

**Cromwell Valley Park Council, Inc.
Minutes – May 11, 2020**

CVPC Board Meeting

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

Park staff: Kirk Dreier

Guest: Corey Johns, BCDR&P Board member at large, liaison to Councils

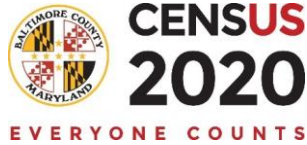
Absent: John Canoles, Pat Novak

1. PRESIDENT'S OPENING REMARKS

- a. Mia called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. This meeting was conducted online using the Zoom meeting app, as park buildings are now open only to staff during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. It is uncertain as to when restrictions will be lifted. Mia presented the agenda, which had been distributed by email, and confirmed a quorum present.
- b. News of unwelcome events at the park:
 - (1) Vandalism to signs at seven locations in the park: Signs were marked with either hate terms or sexually vulgar terms. Fortunately, these were found and could be erased so that no sign was permanently damaged.
 - (2) Gate closure at dusk has caused two events of cars being caught within the park. In each case extra efforts had to be made to extract the vehicles from precarious positions, as they unsuccessfully attempted to drive around the barriers.
 - (3) The car of a park visitor was broken into and property was stolen from the vehicle. Joe mentioned that this is a real issue at parking areas along the NCR trail.
- c. Donor Recognition: Mia turned attention to the Membership report that lists donations through May 9th. A donation of \$250 was received since then from Nancy Mastellone who obtained membership at the Patron level.
- d. Trail maps - Breena Doyle, Kirk and Kim worked to update trail maps to include the membership form on the reverse side and Kim designed larger font labels for the trails for better legibility. Joe Rector had suggested the addition of the membership form to the map to help encourage visitors to consider park membership.
- e. Naturalist Blog Posts – Breena completed the first blog post – The Search for Salamanders. Mia commented at Breena's fine ability as a writer, and we look forward to future articles from her for the new blogsite.
- f. Baltimore County Fiscal 2021 Budget Update – The scheduled announcement of the accepted budget is May 22/23. Johnny O. has proposed \$1.5 million for improvements at Cromwell Valley Park and the County Council met to discuss the overall Recreation and Parks budget on May 5th. This money is proposed for much needed improvements to Willow Grove facilities, park roads and provisions for parking. This includes the \$200,000 recently granted by Maryland State through the bond initiative sponsored by Senator Chris West and Delegate Michele Guyton. It does not include the approx. \$400,000 in the Fiscal 2020 Budget from Cromwood Coventry for improvements to the Willow Grove area, including construction of a pavilion and accessible path.

2. GOVERNANCE

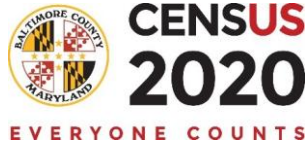
- a. Meeting minutes acceptance from April 2020 meeting. Kim said that she had received no comments regarding the April minutes, and asked if, therefore, there were no issues. Mia said that she would make sure these were posted and for anyone to take another look at them and provide any needed corrections.



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- b. Finance – Kristin (Financial documents were distributed for review prior to the meeting.)
 - (1) Kristin said that she caught up the data in Quickbooks, so that now all data from refunds on cancelled programs are included. It is likely that individual line items may change as the need for adjustments are recognized.
 - (2) Gator donations covered all but about \$900 dollars, which other CVPC funds covered. This was better than originally projected, as the expectation was that the Council would have to commit several thousand from general funds.
 - (3) Mia asked about the petty cash line item of \$925, and Kristin said that this amount is not reconciled.
 - (4) Mia also asked about the Fort Garrison line item on the Balance Sheet of about -\$2000. Kristin said that this is the result of the lack of provision in Quickbooks for “restricted funds”, a work-around is used to manage this by debit line items.
 - (5) Mia said that she needs to transfer the funds that have built up in Paypal to the Council bank account.
 - (6) Mia suggested that questions coming from further review may be asked later.
- c. Double signatures during COVID-19 lockdown: Corey offered that the BCDR&P board recognizes the difficulty of carrying out the best practice of using double signatures on checks due to the stay at home and social distancing requirements. Kristin and Mia said that we have a process for maintaining the use of double signatures which adheres to current restrictions, so this is not an issue for our organization.
- d. Financial Review and Certification for Baltimore County for 2019.
 - (1) Financial Reviews are required biannually, but these are *recommended* by the County for annual timing. Last year the review was completed by Bill and John. This year Joe and Bill have graciously agreed to complete the review. The review is a random examination of transactions through a documentation review.
 - (2) COVID-19 pandemic restrictions prohibit the typical approach of reviewing records in park facilities, so Bill, Joe, Kristin and Mia discussed means to allow both reviewers access to the records. Kristin will gather documents requested for review and leave them in safe keeping at McFaul’s Tavern, her business. Bill will pick them up and conduct his review, then Joe will obtain the documents for his review. Both Joe and Bill will separately complete the entire review.
- e. Financial Impact of Summer Camp Cancellations: This item was a part of the Treasurer’s report on the agenda, but Sya also asked this question during the review of financial documents.
 - (1) Because of concerns about our ability to hold our Summer Camp programs, no purchases were made towards this. If the camps are cancelled, which we all expect, Mia will use the CampBrain system to refund payments made by registrants except for the \$20 membership portion of the payment. This is part of our park’s cancellation agreement. If the programs were to operate, we would have to post a check for \$10,000 to the County to cover wages for Summer Camp staff, but that check will not be authorized if there is a cancellation. Cancellation of the Camp will impact the budget in that we will not have the budgeted surplus of about \$3,000 - \$4,000.
 - (2) Kristin reminded us that \$1,000 has been entered as an expense for the cost of CampBrain. She asked if CampBrain company was making any allowances for cost of service due to forced cancellations. Mia said that they are proposing up to a 25% discount towards next year’s fees, and they are not figuring into the system transaction burden (how they determine the next annual fee for a using group), the refund transactions due to pandemic-related forced cancellations. Mia will notify the company when she will be doing these transactions so that CampBrain can monitor this to our credit.



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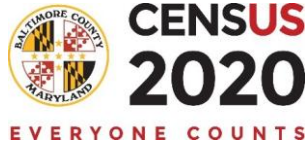
f. Grants Overview

- (1) Recreational Trails Grant – Abe – This grant closes May 14th and Abe has begun work on the application. He is looking for input for potential uses of the grant money and the requirement is that the minimum need is for \$20,000. Uses of the money are listed on the agenda and includes varied expense for trail construction, maintenance, and improvements. Rick, Abe, Bill and Kirk were primary contributors in the discussion.
 - One potential use is the area of the park where the Orange (Sherwood Farm) and Green (Wellington Woods) trails intersect above Sherwood House, an issue raised by park supported Jason Barker. Erosion control and repairs/replacement of a footbridge is needed.
 - Another part of the Orange trail, the route from the woods to Sherwood, is in serious need of erosion control.
 - The Baldwin-Barans trails are also in need of erosion control efforts and general repairs, and there is a benefit to installing a bridge over Towson Run. Kirk mentioned this would be costly as a bridge would need to be installed above the flood level here. [Note: After the meeting, Mia hiked this area and took photographs for documentation for the grant application.]
 - Generally, the thought here is that the purchase of materials, such as wood and gravel, with the expectation that all installations would be done by volunteers, would not add up to the \$20,000 minimum for grant funds. Mia suggested that we consider including contracting the work, which can easily add up to the minimum.
 - Mia asked Abe about the specificity requirements for the grant submission. If we can be general, then we can have flexibility in assigning funds, as we clearly have areas where these funds could be applied. Abe said that he will get deeper into the application form and have a better idea of this.
- (2) COVID-19 Relief Fund Grant – Mia/Corey – up to \$15,000 is available for hardship due to loss of income from COVID-19 lockdown and physical distancing requirements. Joe said that this only applies if the organization can show hardship and has not sought other federal or state COVID-19 pandemic relief, and Corey concurred. We could use this grant to recover lost income, such as losses of planned income from Summer Camp. Mia will take a look at this and submit it if it is not overly difficult.
 - Mia said that she would pass this information along to Kate, as Talmar may be able to benefit from this assistance.

3. MANAGEMENT

a. Leaseholder's Report – Kate for Talmar

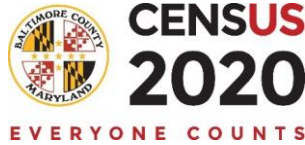
- (1) The programs are online and Talmar is getting good feedback on them.
- (2) There is a strong need for onsite volunteers, however COVID-19 logistics are getting in the way of making this happen. One of the issues is providing for restroom facilities. The system Talmar uses requires regular clean-out, and attempts to get the County Property Management to perform the lease-agreed service have failed to get action. Corey suggested that Kate may be able to get some help from David Marks.
- (3) Rick asked if the deer fencing around the garden was complete, and Kate said that it is.
- (4) Abe asked about the success of the plant sale, which was accomplished online. Kate said that it went well. This was the first sale of seedlings. She said that they had 220 households as customers and few issues. The issues that did exist was due to the online shop deliver/pick-up schedule function.



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- b. Friends of Sherwood – Mia – No report.
- c. Buildings and Grounds – Rick/Joe
 - (1) Park COVID-19 policy prohibits onsite work by volunteers.
 - (2) Security Cameras – Mia/Joe – Visitation at the park has skyrocketed due to the COVID-19 lockdown allowing few options for people to exercise except for availability of parks like ours. The result of high visitation is an unfortunate increase in vandalism. Mia tapped Joe, because of his experience with construction and property management, for help in considering security camera use to deter these acts.
 - Mia asked if there were any issues about installing cameras, and Kirk was not aware of any particular restrictions.
 - Joe talked about options for cameras:
 - (i) Real cameras are the most expensive option. These would record HD video and would require power, recording devices and possibly WiFi. High definition would be required to have hope of determining identification. A plan would need to be made regarding intervals for data retention and erasure. He proposed that, should we elect to go this route, four cameras be placed at locations most likely to help identify culprits. The anticipated cost of four cameras installed is \$2500. An important consideration is that it is difficult to get clear data for identification. In his experience, he has not found this approach effective.
 - (ii) Fake cameras with signs that notify visitors of use of security cameras can be an effective deterrent. It is an inexpensive option, easily obtainable from Amazon, and his company has found it useful on construction sites and around condominium complexes.
 - There was discussion about how installation of any such system might work at the park.
 - (i) Parking lots – Rick said that monitoring parking areas is very difficult now as parking locations have been expanded to accommodate the greater number of vehicles coming to the park. Kate said that as many as ten cars are even parked regularly at Talmar.
 - (ii) Abe suggested that we could perhaps place some of the faux cameras around buildings.
 - (iii) Joe concluded that the arrangement of the park would make effective camera installation difficult.
- d. Programs Committee – Ken – Susan has notified the few individuals who were planning programs at the park, that these events must be cancelled for our site. No new hosted events are being scheduled.
- e. Communications Committee – Mia reviewed the stats showing the increase in followers during the COVID-19 crisis, picking up 282 for FB and 108 for Instagram. She reviewed the extent of reach of Facebook postings, the most popular being the downed tree on Cromwell Bridge Road, receiving 43,000 hits. (See the Communications Committee report in the meeting packet for more details.)
 - Pat and Kim appealed to Council members and followers for a fundraiser called GivingTuesdayNow. This campaign was coordinated by Barbara Hopkins of Neighbor Space for Baltimore County, and it included social media postings and emails. About fifteen charitable organizations, including Laurie Taylor Mitchell's Student Support Network, included appeals for help. The campaign covered about a week, culminating on May 5th. Final totals of donations have not yet been reported.
- f. Membership Subcommittee under Finance – Kim (See the report included in the meeting packet.)
- g. Volunteers Committee – Kim – Invitation to report volunteer hours. We have been missing capturing volunteer hours of our board members. We should identify a way to make this easy. The new Access database is set up to capture and report this date, and there is a field for categories-of-use of volunteer time.



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Kim offered a couple of options for means to get as report from board members. The preferred method is a monthly email invitation for a report of hours. Kim will do this.

- h. Park Staff Report – Kirk (See Sr. Naturalist report for other details. Key points and discussions are captured here.)
- (1) Impact of lockdown – an estimated 41,000 visitors came in the month of April. This is causing wear and tear on the park. Loch Raven is open again, so this may bleed off some of the use of our trails. In spite of program cancellations, the workload on the salaried staff at the park has increased.
 - (2) Kirk and staff are issuing citations for those not following park rules. Ninety-five warning citations have been issued. Citations are primarily aimed at controlling parking behavior.
 - (3) Social Ambassador role of staff is to keep visitors safe. Incident reports are filed with the county in the event of altercations, which are fortunately rare.
 - (4) The Summer Events Calendar is complete but may not be implemented due to COVID-19 restrictions.
 - (5) No Bikes on Trails signs are in and are being installed. Signs are placed along Willow Grove access road. It seems to be effective at reducing abuse.
 - (6) Anne Wedgeworth is the caretaker of the Children’s Garden. Kirk is trying to engage the County to do some mowing.
 - (7) Roof repairs have been made to the small house at Sherwood Farm. Kirk has been working to get this building into a usable state.
 - (8) No parking signs have been placed in areas where parking can cause problems with traffic on park roads.
 - (9) Two new beehives have been added to the apiary.
 - (10) Video has been captured for the Habitat Explorer’s program. This will be shared through Facebook and the County S-drive. For future work, the staff is interested in some video production equipment, primarily a large iPad with iMovie app, which can also be used for data management for citations, an external mic with a windscreen, some basic lighting equipment and a GoPro camera. Rick suggested that unspent budgeted equipment funds might be used for this.
 - (11) Kirk said that a review the current situation of lockdown with Kris Mervine projects that full park use may not happen until December. This is based on projections of the phase-in plan of opening facilities once again to gatherings.
 - (12) Summer Camp – Mia raised the question about timing for a decision regarding cancellation of Summer Camp as originally planned and any possibility of replacement with virtual programming.
 - Kirk said that no decision has come down from his management yet.
 - Mia asked if there is awareness of what other parks are doing, but Kirk didn’t have this information. He said that Breana has been involved in some groups organized within Rec & Parks to explore the virtual approach, but that progress is not fast. Mia received an email from Marshy Point during the discussion and followed up to clarify their plan. They are looking at doing some virtual programming and look forward to collaboration.
 - In the light of fairness to parents, Mia asked the parents of children in our meeting group their need for cancellation information. Mia said that she is getting enquiries regularly. All felt that it is expected that there will be no onsite Summer Camp, so timing of a cancellation announcement is not critical.



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- In consideration of cancellation and substitution with virtual content, there was discussion about how we should distribute and charge for content. It is generally recognized that we cannot charge the full amount of fees of the onsite full-week camp. Kate talked about the free online programs that Talmar is offering and the benefit of attracting new people who have no previous connection to the organization.
- Mia presented the Council role as the “business” end of the park programs, but that program content is the work of park staff. The Council is here to help the staff get what they need.

(13) We need more staff on site, particularly for late afternoon. – Mia

- Who do we need to approach for this? Kirk suggested that Kris Mervine should be the first stop.
- Bill asked Kirk about possible help with monitoring the park from police, but Kirk thought that the police were beyond his reach.
- Abe asked about the security services that monitor Loch Raven, and Kirk thought this service might be a possible answer and will check into it.

4. NEW BUSINESS – None

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for June 8th, a board meeting.

Respectfully submitted by Kim Shapiro, Secretary

5-12-20



2020 CVPC Meeting Dates

Voted Upon at November 4, 2019 Meeting

MEETING LOCATION: SHERWOOD HOUSE

DATE 2020	MEETING	Open to Public?	Time
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 nd week)	Executive Board Meeting	Yes	7:00 p.m.