



**Cromwell Valley Park Council, Inc.**  
**Minutes – November 4, 2019**

CVPC Board Meeting (Closed)

Board members in attendance: John Canoles, Rick Childs, Bill Curtis, Kenneth Keady, Kate Joyce (Talmar, Inc.), Sya Kedzior, Kristin McFaul, Kim Shapiro, Mia Walsh and Abe Yoffe.

Park staff: Kirk Dreier

BCDR&P: Kris Mervine, Regional Coordinator over Nature and Environmental Centers

Absent: Pat Novak, Jenny Trust

**1. PRESIDENT’S OPENING REMARKS**

- a. Mia called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m., introduced the agenda which had been distributed by email, and confirmed a quorum present. Mia welcomed all to the meeting and noted that unless otherwise specified on the calendar, all members are welcomed to attend any of the CVPC meetings. The upcoming list of meetings may be found on the CVPC website at <https://cromwellvalleypark.org/about-cvpc/park-council/>
- b. Volunteer & Donor Recognition:
  - (1) Mia expressed appreciation to the board members that contributed their volunteer time to help at the very successful Fall Harvest Festival event on October 12<sup>th</sup>. Most of us were on hand at the event. Visitation that day set a record for the park at over 1,600.
  - (2) Thanks to Ken Keady who coordinated hosting of two runs at the park, frequent visiting groups of Blue Steel Stampede and Baltimore Roadrunners. Both of these organizations are good supporters financially of the CVPC.
  - (3) Thanks to Bill for posting Critter Cam sightings, in particular, shots of our coyote in October. Mia mentioned hearing the sound of the coyote on a recent evening and one was spotted during the day on the Wellington Woods trail last week.
  - (4) Two \$500 donations were received in October: Blue Steel Stampede and David W. Buck Family Foundation. (See Membership Subcommittee report.)
  - (5) Prior to the meeting today, a group from the Communications Committee, Carole Ziegler, Mia and Kim, along with Susan, stuffed Winter Calendar mailers with remittance envelopes for mailing to Council members. This is a trial to see if the approach of donation envelopes brings additional contributions. Donations are sought, ongoing, through online platforms for Membership and Program signup.
- c. Recertification for BCRP was approved – Based largely on the results of an internal financial audit and interview of Mia (President) and Kristin (Treasurer) conducted by Bill Curtis and John Canoles, CVPC was recertified by Baltimore County. Our thanks to John and Bill for this work. The report is attached.
- d. Baltimore County Staffing Changes:
  - (1) Kris Mervine was named as Regional Coordinator over Nature and Environmental Centers ([kmervine@baltimorecountymd.gov](mailto:kmervine@baltimorecountymd.gov)). Besides the five nature/history centers run by the County, Kris is also responsible for the areas of Miami Beach, Rocky Point and other outdoor programs. Kris plans to attend a couple CVPC meetings a year.
  - (2) Teri Rising is moving on to MD State Highway Administration as architectural historian. Since MD SHA has supported the Park through its grant program, it is likely that we will continue our relationship with Teri.
  - (3) Barry Williams will be honored for his service to BDCR&P at a retirement party on November 12<sup>th</sup>. Mia has purchased 2 tickets for this event and John Canoles will join her as representatives from CVPC. (The announcement of the celebration is part of the board meeting packet.)



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**2. GOVERNANCE**

**a. Decide and Vote on Calendar for 2020 – Mia**

We reviewed the proposed calendar presented in the board packet. Meetings are typically the 2 Monday of the month at 7 p.m. at Sherwood. A couple of months have holiday challenges for attendance, so we considered alternate dates. The last meetings of the year are effected:

The October meeting moved to Monday the 19<sup>th</sup> due to Office holiday closure on Oct. 12<sup>th</sup>

The December meeting moved to December 7<sup>th</sup> due to Hanukkah on Dec. 14<sup>th</sup>

Mia asked for a motion to approve the 2020 Meeting Calendar. John so moved and Kristin seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

**b. Notice of Expiring Terms – Mia**

The following board member terms expire in March 2020: Pat Novak (VP), Kim Shapiro (Secretary), Jenny Trust (Director) and Bill Curtis (Director). Board members whose terms are expiring should let Mia know their intentions prior to the December meeting as any vacant positions will need to be filled.

Mia noted that Jenny has missed several meetings since her term began and Rick recalled that consecutive meetings missed is critical in this case. It was suggested to review our bylaws. (Follow up: Article 7 – Officers and Directors, Section 4 – Removal from Office states: *An Officer or Director may be removed from office if absent from three (3) consecutive meetings without cause.* Jenny's last meeting with us was June.)

**c. Treasurer's Report – Kristin**

Kristin said that she will be completing Tax return and personal property tax forms due on November 15<sup>th</sup>. Kristin distributed the Balance Sheet and P&L Statement from January 1, 2019 – November 4, 2019.

**d. Budget Discussion – The Finance Committee (Rick, Kristin and Mia for Pat) met to develop a budget worksheet in preparation for this meeting. Proposed budget numbers were based on last year's proposal and actual income/expenses to date and expected inc/exp to end of year. The board discussion was led by Kristin and Mia through line item considerations. Below, discussion and changes from the proposed numbers are noted and a revised budget document will be distributed in advance of the December meeting in preparation for voting.**

**(1) Income:**

- Line 120 – Donations – remains at \$6000 despite overage this year, as some large donations may not likely be repeated.
- Line 310 – Building Attendant – Income \$1376 is low compared to proposed \$2000 for 2019. Low number due to closure of Sherwood to meetings during large roofing project. 2020 should be back to normal.
- Line 401 – Educational Field Trips – Income of \$834 is low compared to proposed \$1250 for 2019. Kirk said that field trips were cut back as staff on hand were stretched too much to cover the full week and prep for weekend events, too. Additional staffing has been approved and, once the position is filled, programming increases are likely. We'll keep the number at \$1250.
- Line 402 – Internal Public Programs – Income exceeded last year's budget of \$5000 by almost 50%, so raising the line item for 2020 to \$7,000.
- Line 403 – Summer Camp – Although there were no changes from the proposed number of \$19,000



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and income from 2019 clearly exceeded the budget, there was discussion about raising the price of our Summer Camp programs. Kristin said that our program is offering a lot for the money compared to other area programs. Rick said we should consider the impact of cost of staffing. Mia said that we should also keep in mind the scholarship program, which this year was \$450. Mia, Kim and Susan will come up with a proposal to present at December 2019's meeting.

- Line 407 – Night Out with Nature – Proposal of \$1000 based on lower than expected income was raised to \$1200. Rick said that levels of attendance make the difference, considering the full house for falconry and the low numbers for some programs of lesser general public interest.
- Line 501 – Fall Harvest Festival – Proposal of \$3500, raised \$500 from 2019, will stand. Income was exceptional and so was weather and resulting attendance. Expenses are relatively low for this event.

(2) Expenses:

- Line 215 – Council Equipment Maintenance – The proposed budget number is \$1500, down from \$3000 for 2019, and expenses for last year were well over \$2000. Sya asked why we might consider cutting that budget in half. Rick said that much of the expense in 2018 was due to a maintenance contract that covers several years. Sya suggested that we note this so that future budgeting includes that consideration.
- Line 219 – Printer ink – raised line item to \$750 from \$600. Actual expenses YTD are \$640 with another \$250 purchase not yet booked. An increase in the amount of printing requires this number to be adjusted.
- Line 231 – Membership Committee – The proposed budget was dropped from the 2019 amount of \$500 to \$100 due to low documented expenses for 2019. Kim suggested that we bring the amount up to cover supplies for mailings and printing. Movement of postage cost may be a factor. The proposed amount was moved up to \$250.
- Line 250 – Communications Committee – The proposed number was upped from \$1500 to \$2000 on the bases of additional expenses to be remitted for printing and the expected increasing efforts of promotion for the future.
- Line 260 – Buildings and Grounds – The proposed expense number of \$2800 represents a merger of the Trails Subcommittee (line 261) with the Buildings and Grounds.
- Line 262 – Gardens – The budgeted item in 2019 was again proposed for 2020 although no money was spent by the CVPC in 2019. Rick and Kirk said that what was done on entrance gardens this year was work done by the County at the request of park staff to clear overgrown vegetation that was covering the park signage. Rick would like to find volunteers who are interested in maintaining these gardens to improve the look of the park. Since Sue Lake “retired” from that function, we have not had the volunteer interest to keep it going. With this in mind, we should keep the funds available.
- Line 270 – Program Committee (External) – Expenses are low to non-existence for support of groups that ask our park to host their activities. A proposal of \$100 was raised to \$1000 following discussion of the desire to purchase some canopy shelters for use by visiting groups. Mia has had some experience with such purchases for another organization, including the branding of the canopy, which we may want to consider. Several types of shelters were discussed. Further consideration is needed, including what configurations would best serve the needs.
- Line 292 – Oral History Transcription – The proposed \$500 amount was reduced to \$0 based on the lack of expenditures for 2019 and the absence of a plan for further work.
- Line 304 – Equipment – The proposed number is \$2000 considering expenses to date of \$1236 and



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requests by staff for approval of additional funds for mobile and amplified communications equipment at the park. (See budget requests from Kirk in the board packet.) Kirk wishes to expand the walkie-talkie system with 4 additional radios. This purchase in 2019 would exceed the 2019 budgeted number by several hundred dollars. The “Wireless PA System” that is also requested and was discussed briefly at the September meeting is an expense beyond the budget set for 2019. Discussion showed that the needs for that system require additional information to assure that we have clear separation of Willow Grove and Sherwood for announcements and that we have a clear understanding of the term “wireless” and how it relate to placement of speakers in particular. Additionally Kirk would like to obtain a smaller model Kubota for patrolling the park. Its size allows its use for trails. Additional discussion of this occurred later in the meeting in considerations of designated funds for “Equipment Purchase Reserve” proposed by Rick for Buildings and Grounds work.

- Line 309 – Displays and Exhibits – Proposed amount of \$3500 is down from \$5000 agreed for 2019. This is on the basis of low expenditures in 2019. Kirk said that the projects were delayed due to his additional job assignment this year acting for all of the nature centers. The number stays at \$3500.
- Line 310 – Building Attendant Costs – Rick asked where the actual expenses for 2019 are, as that category was blank. Kristin said she will check with Susan on that, as she had no check requests for money against that anticipated expense.
- Line 312 – Drinking Water – Rick asked if the cost of water adequately covers the use of drinking water at Willow Grove where most of the children’s programs are based. Kirk will look into use practices at Willow Grove. For now, the proposed budget will stay at \$300.
- Line 351 – Nature Center Animal Care – In 2019 expenses are exceeded for this budget item by about 80%. It was recognized that we had some extra needs for Pouchy. Abe asked what the responsibilities are for the County and the Council involving animal care. Both Kirk and Kris confirmed that this is a gray area for the nature parks. Animals are important to our visitors and the park councils all contribute to their wellbeing because of that. The budget line is \$1250.
- Line 403 – Summer Camp – The proposed budget was reduced by \$2000 to \$16000. This is mostly due to sharing the cost of CampBrain with other public program registration.
- Line 407 – Night Out with Nature – The \$1000 proposed was reduced to \$750 on the basis of actual expenses for 2019.
- Line 409 – Credit Card Fees – Bill raised a question about these expenses, which are significant. Mia said that these are an accumulation of fees from the various services that provide us the ability to take payments online, including PayPal and CampBrain. We expect these to increase as more program participants use online registration capabilities. \$1400 is proposed for 2020.
- Proposed line item “Equipment Purchase Reserve” – This is an item that Rick proposed several months ago. At the time we agreed to consider this as a part of the budget discussion. The Finance Committee meeting generated a number of \$2000, which would represent an initial designation with expected additional designation during each budget year. It represents our commitment of money to supporting replacement of equipment for management of trails and other Buildings and Grounds needs.
  - (i) Rick suggested that a higher number would be in order for the starting designation. He suggested that we consider moving an amount of “unrestricted funds” that the Council has in place to increase the base amount of this fund. This would help fund replacement of the Gator which is now ten years old.



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- (ii) John suggested that we augment these resources by doing fundraising efforts for specific needs as these are recognized.
- (iii) Considering Kirk's request for a small Kubota at a cost of \$9000, Rick proposed the use of ATV-style of equipment, would be more cost effective. However, Kris stated that an ATV would not be permitted by the County. Discussion continued around the practice of buying then donating the equipment to the County, as maintenance expenses are then the County's responsibility. However, CVPC council volunteers would not be permitted to use the County's equipment, despite being told otherwise in the past.
- (iv) Bill asked for clarification of what equipment the Council owns and what the County owns and who can do what with that equipment. The main items are the Gator (Council property) and the Kubota (County property donated by the Council). Additionally there is a mower attachment for the Kubota which we own as the County did not accept that as a donation. We have full access to use of the Gator, but not the Kubota. There are downsides to the purchase and donation to the County as it maintains a strict list of what makes and models they will accept and, as confirmed by Kris, they will restrict use of the equipment to staff only.
- (v) Kristin asked is we would consider the purchase of used equipment for the Council's use as she has a contact who deals in that market. Rick said that we could certainly consider used equipment. In general, purchases off the County list would be ours and we'd need to consider the cost of maintenance during the budget process.
- (vi) Kris talked about the approach that Lake Roland takes. They have chosen to buy and keep their equipment, but they insure both the volunteers and the park staff for use of that equipment as part of their insurance policies.
- (vii) No decision was made regarding the establishment of this line item or an amount for a reserve fund. This will be presented again at the December meeting while we vote to approve the budget.

### 3. MANAGEMENT

See attachments for reports from Standing Committees and Staff.

Leaseholder's Report – Kate for Talmar

- (1) Kate said that Talmar is refocusing its mission to serve all people of all ages in its horticultural programming, inclusive of people with disabilities. There is staff on hand with special skills in working with people with disabilities and these folks may also be available to help with the needs of CVP as needed.
- (2) Talmar will hold a "low sensory" Santa event on November 30<sup>th</sup>. It will run about 3 hours.
- (3) There will be small retirement event for Cate Murphy on December 10<sup>th</sup> at Sherwood from 5 to 7 p.m. CVPC board members are welcome to attend.
  - Mia suggested that we make a donation to Talmar in honor of Cate. Rick proposed that we donate at least \$250. Mia agreed and there was no challenge to that suggestion. Mia will prepare a check request and stated that others may feel free to donate individually to Talmar as well.

### 4. NEW BUSINESS

a. Hawk Watch – John

- (1) John raised concerns about obstruction to hawk counting at the hawk watch site. Several spruce trees have grown up to block the view and increasing forest growth has forced movement of watchers further



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towards the road. John's request includes the spruce removal, and considering the general forest growth, movement of the picnic tables and Hawk Watch sign to the viewing area. Kirk said he would consider the request but admitted a soft spot for the spruce trees. John said he would provide a panoramic photo and indicate the culprit spruces.

(2) Additionally, John feels that signage should be provided to show landmarks for counting purposes and another to help identify hawk species. Kirk generally liked this idea and John volunteered to help put some ideas together and Mia agreed to help with the design / layout.

- b. The Halten Garden Club proposes to donate two native trees and a bench near the entrance to the new nature path. The donation seems appropriate as the area could use some shade from the sun in summer months. There was some discussion about location and whether or not another bench was needed, proposing placement of trees near an appropriate existing bench. Tree placement must consider existing native flower plantings. John and Mia will follow up with the Club.
- c. Field Burn – John asked if the County would support a field burn. Kirk said that he had been involved in a burn out at Oregon Ridge. He said that it went well, but there is a lot involved with setting it up. Kris said that, at this point, the County may not want to handle such a request due to the need to fill the director's spot permanently. Once that is accomplished, talks similar to this could happen. John said that there is a window of opportunity for a burn – late winter to early spring. If we miss 2020, then we must wait until the next year.

**5. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Rick – Parking was an issue for the Fall Harvest Festival. With record attendance, cars were parked anywhere available and lined the entrance roads. Kirk agreed that this was a concern and has it on his radar. Mia said that the good news is we have great community participation. We need to make changes to accommodate the popularity of our events and to ensure the safety of those who attend our programs.
- b. Abe asked Kirk if the report of the Barn Use had been submitted to the County. Kirk said that he had not had time to deal with this lately, but he plans to work through it with Kris.
- c. Kris asked if we were aware of the new background check plans by the County. Mia filled him in on Bill's report to the Council following the Nature Council President's meeting in September. Kris said that the project was pushed back until January and that the plan should roll out then.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

**The next meeting is scheduled for December 9<sup>th</sup>.**

Respectfully submitted by Kim Shapiro, Secretary  
11-4-19

**Holiday Meeting Sign Up:**

Non-alcoholic drinks: Rick

Beer: Kristin

Wine: Mia

Cups/plates: Bill

Ice: Abe

Cheese/crackers: Kim

Dessert: John, Kate

Mia will purchase additional appetizers from the Meeting line in the budget.



## 2020 CVPC Meeting Dates

Voted Upon at November 4, 2019 Meeting

MEETING LOCATION: SHERWOOD HOUSE

<b>DATE 2020</b>	<b>MEETING</b>	<b>Open to Public?</b>	<b>Time</b>
Monday, January 13	Executive Board Meeting	Yes	7:00 p.m.
Monday, February 10	Executive Board Meeting (closed to Board only)	No	7:00 p.m.
Monday, March 9	Council Meeting (open to Public – Annual Meeting)	Yes	7:00 p.m.
Monday, April 13	Executive Board Meeting	Yes	7:00 p.m.
Monday, May 11	Executive Board Meeting	Yes	7:00 p.m.
Monday, June 8	Executive Board Meeting	Yes	7:00 p.m.
Monday, July 13	No Meeting		
Monday, August 10	Executive Board Meeting (closed to Board only)	No	7:00 p.m.
Monday, September 14	Council Meeting	Yes	7:00 p.m.
Monday, October 19 (moved from 10/12 Columbus Day)	Executive Board Meeting	Yes	7:00 p.m.
Monday, November 9	Executive Board Meeting (closed to Board only)	No	7:00 p.m.
Monday, December 7 (moved from 2 <sup>nd</sup> week)	Executive Board Meeting	Yes	7:00 p.m.