



Cromwell Valley Park Council (CVPC)

Meeting Minutes

November 4, 2024, 6:00 PM

- **COUNCIL MEETING ATTENDANCE**

- In-person: Abe Yoffe, Rachel Allhouse, Carl Gold, Rick Childs, Stacey Cruise, Kate Joyce, Mia Walsh, Bill Curtis, Deb Lee
- Absent: Pat Novak (not without trying), Joe Rector, Kim Shapiro
- Park Staff in attendance: Breena Doyle

- **WELCOME FROM PRESIDENT, ABE YOFFE**

- Call to Order & Adoption of the Agenda; Establish Quorum
 - Call to order: 6:04 PM
 - The meeting was in-person (Google Meet was available at start).
 - The Agenda was adopted. A quorum was present.
- Thank you to:
 - Stacey Cruise for filming documentary footage tonight.
 - Kelly Emerson for hosting the History & Culture meeting at her house.
 - Rachel Allhouse for putting together an agenda for today.

- **GOVERNANCE**

- CVPC approved October 2024 Minutes – Rachel Allhouse
- Treasurer's Report – Mia Walsh
 - Review Profit & Loss Statements (P&L) and Budget vs. Actuals
 - Year to Date 2024
 - 172% of budget for donations and 134% for dues. No significant expenses expected for remainder of 2024.
 - As of 11/4, \$1,525.69 in Honor Garden funds. Will be moved to the Balance Sheet as a restricted fund for 2025 in December 2024. Please see October Treasurer report for breakdown of donations and expenses for the calculation.
 - Equipment still has funds. Can spend within this line item until December. Whatever is left can be moved to restricted funds.
 - \$2,195.95 has been raised towards the Gator 2024 Fundraising Campaign through.
 - Through giving Tuesday, equipment balance, other funds, it will put us close to having full cost.
 - Do we buy contracts on maintenance? Typically, no. John Deere comes out once a year. \$3,000 was budgeted for this in ad hoc.
 - As we are at budget for newsletter and over budget for postage (because BCRP no longer pays for it), the Winter newsletter will be combined with the Annual Report and mailed in January 2025.
 - Will include new donation remittance envelopes and membership renewals and 2025 donations.
 - The President should consider another plea message to the

- members and donors as it was a successful initiative.
 - Goal to have address/mailbox sorted before this mailing. We cannot have anything registered with CVP's address.
- Fall Harvest Festival (FHF) Final Results
 - Per agreement with BCRP, on 10/23 we submitted P&L. Income was \$3,096.86. Expenses were \$5,049.73. **Loss of \$1,952.87.**
 - A copy of the P&L statement was attached in the agenda.
 - If you take out insurance and additional tent expense, there would have been a surplus. These numbers present a significant loss compared to last 5 years.
 - Nobody is interested in a two day event anymore.
- Grant Request for Baltimore County
 - Thank you to Mia for putting this together-it was a lot of work.
 - CVPC submitted a 2025 Grant Request based on the Reimagine Recreation loss of income. The total request was not to exceed \$25,000 and we submitted for costs of \$24,964.00.
 - Includes funds to be raised for the Goats in 2025.
 - Requests include items include coverage for software, equipment maintenance, office supplies, printing, postage, marketing and insurance. A detailed list of all requested items was provided in the agenda.
 - We were given a 3.5 week turnaround. The Recreation side had the application for at least a month longer than nature councils.
 - What are the next steps? Nothing defined except 10/3 due date.
 - CVPC should move forward assuming we will not get anything. But if we do, it could be favorable.
- Balance Sheet
 - Look to spend items in restricted funds by 12/31/24.
 - Deady Funds - \$112.05 - benches, mulch
 - Lawnmower Fund \$793.30 - two new push mowers
 - Butterfly Funds - \$480.05 -Buy native species/plant in gardens?
 - Weed Warrior \$194.53
- Voting on the 2025 Budget -Mia Walsh
 - TOTAL PROPOSED BUDGETED INCOME: \$26,015.00, EXPENSES: \$31,950.00, NET LOSS: (\$5,935.00)
 - We have funds to cover the loss. It is not an unusual circumstance to budget for loss. We were conservative with dues/donations and will have unexpected expenses.
 - Deb Lee shared that we are short on pop-up tents. Should CVPC have a tent of its own designated for a "Welcome Tent" that clearly identifies the starting point for events/programming.
 - We can collect donations. Pricing for a 10x10 tent is between \$350-\$850.
 - A motion was made to approve spending of up to \$1,000 for a new tent in 2024. The motion was unanimously approved.

- Signage discussed.
 - BCRP is looking to repair damaged signs, such as Sherwood Farm sign and trail signs. If replaced, the goal would be to keep design as close to original as possible.
 - Consider CVPC having banners up at entrances at all times. Events vs. CVP attractions, change them out regularly. Money in the budget for signage.
- Treasurer did not receive any additional comments from CVPC since October Board meeting
 - The History and Culture Committee expenses will focus primarily on donations and grants.
- **Proposed 2025 Budgeted Income Highlights:**

Dues	\$10,000	We will be losing approximately \$3,500 in family memberships, which are included in Summer Camp Registration, plus additional people who will not renew due to loss of membership discounts for program registrations.
Donations	\$ 13,500	We did budget for \$1K in Goat donations since this project was pushed back to 2025. We will lose a lot of donations which people make during program registration. In 2023, that amount was almost \$2,000.00.
Fall Festival	\$2,000	Budgeting \$2,000 in income and \$2,000 in expenses to break even.
Night Out with Nature (NOWN)	\$500	The excitement for this event continues, but we need someone to head it up for 2025.

■ **Proposed 2025 Budgeted Expenses Highlights:**

Postage	\$1,400	Postage fees will increase as R&P will no longer pay for our newsletter postage due to Reimagine Rec.
Insurance	\$ 2,100	Insurance costs will be three-times the amount prior due to the new requirement for increased liability insurance for Reimagine Rec.
Volunteer Appreciation Event	\$ 2,000	Combined volunteer and membership appreciation event is being considered for Spring 2025.
Fundraising	\$ 1,750	Costs of Annual Report and Campaign Materials

- Background Checks- Abe Yoffe
- **MANAGEMENT**
 - Park Staff Report – Breena Doyle
 - A detailed report is available in the November 2024 Agenda
 - Kirk is not present because he worked all day Saturday, doing outreach at Jefferson Patterson Park.
 - Primitive Technology Weekend on 10//12-1-0/13
 - Decent weather.
 - Total count 889 for both days.
 - A volunteer, Vanessa Blackner, sold many of the leftover Primitive Tech t-shirts from previous low-attended events.
 - Total \$165, Mia has picked up from the office.

- Discussion of the refurbished Nature Center Earth Oven Eagle Scout project on Oct 5th. It is drying and will be ready to go by the Spring.
- Staff has been busy with field trips throughout October and November. The Fall Harvest theme is the most popular request. It involves learning about apples, apple pressing, black walnut harvesting, chickens and their life cycle, and the importance and processing of corn throughout history. Baugher's apple crate was returned last weekend.
- The county has given us an additional Activity Coordinator (which is what Laura Page is), Matt Pedri. He was interested in transferring to learn more of the Naturalist/Educational side of things. The move is part of BCPR's large hiring spree. They are planning to add more than 90 positions. Ranger Kirk and Matt will work on re-routing the Eck Path to match the park map this month.
 - Kate Joyce requested a NO PARKING sign at Talmar driveway entrance/Sherwood Bridge. It causes erosion and is a safety concern. Rick Childs suggested a Handicapped parking spot due to the gentle slope making nearby trails more accessible. Kate Joyce supported this.
- Project FeederWatch begins this week and runs until mid-April. It is organized by Laura Lechtzin. A training for volunteers was held on 10/24. Laura developed a great program with a core group of dedicated birders. She runs all Cromwell Valley Park's (CVP) birding programs and does a fantastic job.
- The new Polaris has been delivered to the park and is now in use.
- Division-wide Master Naturalist training started on 9/21 organized by Jessie Jeannetta. Involves all full-time staff at all division sites. A meeting at Sherwood was held 10/5 and a session will be led on Native Americans of Maryland on 11/16. Ranger Breena will lead a session on Interpretation/ Program Delivery on 11/9 at Marshy Point Nature Center. Two trainees have communicated with Ranger Kirk about completing projects at CVP. Projects help participants earn 40 hours of volunteer work to be certified. One sounds like a Powerpoint introduction of the park, and the other would be an interactive bones exhibit for the nature center. Ranger Kirk has more detailed information.
- Debbie Trout is resigning at the end of this week. Will be a part time building attendant. Communication might slow down until a new hire is made.
- Leaseholder's Report - TALMAR - Kate Joyce
 - Positives: VA Farms program graduation, pizza party held, end of harvest season.
 - Had frost/deer.
 - Christmas trees ordered, coming 11/26.
 - Sale requires good weather. Because of this, online ordering will be made available before sale starts. Can assign trees in advance without unwrapping.
 - Corey Johns will be Santa. Other ways can the tree sale be festive?
 - Volunteers (tall people) needed to help pick up and load trees on cars.
 - Continue to have no movement regarding lease.
 - Can't replace the trailer without a lease.
 - No heat.
 - CVPC expressed an interest in helping advocacy for TALMAR moving forward.
 - People on waitlist for VA Farms program for 2025.

- A shift to make serving on a board mission focused. Is that question on grant applications?
 - Consideration of membership level vs. donations. What is preferred?
 - ACTIVITIES OR ITEMS FOR THE UPCOMING MONTH
 - Order new remittance envelopes-ON HOLD UNTIL THE MAILING ADDRESS ISSUE IS RESOLVED.
 - Order plaques for Adirondack chairs in the Honor Garden. Additional Native Plant signage?
- Membership - Kim Shapiro
 - Membership numbers are strong. There are a higher than normal proportion of memberships at Contribution and higher levels than basic membership levels. Great news for fundraising.
 - Current Membership Data as of 10/4/24:
 - Total-528, Lifetime-17, Patron-8, Sustaining-36, Contributing-51.
 - Working to clean up data and resolve differences between the offline and online systems. Mia has been sending reports from CampBrain to help in this effort.
 - Coming month: Continue working on best methods for data maintenance.
 - Recognition: Thanks go to Mia for gathering and inputting membership data and for forwarding records of membership purchases. Thanks to Dave Schroeder for including membership appeals in newsletters.
- Building and Grounds - Rick Childs
 - Fall cleanup underway.
 - New big tree completely blocking Minebank Run that blocks access. Too big for trail crew.
 - Large wood in streams is healthy from an ecological standpoint.
- Events and Programs - Kelly Emerson
 - No Upcoming PPI's
 - Reminder that PPI stands for Projects, Programs, Initiatives. The PPI process used to be utilized for everything, not just events.
 - Consider using PPI for more in the future beyond events.
 - Met Dave Oakes. Would be a great addition to future meetings, History & Culture Committee, etc.
 - Fall Harvest Festival (FHF)
 - Still gathering feedback and use it in a way to improve FHF in 2025. When compiled, will be available to CVPC in a folder.
 - Set a date for 2025 ASAP. Discussion of a date change to have it later next year. Ben Porter would prefer to have one BCRP event per day on calendar.
 - Holiday Open House
 - Saturday 12/7, 10:00-1:00pm
 - What volunteer support would BCRO and Ranger Kirk want?
 - Parking, decorations, cider, etc.

- Use the volunteer support document from last year as a starting point. Send this to Rangers Breena and Laura.
 - A photographer/photo booth was offered to be donated. Look into why park staff did not want it.
 - Stacy Cruise was given family gingerbread and shortbread recipes from Laura Jennifer's family and an apple butter recipe from Jim Kelly. Idea to print and give at holiday open house on behalf of the History and Culture Committee.
 - Future Events
 - Is Gilchrist on the schedule for 2025? Kelly Emerson will reach out. How can CVPC support their event at CVP? Consideration of current fees and ways to sponsor events.
- Communications – Mia Walsh
 - DO WE NEED TO CONSIDER A NEW LOGO FOR CVPC?
 - Logo contest? Can get people involved and invested? Whoever wins gets membership?
 - Interesting to see how park goers perceive CVP.
 - Wait to buy a tent if changing the logo? Discussion of logo on tent vs on tablecloth.
 - Thank you to Bill Curtis for some great footage on the Critter Cams of bucks, foxes and coyotes! Check out Facebook page.
 - 11/8 NOWN has 13 people signed up. Big increase from prior months. Shows interest is being reignited for speaker series.
 - Website Updates: NOWN programs, Fundraising Efforts, Changes requested by the Park Staff
 - Email Blasts: We are still promoting BCRP events in our email blasts and our newsletters.
 - About 100 printed year-end cards (non-dated) from last year to be used for larger donors. Ordered 100 New Year cards for larger donors towards the end of the year.
 - Hike Through History- (See more info about Hike Through History Project from Deb Lee in Old Business)
 - Mia Walsh received information from Dr. Heidi Schrieber-Pan with the documents from the Hike through History. It is a .pdf document and not editable. May require change in formatting to include edits..
 - Mia Walsh will work with Deb Lee to obtain the QR codes for each location and page, update the photographs, and to make a color brochure, rather than black and white.
 - Carl Gold will address the typos by contacting Jim Kelly. He will send the .pdf to ask for what changes need to be made.
 - Check order of pages before printing. It is meant to be bound.
 - Why is the title Sherwood-Eck when that only covers a fraction of the Park?

- Should we post the County's CVP Enhancement project on the social media and newsletter sites?
- ACTIVITIES OR ITEMS FOR THE UPCOMING MONTH
 - Start working on Annual Report
 - Run donation reports to get ready to mail year-end cards, year-end donation receipts.
 - Record two Hike Through History audio files for Deb Lee and upload to website so she can create QR Codes for the project.
- Volunteers – Abe Yoffe and Rachel Allshouse on behalf of Pat Novak
 - October 2024 Total Hours: 398.5.
 - Hours above reflect two additions submitted after the meeting.
 - Is anyone interested in taking over NOWN. Spring to Fall is the typical season. 11/8 is the last NOWN of the season.
 - If submitting hours to Volunteer Tracker Form after the Agenda has been sent or Board Meeting held, please notify Rachel Allshouse so it can be updated for minutes. We depend on hours being submitted prior to Pat Novak sending a committee report for the agenda.
- History & Culture - Stacey Cruise
 - As of 10/26, filming for the documentary is complete. The Modern Pioneers of Cromwell Valley celebrates the history and spirit of CVP and highlights its natural beauty and significance.
 - The documentary film project is being edited. Once finished, the Committee will be able to view it first.
 - Emily New exceptionally captured CVP's significance in a concise, well-written script. Her dedication and professionalism helped everyone feel comfortable and at their best. She was allocated only 30 hours, but went above and beyond.
 - Thanks to Rick Childs, who gave Emily a tour to capture video of the fall foliage and historic structures that help tell CVP's story.
 - Encourage Ranger Kirk to follow up with Stacy Cruise about banjo for soundtrack. Possible duet with Emily.
 - Emily and her classmates will present projects on Wednesday, 12/11, 5:30 to 7:30pm at Towson University. CVPC is invited, courtesy of Dr. Victoria L. McAlister, Assistant Professor of History. An invitation flier was shared in the agenda.
 - Discussion about the public debut. What would Emily New like to do? Something for Earth Day? Combine with member appreciation event? Do something nice for Emily as a thank you.
 - Next Committee meeting is 12/5, 1:00pm in the Sherwood House.
 - In the New Year, meeting times may change to accommodate members' work schedules. Half the year one time, half the year another time and always available on zoom.
 - Ideas to be shared at a later date include Women's History Month and Hampton Mansion partnership.

- **NEW BUSINESS**

- Rec & Parks Transition Grant - Abe Yoffe (see treasurer's report)
- Updated MOU - Abe Yoffe (see Governance Committee report)

- **OLD BUSINESS**

- County Grant Request re: footbridges over streams – *Abe Yoffe*
- Motion to approve US Post Office Box -*Mia Walsh*
 - Postponed until next meeting with BCRP.
- Sewer Project -*Mia Walsh*
 - When is start date? They never had one. Little progress has been made. The project will affect entrances. When dates are established, consider how it will impact programming.
- Weed Warrior Pilot Program -*Mia Walsh*
 - Lack of communication since last meeting. Main question is does BCRP want the established weed warriors at CVPC as part of county wide program?
- Minebank erosion – *Rick Childs*
 - Mia Walsh spoke to Environmental Protection.
 - How to ensure this project speaks to sewer project and capital roads project. They will likely overlap. How will 3 entities work together and time work?
- Hike Through History - *Deb Lee*
 - Kudos and thanks to the Trails crew for installing 15 of 20 posts of the Hike Through History. Remaining posts will be installed 11/5. As we get rain, the crew will reinforce the dirt around the posts to ensure that they remain sturdy.
 - Deb Lee encouraged all CVPC members to complete the hike.
 - 20 QR code signs throughout CVP highlighting history of park structures.
 - The original project was completed by Sebastian Schrieber-Pan as a Troop 444 Eagle Scout Project in September 2016.
 - Paper copies of the Sherwood-Eck Trail booklet can be found near the Willow Grove Nature Center kiosk.
 - Updated posts modeled after another Eagle Scout project, the Minebank Run project, by Nathaniel Corey.
 - 1 remaining recording/QR code sign to complete for the Willow Grove Barn.
 - Will have 2-3 extra posts that can be used for future projects (Honor Garden or a QR code trail map sign? Doesn't have to be QR code. Can be added to booklet.)
 - Total project cost will be \$1,400, which is under the budget of \$1,800 (but not to exceed \$2,250)
 - Booklet can be printed with extra money.

- The meeting adjourned at 8:14pm.
- Submitted by Rachel Allshouse, Council Secretary