



## **Cromwell Valley Park Council (CVPC)**

### Meeting Minutes

January 13, 2025 6:00 PM

#### ● **COUNCIL MEETING ATTENDANCE**

- Abe Yoffe, Carl Gold, Rick Childs, Kelly Emerson, Rachel Allshouse, Stacey Cruise, Bill Curtis, Kate Joyce, Pat Novak (virtual)
- Absent: Mia Walsh, Deb Lee
- Park Staff in attendance: Kirk Dreier, Ben Porter
- Guests: Emily New, Laura Jenifer (entirety of meeting), Eric, Constance, Alysia, Brandon (friends/family to view documentary)

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

- Call to Order & Adoption of the Agenda; Establish Quorum
  - Call to order: 6:04pm
  - The meeting was in-person (Google Meet was available at start).
  - The Agenda was adopted. A quorum was present.
- Viewing of “The Modern Pioneers of Cromwell Valley - A Legacy of Conservation” documentary
  - Stacey Cruise introduced and welcomed Emily New. CVPC thanked her for going above and beyond in the creation of this project.
  - Emily shared her presentation given at the end of the class outlining the process and purpose of the documentary.
    - 3 objectives: share history, tell story of efforts to preservation, and role of CVPC today.
    - Process: Met with Stacey Cruise, filmed at Fall Harvest Festival (FHF), collaborated with History & Culture Committee on script, interviews, lengthy editing process, sourcing historical materials, sourcing music, final feedback and edits, final product.
    - Obstacles: Time (short film and within semester), technology, digitizing materials
  - Classmate’s reactions to the video evoked ideas about inviting international students to visit, exposure to park for local college students, and sharing historical significance.
  - The professor will use this as an example with a partnership with Walters Art Museum.
  - Video shows the importance and significance of grassroots efforts in recent times, as CVP was created in 1996.

#### ● **GOVERNANCE**

- CVPC approved December 2024 Minutes – Rachel Allshouse
- Treasurer’s Report – Abe Yoffe on behalf of Mia Walsh
  - See Treasurer’s Report was in the January agenda packet (pp. 2-3) (emailed to CVPC 1/13/25 at 1:37pm). The report included the following documents: Profit & Loss Statements (Final 2024 and 2025), Balance Sheets (as of 12/31/24), Annual Report for MD Department of Assessments and Taxation, and Budget Overview for 2025. (pp.6-16).
    - Final Year End 2024: 220.5% of budget for donations and 136% for dues including funds for the Gator Campaign and Honor Garden. Balance Sheet Year-End is \$208,377.18 in assets, with \$23,995.15 in restricted funds, including \$4,223.25 remaining in Fort Garrison and \$13,273.78 for the Gator purchase. Our financial position remains strong.
    - P&L by Programs Report-Year End 2024: Items on report requiring

explanation.

1. **Summer Camp & Polliwogs:** CVPC is disputing some of the “Gift and Grants” for staff with the county. A meeting is scheduled 1/24/25 to review charges and documentation, and to agree on a final number.
2. **Primitive Technology:** Thank you to Ranger Kirk for selling old shirts and donating the proceeds back to CVPC. This shows \$165 surplus in 2024, though CVPC paid for the shirts in 2023.
3. **Holiday Open House and Arts in the Park:** Both of those figures are from 2023 events, paid or received in early 2024.

- Grant Request for Baltimore County: An updated request was submitted as some of the maintenance costs were not accepted by the County. Communication continues between Mia Walsh and Fran Spero. We are attempting to get the full grant amount of \$25,000.

- MOU: Motion for PO Box **will be rescinded**. MOU provided CVPC receive mail at Sherwood House. We chose to make the SDAT official 501©(3) corporation at 2200 Cromwell Bridge Road as Marialena (Mia) Walsh is the Resident Agent for the corporation. Mia Walsh submitted the paperwork (and paid \$75 fee) to change this with the State of Maryland.

- Tax: 2025 Annual Report Filing for Personal Property was filed on 1/7/25.

- Activites/items for the upcoming month: Work on File 990 Tax Report (Jan/Feb). All financials have been completed.

- GATOR PURCHASE MOTION (p. 3 of agenda): \$5,000 in our operating budget in 2024 for the Gator Purchase. Since funds were not used, the expenditure over the \$13,273 in the restricted funds (about \$2.5K) will hit the 2025 P&L. A vote was held to add an additional \$3,000 to Budget line item 212 Council Equipment Purchase to cover the costs which were budgeted in 2024 but not spent for the 2024 Gator and approved unanimously.

- Background Checks- Abe Yoffe

- Stacey Cruise and Rachel Allshouse have upcoming expirations. Please renew.

- **MANAGEMENT**

- Park Staff Report – Kirk Dreier

- Ben Porter began by commending the documentary. Ranger Kirk continued.

- In December about 160 people attended the Holiday Open House which was successful. Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus have been paid as of 1/4/25. They have already put the event on their calendar for 2025.

- The Polaris and utility trailer came back from the shop and seem to be working correctly. The Log splitter was repaired and ready for use by Grounds crew people.

- Can it cut up logs left at TALMAR when the maple tree was cut down? Does Kirk have enough wood? Logs left on trails can be brought in. Log cutter is an old piece of machinery.

- Shakespeare in the Park has a tentative appointment to use the park on 7/19/2025 and 7/20/205. The dates have been saved and a meeting will be held to discuss in further details.

- Ranger Breena did an away program at Villa Cresta Elementary. She has a second one 1/14/25. They have been well received.

- Notch Cliff Nature School will rent Sherwood house on 1/14/25 from 10:00am-1:00pm. We think that they are using the house to warm the kids up.

- Bow Course was cancelled at Marshy Point Nature Center (MPNC) due to Civic Recreation and no advertising. Prices going from \$100 to \$150 may have contributed. It has never been cancelled, not counting the Pandemic.

- Is there a plan to increase advertising? Ben Porter shared information about the Public Information Officer employed by Baltimore County

Recreation & Parks (BCRP) who is in charge of advertising (weekly newsletter to everyone who has ever registered in CivicRec and social media postings). Multiple CVPC members present at the meeting shared that they do not receive a weekly newsletter, even though they have used CivicRec to register for BCRP programs. Kelly Emerson inquired about inviting this staff member to one of our future meetings.

- Bart Rein and the Superbowl Run for 2/9 has been approved.
- Ranger Kirk is still working on getting information from Hopewell Industries about the Apple project. Possibly use some of the money that Dr. McQuage donated for nature center work for the exhibit?
- Ranger Kirk has been working with the Master Naturalist candidates to do an exhibit on bones for the nature center. Another Master naturalist is working on an introduction to CVP as a power point.
- Planning has begun for summer 2025 Seasonal Naturalist training. This is important because it impacts how parks can acquire staff.
- CVP is planning an annual winter luncheon for trail guides and crew 1/27. Ranger Kirk requested CVPC's support for two lasagnas costing about \$250.
  - What budget line would this come out of? If in budget, no need for motion. Everyone present was in favor.
- Two-returning staff for summer camp; Olivia Jung and Becca Thompson. Park staff think summer youth staff member Sean Rodrigues will return too.
- The Nature Center Oven has issues. Repairman fixed it today.
- A lively and informative discussion occurred about beavers and beavers at CVP.
  - They are building a dam. Ranger Kirk has photographed it and is writing an article for the newsletter.
  - Trail cams are on the site. Footage can be seen using #cromwellcrittercam on facebook or instagram.
  - Ranger Kirk shared beaver behavior and observations of water activity/dam. He thinks there are two beavers who are starting another mini dam. If they stay and make it through the season/heavy rains, we may have kits in the spring. They mate in February/March. Born with fur, teeth, eyes open, can swim if needed, normally stay in lodge for 12 weeks while they nurse.
  - This has potential to be something special. Visitors are asking lots of questions. Is there a need for a sign? Worry about kids playing around it. Not yet, unless people mess with it. Beavers are mostly nocturnal. If there is a problem, will address it by marking it off or putting up signs.
- Leaseholder's Report - TALMAR - Kate Joyce
  - Tree Sale update: All but 12 trees sold. Low sensory Santa was successful. Good weather helped sales. Would like to find a way to donate 20 trees in the future. CVPC members volunteered to deliver trees in the future. Are there agencies that serve people with disabilities and can transport trees? If any ideas, contact Kate Joyce. Cares Pantry was suggested. A deadline would be the third weekend of the sale (around December 20).
  - Still working on lease. Email from Bob yesterday. Applying for CVBG funding to replace the trailer. In order to apply, must have a lease. 2/4 critical deadline for grant. After lease, discussing developing an MOU, but lease is top priority.
  - Actively recruiting for VA Farms. Any veteran with a disability is eligible. Name/contact info they get paid by VA for time spent at TALMAR for training.
  - TALMAR being represented at the Care Farm Conference at University of Massachusetts. Jamie, Occupational Therapist is speaking at the event.
- Friends of Sherwood Report - No Report
  - Activity for upcoming month: Kelly Emerson volunteered to contact Halten Garden Club to

see if they will be keeping the Sherwood Herb Garden weed-free moving forward. If not, how do we get Property Management to take care of it?

○ Standing Committees-

■ Governance - Carl Gold

- 11th hour on the MOU. Kudos for the patience/time spent exhibited by Abe Yoffe. Want to finalize the addendum. Revised version of the addendum expected in the next couple of days. Can likely vote on it at the next meeting.
- Contract has been awarded to redo the pumping station on Cromwell Bridge Road. It will create a disturbance when work starts (consider road closures, tunnel, large footprint). Will they want to use the park? Will they need to use our access? Carl has written to the Department of Public Works for a tour. Carl is interested in writing an article about this.
- Be on the lookout for Carl Gold's article about two tunnels in the newsletter.

■ Finance - No Report

■ Fundraising - Abe Yoffe on behalf of Mia Walsh

- Year End Donations: 188 households gave \$50 or more in 2024 out of a total of 450 donors. A fundraising snapshot image was shared in the agenda packet (p.19). A significant amount of memberships each year have been through the Summer Camp Registration and they are not recorded in our donation database, but only as a cumulative line item in our P&L statement.
- Remittance Envelopes: New remittance envelopes have arrived. Mia Walsh has put some at Sherwood for today's Monday. We should put some out in the two Park kiosks.
- Membership - no report
- Activities/Items for the upcoming Month: January–February is a busy time for fundraising. The committee will Mail out New Year Cards with cumulative receipts equaling \$50 or more, compile donation information for Annual Report, and create an annual report document for January/early February newsletter mailing. Also, **Order plaques for Adirondack chairs in the Honor Garden.** Additional Native Plant signage?

■ Building and Grounds - Rick Childs

- Discussion of damage by BGE on the trail by the community garden. Ranger Kirk will photograph the damage and report it.
- Plan for getting the community garden ready. The fencing has been approved and a request has been made to put in mesh barrier to prevent rodents from chewing deer fence. Target date to have fencing in by early April.
- Repairing fencing is in the MOU. Will BCRP provide materials or is CVPC responsible for a split rail? Kirk and site staff put in mainstar requests. If costs exceed a certain amount, it becomes a capital project. The County will decide the scope of a project; is it mainstar or capital? Or is it something appropriate to be overseen by volunteers?
- All the wood we had was given to the scout project. Wood should be saved/stockpiled unless it has nails in it.
- Holes are forming in the access bridge. Ranger Kirk has put in a mainstar for that. Property management inspected it recently.
- The new gator will be delivered tomorrow. Funds have been used.
- There is a report of a large tree down. Ranger Kirk will inspect and see if BCRP will address it or if Wayne can cut it and move it.
- Discussion of the field cutting plan. Plan will be complete by March. It is a property

management function. People were upset that too much was cut in the past. A baseline was established last year. Kirk will decide which to be cut this year and next year. There is a plan that identifies numbers for the fields and recommendations for rotation that Kirk has access to and can reference. Any concerns should be given to Kirk. It's a delicate balance to keep fields mowed enough to maintain, yet leave enough for wildlife. Asking for it to be cut twice a year is not realistic.

- Discussion of other entrance by Providence Road and possible parking. The conversation was raised but is no longer in discussion. It is available for pedestrians only.

■ Events and Programs - Kelly Emerson

- Chesapeake Shakespeare Company (CSC)
  - Asked for two dates this year, 7/19 and 7/20.
  - Meeting to be scheduled with CSC, CVPC, and Ranger Kirk.
  - Parking and lights are two major topics to be discussed.
  - Discussion about what kind of event this will be (partnered, CVPC, or BCRP). If it is BCRP, will they pay for interpreters? Ranger Kirk will discuss with BCRP to determine the answer to this.
  - Overall consensus, regardless of what kind of event it is, is that the event is great for CVP. Everyone is in support of the event.
  - Kelly Emerson's son would like to present parking recommendations to CVPC.
- Holiday Open House
  - All decorations are down and accounted for in CVPC closet.
- Fall Harvest Festival (FHF) 2025
  - A date needs to be set.
  - Requested a specific date each year on MOU addendum (ie first, second or third weekend in October).
  - Ben Porter shared he would prefer the event to remain partnered. He also shared that BCRP wants to avoid multiple events on the same weekend for infrastructure and staffing purposes.
  - Ben Porter reviewed other BCRP events already on the Fall 2025 calendar. Why had 5 other BCRP events already been reserved without consideration of CVP FHF? Only open weekend was now 9/13 or 10/18 for a partnered event. CVPC felt 9/13 was not an appropriate date for a "Fall" event. 10/18 would be too daunting for CVP staff with Primitive Tech being held the week before.
  - Ben Porter proposed a compromise to move another BCRP event to the weekend of 10/18 and FHF can be held on 10/25. This is tentative until he can confirm the moved date with staff at the Ag Center.
- Membership Appreciation Event
  - Date should be around Earth Day. 4/26 proposed.
  - Mostly outside, would include food, music, rain or shine.
  - No tent available (20x30 in size). Maintain relationship with Loane Brothers.
  - Would be a CVPC-run event.
  - Ranger Kirk will check the facilities calendar. If open, CVPC can put a request in CivicRec.
- Discussion of ideas for events in the future
  - Smaller fundraising events at Sherwood House
  - From BCRP's perspective, each nature site would ideally hold 2 special events a year (partnered or BCRP)
- Night Out With Nature (NOWN)
  - Night Out With Nature (NOWN) scheduled for 4/4. Pop up museum using

artifacts.

■ Communications – Abe Yoffe on behalf of Mia Walsh

- Received letter confirming we received final credit for disputed \$1,400 charge from Constant Contact.
- Existing logo was revamped to add the word “Council.”
- Mia Walsh has been working with Jenna Fava Design on website redesign items. She will bring graphics to CVPC Board for approval when ready.
- Special thanks to Bill Curtis for the Critter Cam footage.
- Summer Camp - Mia Walsh worked with Ranger Breena to send message to prior campers. Website and Facebook have been updated. Thank you to Pat Novak for adding them as facebook events.
- Hike Through History missing pieces for QR code and book have been completed.
- Should we post the County’s Cromwell Valley Park Enhancement project on the social media and newsletter sites? May spark some criticism or comments.
- Activities/items for the coming month: Start work on annual report, run donation reports in order to mail year-end cards and year-end donation receipts, continued work on Hike Through History QR codes and updated brochure.
- Additional special recognition to Kim Shapiro for work on CampBrain eblasts and Dave Sch Schroeder for work on the first 2025 newsletter.

■ Volunteers – Pat Novak

- Total December 2024 CVPC volunteer hours: 217.5
- Review formatting of volunteer hour report in future agendas
- Discussion about liquor license for events

■ History & Culture - Stacey Cruise

- See January agenda packet for detailed report (pp. 23-25)
- Recognition of Wayne Harman’s Dedication
  - Carl Gold authored an article for the upcoming newsletter celebrating Wayne Harman’s role and contributions to CVP. The article honors his legacy and raises awareness of the park’s history.
- Black History Spotlight: Genevieve Cooper
  - Stacey Cruise contributed an article on Genevieve Cooper’s historical significance, remarkable story, highlighting the importance of preserving and sharing diverse CVP narratives.
- The Women of the Valley - A Round Table on Leadership, Legacy and Conservation
  - This inaugural event honors women’s contributions to CVP. The hope is for it to become an annual event.
  - Flier for the event was displayed. Colors intentionally chosen were purple (valor), green (growth), and white (suffrage movement).
  - First partnered event between NOWN and History & Culture Committee
  - Friday, 4/4, 6:30-8:00, Sherwood House Meeting Room, \$10 admission
  - The flyer for the event was shared. Invitations were sent. Registration required.
  - A detailed description of the event is shared in the agenda packet including purpose of the event, event objectives, key features, target audience, outcomes, budget and logistics/planning.
- Discussion about other event ideas including pop-up museum, event in conjunction with Earth Day (partner with Events committee to debut documentary at membership appreciation event).

- Next meeting date 2/6. Two new members.

- **NEW BUSINESS**

- 2025 Meeting Calendar -Rachel Allshouse
  - The 2025 Meeting Calendar on page 26 of the agenda packet was approved.
  - One deviation from 2nd Monday in October due to Indigenous Peoples' Day. Moved to next day, Tuesday, 10/14.
  - Suggestion to add "subject to change" disclaimer at bottom of document.
- Preparing for Annual Meeting
  - Nominating Committee/Elections
    - See draft of report in January agenda packet (p.27)
    - The annual meeting is scheduled for 3/10. This is the time for the election of officers and directors of the Executive Board of CVPC, to be effective 4/14/25. If any CVPC member has attended two or more meetings during the past twelve-month period, they are eligible to vote at the meeting.
    - A draft of the Nominating Committee Report, chaired by CVPC member Raymond Reed, provided the slate of officers and directors nominated for election for the period April 2025 through March 2027. Terms in office comply with the cycle of elections stated in the CVPC.
    - Candidates listed in **\*BOLD** to be voted upon at the election are: President (Mia Walsh), Treasurer (Deb Lee), Director (Open), Director (Stacey Cruise), Governance Standing Committee (Carl Gold? & Raymond Reed)
  - Kelly Emerson proposed Laura Jenifer as a potential committee member. Inform Mia Walsh and Raymond Reed so that the sheet can be updated.

- **OLD BUSINESS**

- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) & Addendum - Abe Yoffe
  - See Governance Standing Committee Report
- County Grant Request re: footbridges over streams - no update
- Sewer Project -Gunpowder Interceptor Relief Sewer Line, Soil Borings, and Test Holes - no update
- Capital Projects - should we publish illustrations to CVPC website? Nothing updated, graphics may not be useful to website visitors.
- Sherwood-Eck Trail Guide & Hike Through History
  - See Communications Standing Committee Report
- Weed Warrior Pilot Program
  - Training in spring (April) by Jessie Jeanetta. Has she been in touch with Dave and Laurie Taylor-Mitchell for consultation? Plans to partner with existing weed warrior groups?
- Rec & Parks Transition Grant
  - See Treasurer's Report
- Website Refresh
  - See Communications Standing Committee Report

- The meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.
- Submitted by Rachel Allshouse, Council Secretary