https://www.chesapeakeshakespeare.com/beyond/>
 - A Midsummer Night's Dream free to the public from a grant from the State of MD and the National Endowment for the Arts and others .
 - Arriving at 3:00, Pre show at 6:30, Show at 7:30
 - Paperwork update - Food truck paperwork in the works. They are planning two food trucks (Once Upon a Potato and pizza) and one ice cream truck. No one will need us for electricity. A separate conversation will occur to discuss paperwork, setup time for food trucks, parking for food trucks.
 - Park staff and Kelly Emerson met with CSC staff on May 20th.

- Event will take place on Sherwood lawn dell with a truck just inside the road.
 - Mobile wagon needs nothing.
 - They will install an additional small tent canopy for “tickets” and information
 - We will organize parking for about 75 cars.
 - They will clean up the trash.
 - Need volunteers. Tape to help direct vehicles. Kelly Emerson will organize volunteers.
 - We can have a CVPC table in their tent. Planning and volunteers needed.
 - Find tablecloth with CVPC logo/banner on it? In closet?
 - Do we want to offer chairs to CVPC members or individuals who join the council at the event?
 - Must be “Membership Drive.”
 - Kelly Emerson has 100 chairs and has seen this done successfully elsewhere.
 - Need volunteers to man the table and help with chair distribution if we decide yes.
 - Marketing – see flier. Banners are up. (<https://www.cromwellvalleypark.org/event/a-midsummer-nights-dream/>)
 - Additional efforts here would be appreciated.
 - Accessibility - porta pots. Kirk sent email requesting the move of a handicap accessible porta pots from the Bridge to near the handicapped parking at the Sherwood House
 - Accessibility-private funding secured for ASL interpreters.
 - Discussion about cost for this accommodation
 - Thank you to TALMAR.
 - \$1,000-\$1,600 total cost because so last minute.
 - Does CVPC want to match TALMAR? No money in the budget. Someone would make a motion. If no decision today, revisit in August.
 - Is the county obligated to provide these accommodations? Kelly reached out with email. Ranger Kirk can also inquire.
 - CVPC can advertise that they are providing this accommodation.
 - Does not have to be paid in advance so time to work out who is paying for this.
 - CVPC’s role and vision in future programming and accessibility/accommodations.
 - Press release - pending language
- Communications – Mia Walsh

- Website Updates: Shakespeare in the Park, Weed Warriors, Movie Night.
 - Pat Novak is adding them to facebook.
- Kim Shapiro sent out information to all members regarding signing up for programs starting July 1st on CivicRec.
 - A request was made to hear how registrations have been going through CivicRec. Ranger Kirk shared he can look at numbers related to who is signing up for events.
 - Is the county making a tutorial “how to” video? Debbie Trout can provide resources to people in person.
 - Council members reported having difficulty finding future events more than a few weeks out. They also reported that they have given up on using the website, but will try again.
- 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 and the Summer Newsletter.
 - **Pat Novak** for adding July & August program registration information on Facebook.
- Volunteers – Abe Yoffe on behalf of Pat Novak
 - Night Out With Nature (NOWN)
 - NOWN is a \$56.80 deficit to date.
 - Discussed changing name from NOWN to CVPC Speaker Series.
 - Discussed the status of this event. Is it partnered or other? Clarification is needed. Is it in the MOU? Agree to further discuss this in a separate meeting.
 - Shining Star Award
 - Initial email communication to obtain nominations will be sent by Rachel Allshouse. Mia Walsh will order the plaque(s).
 - The tally of reported JUNE volunteer hours and estimates of known activity for board members is shown below. 380.5 hours total.

Last Name	Hours	Category/Event
Allshouse	10	Meetings, revisions, emails
Childs	224	17 volunteers BG&T
Cruise	28.5	History/Culture Ad Hoc Committee, Family Programming, Visits
Curtis		
Emerson	61	Gilchrist event, meetings, scanning documents, event planning
Gold		
Lee		

Novak	6	Facebook, NOWN, volunteer hours
Rector		Office visits, administration
Reed		
Schroeder		Volunteered at Marshy Point
Shapiro		
Walsh	35	Estimated: Treasurer, memberships
Yoffe	16	Meeting prep, council meeting, nature council leaders meeting, meeting with Rec/Parks rep about Fall Festival, emails, phone calls

- Finance – Rick Childs
 - Nothing to report.
- Membership – Kim Shapiro
 - Changes in membership are minimal this time of year.
 - **Coming month:** Continue to send out thank-you cards/membership cards to renewing households.
 - **Recognition:** Thanks go to Mia Walsh for gathering membership data from all of the sources, inputting membership data into CampBrain and forwarding records of membership purchases. Thanks to Dave Schroeder for including membership appeals in CVPC newsletters.
 - **CURRENT MEMBERSHIP DATA:**
 - Total memberships as of 7/6/24 452
 - Last Report (Jun) 448
 - Lifetime 16
 - Patron 6
 - Sustaining 27
 - Contributing 39
- Ad Hoc Committee - History & Culture - Stacey Cruise
 - A detailed report of the Initial Planning Meeting held on 6/26/24 was provided in the July Agenda. The purpose was to develop a strategic plan to highlight and preserve CVP’s historical and cultural heritage.
 - Four-Point Focus and Mission:
 - 1. Indigenous Heritage
 - 2. Colonial and Agricultural History
 - 3. Industrial Influence
 - 4. Conservation Movement
 - Purposes:
 - 1. Recruitment
 - 2. Engagement
 - 3. Support
 - 4. Volunteer Recruitment
 - 5. Preservation
 - 6. Research Accessibility
 - Mission Statement: The committee continues to work on a mission

statement, ensuring it aligns with the overall goals.

- Land Acknowledgment and Labor Agreement definitions and explanations were provided. They are essential for fostering an inclusive and respectful community that values and honors the contributions of all its members, past and present.
 - Sample Occasions to Pronounce the Land and Labor Acknowledgments: Event Opening Ceremony, Educational Program Series Launch, Council Meetings, Community Engagement
 - On 6/27/24, a virtual meeting was held with Dr. Ryan Koons to gain insights to draft a meaningful acknowledgment statement. The committee is searching for a Labor Acknowledgment expert to guide the writing of this important statement.
 - Next Steps: Finalize the labor and land acknowledgment agreement, begin recruitment efforts for volunteers and community leaders, establish a recurring column in the newsletter, historical photo display.
 - A meeting was held on 7/8/24. The following items were drafted and presented for approval at the Board meeting:
 - **Land Acknowledgment:** The Cromwell Valley Park Council acknowledges the history of the land we now steward. It once provided for the Piscataway, Susquehannock, and other Indigenous peoples, who nurtured it for generations. We honor their enduring legacy. We pledge to continue this stewardship tradition by protecting and preserving Cromwell Valley Park.
 - **Labor Acknowledgment:** We pay tribute to all those whose labor helped shape this land. These laborers included the enslaved, indentured servants, sharecroppers, and settlers. We acknowledge their contributions. There is a special focus on CVPC's duty to continue stewardship of land. We are trailblazers in these efforts.
 - Acknowledgements should be short, so that when it is spoken, people will pay attention. The information is based on history as far back as we know. It shows that in the modern day, we respect it. What is not said in the acknowledgements themselves will be showcased in events, articles, and work of the committee. It will pique interest on further programming as it relates to history.
 - Both acknowledgments recognize the history of this park and that we are here to support, celebrate, and acknowledge this history.
 - **A motion passed to adopt the Land and Labor Acknowledgements.**
 - Next step is show labor acknowledgement to Dr. Koons. Stacey Cruise will send to one more person to ensure accuracy. Any feedback received will be shared with the committee/CVPC. Once complete, we can share with other councils.
 - The goal for the committee is not to stand alone, but to infuse into all that we do with other committees.
 - The efforts of the committee will bring stories forward and increase visibility. It will be meaningful and significant to educate and connect with people.
- **NEW BUSINESS**
 - CVPC material/equipment inventory- Kelly Emerson & Rachel Allshouse
 - A working document was shared on screen, listing items, locations and quantity.

- Work is not complete. “Closet room” still needs to be inventoried.
- Double check what may/may not be BCPS. Known items in “birdhouse” room.
- What should be done with old technology?

- **OLD BUSINESSES**

- MOU with Baltimore County and BCRP - Abe Yoffe
 - Plan to meet by the end of the July to discuss the MOU and responses.
 - There are still sections not completed.
 - Abe Yoffe will share the email outlining updates and timeline from BCRP.
 - Nature councils cannot have donation boxes or merchandise at parks.
 - The purpose of our donation box is animal care.
 - Overall concern about the role of Councils being diminished. Should we consider a worst case scenario/plan B? (ie Friends of Cromwell Valley Park, meet offsite).
 - How can we ensure the MOU gets signed in a timely manner?
 - There is a focus on the MOU. It takes time to work through the process.
 - There is the belief that staff in the County Executive’s office understand and value the need and role of nature councils and what we do.
- Reduced postage for non-profit mailings - Abe Yoffe
 - Actively working through this process.
- Protection of dining room walls - Deb Lee
 - Decision to hold off for now. Unsure if stanchions will serve intended purpose.
 - Continue to limit access and food in the room. If we want to buy something for this, we can use the Sherwood House budget.
- Chimney Swift Towers – Carl Gold
 - The county needs a base built before the concrete can be poured.
 - Whoever is building the tower needs to build the base so that bolts can be put in place.
 - There are no dimensions for a base in the book. Where is the book?
- County Grant Request re: footbridges over streams – Abe Yoffe
 - The grant request has been submitted. No new information at this time.
- Motion to approve US Post Office Box - Mia Walsh
 - Waiting on this for now.
 - Ranger Kirk plans to contact Megan Barger and Eric Duce as follow up to this.
- Hike Through History - Deb Lee
 - Signs have been made. A sample provided. Wooden poles have been made/cut.
 - Deb Lee and Wayne of the trails crew determined existing poles should be replaced. Signs were specified to new posts, not old ones. Holes do not line up. Company will recut holes for free to old posts. In order to get holes in the correct places, Deb Lee needs one of the old signs.
 - Are the numbers for poles weather resistant?
 - The “Pool House” location was discussed
 - Do we want a hike through history sign in the location given the condition of the building?
 - It has historical value and Ranger Kirk ideally has a plan for an exhibit.
 - Is there a post there?

- The board decided to keep the August 12 meeting on the calendar.
- Discussion about how we can help support park staff during this time of transition and what CVPC's role is. Working within the parameters of the MOU, how can we make funds to channel back into the park and staff activities?
- The meeting adjourned at 8:26pm.
- Submitted by Rachel Allshouse, Council Secretary