



Cromwell Valley Park Council (CVPC)

Meeting Minutes

June 10, 2024, 6:00 PM

● **COUNCIL MEETING ATTENDANCE**

- In-person: Abe Yoffe, Rachel Allshouse, Carl Gold, Bill Curtis, Stacey Cruise, Rick Childs, Kelly Emerson, Kate Joyce
- Virtually in attendance: Pat Novak, Kim Shapiro
- Absent: Joe Rector, Deb Lee, Mia Walsh
- 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 present.
- Thanks to Mia for combining the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) comments from the other Nature Council leaders into a document that can be shared with Baltimore County Recreation & Parks (BCRP).
 - Ability to track changes
 - Meeting next week to review before being sent back to county
 - Possibility of meetings with individual nature councils

● **GOVERNANCE**

- The CVPC approved March, April, and May 2024 Minutes – Rachel Allshouse
- Treasurer's Report – Abe Yoffe on behalf of Mia Walsh
 - Review Profit & Loss Statements and Budget vs. Actuals
 - Year-To-Date 2024
 - June will be our last month to see any income from Internal Public Programs. Income currently is at \$1,806.30 of the \$5,000 budget. The income won't change significantly between now and the end of the month.
 - The Summer Newsletter will be published soon and that will increase our expenses to approximately 75% of budget, which is in tune with our 4 quarterly newsletters.
 - In the process of non-profit status for US postage. There is an up-front cost, but it will save money in the long run. County has been paying for postage up until this point.
 - 2023 990
 - Regarding Internal Revenue Service (IRS) penalty fee of \$1,210.93

(2021 late submission), a letter was received on 5/23/24 from the IRS stating that they are in receipt of the April letter and require an additional 60 days for their response to us.

■ Summer Camp

- The County is requesting \$12,800 in Summer Camp Staff salaries for 2024. In December 2023, CVPC sent a \$10,000 check, which covered an unofficial audit of \$4,718 deficit in staff salaries CVPC “owes”, leaving a surplus of \$5,281.83 CVPC has pre-paid towards the 2024 Summer Camp Salaries. The President has requested through Kirk that the County provide an updated audit report. When Rachel Jablon was contacted by the Treasurer in December 2023, she was unable to provide that report due to the switching of payroll to their new “Workforce” system. We anticipate having to pay the \$12,800 - \$5,281.83 or \$7,518.17 towards salaries once the financial pieces are agreed upon.

- Data and feedback was presented after reviewing the numbers/books. This was triple checked by Ranger Laura, Ranger Kirk and Ranger Breena, and through Workday

- Ranger Kirk provided the document “Cromwell Valley Park General Leger (CVP GL)” from 7/1/22-6/30/23 to Fiscal Year 2024, 7/1/23-6/3-/24 itemizing how \$10,000 from 12/12/23 was spent.
- Ranger Kirk provided a “Summer Camp Estimate 2024” document.
- Amended request total estimate to \$10,996.20 (original request minus \$1,847.70). A check for \$11,000 should cover everything.
- A request was made to verify the starting balance of \$4,662.74.
- Computer records and paper copies are kept.
- The documents will be shared and reviewed with treasurer, Mia Walsh.

■ 2023 Financial Audit

- The President will present a response to the Financial Audit Questions presented by Deb Lee and Bill Curtis.
 - Drafted, and will be sent out this week.
 - Realize tax exempt status for purchases.
- Regarding Internal Revenue Service (IRS) penalty fee of \$1,210.93 (2021 late submission), a letter was received on 5/23/24 from the IRS stating that they are in receipt of the April letter and require an additional 60 days for their response to us.

- Special recognition to Deb Lee for her continued work on the Hike Through History project.

- Donations/Fundraising
 - Donations and Memberships continue to slow in this period.
 - 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. (ON HOLD UNTIL THE MAILING ADDRESS ISSUE IS RESOLVED.)
 - Order plaques for Adirondack chairs in the Honor Garden. Order Dr. Lake's and Phil Tupper's name plates for Adirondack chairs. Additional Native Plant signage?
 - Background Checks- Abe Yoffe
 - Everyone will be up to date.
 - President will provide updates for any changes in the last two weeks.
 - Vote on adoption of revised Bylaws – Abe Yoffe
 - Able to vote today because 10 CVPC members present
 - The President made a motion to adopt the new bylaws.
 - The motion passed unanimously.
 - The Bylaws will be resent via email to the Board
 - New Committee Structure & Participation – Abe Yoffe
 - Reviewed committees and potential chairpersons
 - Draft a communication to be shared with CVPC membership to increase participation
 - The President has a working document to organize this
- **MANAGEMENT**
 - Park Staff Report – Kirk Dreier
 - The park staff was incredibly busy and still are this month.
 - It kicked off after Memorial Day with Seasonal Naturalist Training.
 - It is still going on. Tomorrow is the last day ending with presentations to Senior Staff.
 - May Night Out with Nature (NOWN)
 - Dr. Laura Johnson presented a program about world wide pollinators
 - 15 people in attendance
 - Visit the Nature Center Day on Mother's Day weekend
 - Over 100 visitors to the center
 - School Field trip season ended on May 23rd.
 - Saturday morning bird walks ended May 25th.
 - BCPS had 310 children here on May 31st for BioBlitz, self-led field stations
 - Gilcrest held their event on Sunday, June 9.
 - About 350 in attendance
 - Gilcrest had another tent delivered which was not in their

contract. We allowed it with conditions.

- Ongoing projects
 - “Whose Scat is That?” was completed.
 - The Egg exhibit needed repair; as the kids love it so much, they love it to death by pounding on the buttons.
 - Shelving was put up in Ranger Laura’s office to help with her organizing.
 - “Seed Library”
- Animal News:
 - Our good ole possum “Stumpy” went to the Possum Stump in the sky, when she died at the ripe old age of 3. About average for possums.
 - We moved our box turtles to the outside cage that used to be Stumpy’s and they seem to like the light, air and soil to walk on.
 - Unfortunately, our one female turkey escaped and we think she met her end in the jaws of a predator.
 - Wayne Skinner found her feathers on the Sherwood (orange trail).
 - We have ten (five of her eggs) incubating and will be attempting to incubate them to replace her.
 - We added a Largemouth Bass to the pond tank at Willow Grove.
 - Plan to add sunfish.
 - Mr. Schwartz (rat snake) seems to like his playpen next to his tank. It allows him to slither up and down branches placed within.
 - We had a vole problem in the Children’s Educational Garden but natural controls were employed and they seem to be gone. Vole away oil was sprayed in and around them and black rat snakes were released inside.
- The seasonal naturalists went to first aid and CPR training last week.
- Staff will be helping out at Banneker Museum Saturday, June 15 for their Juneteenth celebration.
 - Ranger Kirk will be the parking liaison.
- Leaseholder’s Report - TALMAR - Kate Joyce
 - No response from BCRP about holding farm stand at Willow Grove
 - State has to approve it because items are being sold.
 - Farm stand will be held at TALMAR unless we hear back
 - Wednesdays from 4:00-6:00 pm
 - No movement on lease
 - Kate Joyce attended a BCRP meeting
 - Participants in the Beginning Farmer Training Program for Veterans course will graduate this month
 - No active head of therapeutic recreation at this time

- Volunteers/participants have exceeded the expected number for the year
 - Offer to give CVC tour of TALMAR
 - Date needs to be chosen. Late summer/early fall suggested.
 - Friends of Sherwood Report – Mia Walsh
 - No report
 - Standing Committees
 - Building and Grounds - Rick Childs
 - A list of activities the Building and Grounds Committee would like to continue doing at the park was sent to be added as an addendum to the MOU.
 - The committee has been very busy, especially after last week's storm. Many areas needed to be cleared.
 - All major pieces of motorized equipment have been put away.
 - Events and Programs - Kelly Emerson
 - Gilchrist - June 9
 - Wonderful event/all parties satisfied. Gilchrist staff/ volunteers were lovely. Very peaceful, healing vibe.
 - Tent Misorder created a last minute issue that was easily solved by Loane brothers staff who switched the delivered tents from being grounded by stakes to heavy water barrels.
 - Evans parking staff was wonderful. Together we parked about 120 cars in the field between 12:45 and 2:30. Their staff was very professional, flexible and charming. They have expressed willingness to come back and help at other events.
 - Participants were a very visibly diverse group. Families and individuals of all ages. A large majority of the participants (Kelly Emerson spoke with) were newcomers to the park and took home maps and activity forms promising to come back.
 - Gilchrist volunteers have also offered to come back for other events.
 - Fall Harvest Festival - Saturday, September 28
 - Planning is now back in full swing after meeting with park staff and Cortney Winestock.
 - Notes from Cortney regarding this meeting were shared.
 - Purpose: Partnership and pathway Forward for 2024 Fall Festival

- Chart of Outline/Overview of Past Scope for Towson Art Council (TAC), CVPC, and BCRP.
- To be continued is an overview of what is received by each party (alcohol sales, vendor fees, parking).
- Next steps:
 - Scope of partnership
 - Policies for approval/collection of funds
 - Transitional year agreement
 - Review Faerie Fest agreement as a start (pending Office of Law approval)
- Some conversation should happen here as we prepare a response.
 - There is some implicit underestimation about the amount of volunteer support required.
 - Concern of future parking discussed. Will it have to be done by BCRP staff (not this year's event)? Will this be the case for CVPC-only events and/or partnered events?
 - Reference Faerie Fest agreement as an example when preparing a response.
- Current focus, securing vendors and exhibitors.
 - Help may be needed here.
- Need to finalize and move on to marketing.
 - Help may be needed here.
- Research into past corporate relationships and potential new ones for sponsorship. Hoping to set up a meeting with Mia Walsh/others to discuss best structures.
- Debbie is working on TAC's paperwork.
- TAC will need an additional tent.
- A concern about vendor exclusivity was shared.
- A logo needs to be prepared for this year's event. An example of last year's flyer was shared.
- Banners may still exist.

- Shakespeare Beyond - July 20 (Rain Date July 21)
 - Chesapeake Shakespeare Company (CSC) will bring their Shakespeare wagon to Cromwell Valley Park 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.
 - Paperwork is complete.
 - Park staff and Kelly Emerson met with CSC tech and marketing staff on May 20th.
 - Event will take place on Sherwood lawn dell with truck just inside the road. Mobile wagon needs nothing. They will install an additional small tent canopy for "tickets" and information.
 - Plan for parking for about 75 cars.
 - They will clean up the trash.
 - We can have a CVPC table inside their tent
 - box for donations
 - CVPC tablecloth
 - Opportunities for additional revenue (rent a chair/blanket)
 - 5-6 volunteers needed for parking and table
 - Marketing – copies of the flyer were shared
 - Flyer can go out to CVPC membership.
 - CSC will do their own marketing.
 - Additional signage is the responsibility of CVPC. Their grant does not include banners (about \$50 each). These could be reused if we repeat the event. Does the CVPC want to purchase banners?
 - Open to the idea of vendors and to helping secure them. There is room for growth.
 - Discussion of inclusivity for people with disabilities
 - Distance to wheelchair accessible bathrooms. Do we want to consider additional bathrooms or moving them closer?
 - Look into an American Sign Language interpreter.
- Communications – Mia Walsh
 - July programs are on Facebook. Pat Novak will add August programs as well.
 - Summer Camp shirts were ordered for campers, board members, and staff. The design was voted upon by Park Staff. A picture of the shirt design was shared on the agenda.
 - 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 program registration information on Facebook.
- **Volunteers – Pat Novak**
 - **Night Out With Nature (NOWN)**
 - A request was made for more involvement from the CVPC Board for events such as Night Out With Nature (NOWN).
 - An ongoing list of speakers is available.
 - The tally of reported MAY volunteer hours and estimates of known activity for board members is shown below. Total hours: 495.75

Last Name	Hours	Category/Event
Allshouse	10	Meetings, revisions, emails
Childs	239	17 volunteers BG&T
Cruise	16	Fall Harvest Festival, research, Park visits
Curtis		
Emerson	36	BCRP community meetings, meetings other and paperwork, organizing council docs and scanning
Gold	15	Trail guide, guided hiking, MOU review, research and writing. Cheers, crg
Lee		
Novak	6	Facebook, NOWN, volunteer hours
Rector	3	Office visits, administration
Reed	2	Dog leash signs
Schroeder	9	Newsletter, Spring Planting, Stream Strollers, Outdoor Living Skills
Shapiro	14	Membership, communications, capturing memories, meetings
Walsh	45.75	Memberships from website, review MOU, donations, bank deposit, CampBrain, Check requests, credit card bill, quickbooks, tax reporting, new summer camp, credits, 990 tax submission, Board mtg, Newsletter, Land acknowledgement, summer camp t-shirts, Jon Marsalek(Wade Koch Office) walk property
Yoffe	16	Meeting prep. Council meeting, nature council leaders meeting, meeting with Rec&Parks rep about Fall Festival, emails and phone calls.

- **Finance – Rick Childs**

- Nothing to report.
- Membership – Kim Shapiro
 - Memberships continue to come in.
 - 30 thank-you notes with membership cards went out in May.
 - **Coming month:** Continue to send out thank-you cards/membership cards to renewing households.
 - **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.

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP DATA:	
Total memberships as of 6/03/24:	448
Last report (May)	443
Lifetime:	16
Patron:	6
Sustaining:	27
Contributing:	39

- **OLD BUSINESS**

- Protection of dining room walls
 - An order will be placed to buy stanchions.
- Chimney Swift Towers – Carl Gold
 - The next step needed is a schematic of the base so that bolts can be placed.
 - Find someone who can build it, then the county can pour the concrete base.
- County Grant Request re: footbridges over streams – Abe Yoffe
 - The grant request has been submitted.
- Clean up of Betty’s Pond
 - Ranger Kirk plans to contact Megan Barger and Eric Duce as follow up to this.
- The water in the Community Garden is on. The Chief has asked to get some aspect of the community garden started. There has been slow movement because of other things happening.
- A request was made for additional parking signs to be put up so that work can be completed.

- **NEW BUSINESS**

- Proposal for new History & Culture Ad-Hoc Committee – Stacey Cruise
 - Stacey Cruise shared a presentation for this proposal to the CVPC Board
 - The proposed name is “Cromwell Valley Park Council’s History and Culture Ad Hoc Committee”.
 - The proposal is to organize an ad hoc committee that “straddles” between the Building and Grounds and Events and Programs Committees.
 - The committee would be responsible for establishing traditions that celebrate the history and culture of the Park. For example:
 - 1. Land and Labor Acknowledgment Protocols
 - 2. Events and educational programs highlighting the human history of the Park for all ages. Inviting colleges and high schools to conduct research via the artifacts and etc.
 - 3. A recognition day honoring the modern-day pioneers who were relentless in their pursuit to establish the park.
 - Rationale: A dedicated committee can focus on continuing preserving and highlighting the historical and cultural heritage of the park, ensuring that important artifacts, landmarks, and stories are protected for future generations.
 - Committee Composition: A diverse group of members representing local historians, Indigenous community leaders, educators, park staff, and volunteers. - Ensure representation from different cultural backgrounds and age groups to bring varied perspectives and expertise.
 - Proposed Vision Statement: Our vision is to create a vibrant and inclusive community hub at Cromwell Valley Park where the historical and ****cultural heritage**** is actively preserved, celebrated, and shared, inspiring a deep connection to the past and a commitment to future stewardship.
 - The cultural heritage of Cromwell Valley Park is rich and diverse, reflecting the various communities and historical developments that have shaped the area over time.
 - Key aspects of its cultural heritage include:
 - Indigenous Heritage:
 - Colonial and Agricultural History including the labor of enslaved people
 - Industrial Influence
 - Conservation Movement
 - The establishment of Cromwell Valley Park was driven by a commitment to conserving natural landscapes and historical sites. The park represents a blend of natural and cultural preservation, elevating the importance of protecting both environmental and historical resources.

- The proposal passed unanimously.
 - MOU with the County/BCRP - Abe Yoffe
 - Communication to membership about changes
 - Kelly Emerson working on a document compiling past minutes and information that will be accessible to all.
 - Motion to approve United States Post Office Box -Abe Yoffe on behalf of Mia Walsh
 - Hold on this until the address issue is resolved via the MOU.
 - CivicRec registration starting July 1
 - Discussion about how to communicate that signing up for all programming must done through CivicRec website:
<https://recandparks.baltimorecountymd.gov/MD/baltimore-co-md/catalog>
 - Brainstormed ways to assist people in how to navigate Civic Rec such as helping create accounts, creating a step by step document with screenshots, filtering by location, etc.
 - Discussion about the presentation and organization of the website as problematic. It is difficult to find and register for CVP programs. Consider communicating this concern to BCRP in a letter from CVPC.
- The meeting adjourned at 8:01pm.
- Submitted by Rachel Allshouse, Council Secretary