

Cromwell Valley Park Council, Inc.
Minutes – August 10, 2020

CVPC Board Meeting

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

Park staff: Kirk Dreier

Guest: Anne Westgate, CVPC community member

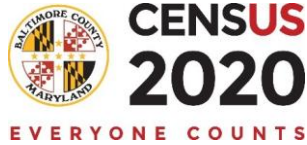
Absent: Bill Curtis, Kristin McFaul, Pat Novak

1. WELCOME FROM PRESIDENT

- a. Mia called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. This meeting was conducted online using the Zoom meeting app, due to safety considerations during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Mia presented the agenda, which had been distributed by email. Nine board members were present, and hence we had a quorum.
- b. Mia introduced our guest, Anne Westgate, who was invited to present a proposal of a dog park at Cromwell Valley Park. Anne had contacted the park staff with her proposal earlier in the summer, and we discussed the topic at the July meeting. We had decided at that meeting to invite Anne to present her idea at the August meeting.
 1. Anne introduced herself: a student at Towson University, owner of two dogs, and recently moved to the area from New Jersey. Mia invited each of us to introduce ourselves and CVPC roles to Anne.

2. PROPOSAL FOR DOG PARK AT CROMWELL VALLEY PARK – Anne Westgate

- a. Anne had prepared a digital presentation for the group, and Mia allowed Anne the benefit of sharing the screen so that we could view her presentation. (The content of Anne's presentation is included as an attachment to these minutes. Please refer to this for the well thought out details that she provided.)
 1. Anne's presentation was well organized and considered pros and cons of the project. It included benefits of a dog park for the park community, the "dog parents," the CVPC and park staff, and the dogs themselves. In addition to benefits, she also balanced this with the potential issues for the providing a dog park. These included cost, maintenance, and liability. She presented potential rules for dog park users and "open questions" for managing the operation, including ongoing maintenance, cost support, rule enforcement, and dog behavior management.
- b. Question and Discussion:
 1. Rick asked Anne if there is a location for the proposed park that she recommend, and she suggested the area behind the Sherwood Barn that does not appear to be in use. Rick and Kirk identified this as a 2 to 3-acre area that had previously been used for horse grazing. Anne said that the area size was well beyond the approximately half-acre that is more typical of a dog park.
 2. Joe asked Anne to consider the effect of a dog park on the health of tributaries and streams, which can become polluted from runoff from the dog park. He is familiar with this situation from his association with the Lake Roland Park dog park project.
 3. Abe asked Anne about the benefit of dog park membership. She suggested that membership helps to cover costs and allows vetting of the dogs to help assure safety through control of participation. She suggested that requiring dog park membership may inhibit participation due to the cost.
 4. Mia related information she obtained from a discussion with Jeff Budnitz of the Lake Roland Nature Council (LRNC). She had learned from Jeff that the cost would likely be far beyond what Anne had found (\$30,000 per acre). LRNC realized a cost of at least \$125,000. They do use a membership program to help cover maintenance costs but it does not address initial outlay, and the Council is responsible for the dog park, with park staff stepping in for serious disagreements among users. Mia said the aeration and replanting of grass needs to be done periodically and treated to reduce possible disease sources.



Cromwell Valley Park Council, Inc.
Minutes – August 10, 2020

CVPC Board Meeting

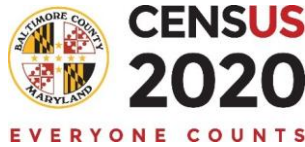
5. Abe asked the reason for installing a water source. Anne suggested that it is helpful to keep the dogs from overheating. Mia said that the water source was needed for maintenance of the turf and field areas of the dog park at LRNC.
6. We recognized that a decision on this would not be in order at this meeting. We thanked Anne for coming with an excellent presentation. Anne gave us contact information and would stay engaged. Anne left the meeting.
7. Mia asked Kirk for his thoughts about a dog park at CVPC. Kirk felt that he was overwhelmed with off-leash dog issues, and that it is difficult to consider a facility for dogs. Mia said that in her discussion with Jeff, he had recognized the positive reception within the community, but there were many more downside issues.
8. Rick suggested that we find a way to get a stronger understanding of interest level from the park using community, perhaps through an invitation for input at the kiosks or via the newsletter.

3. ONLINE AND HYBRID PROGRAMMING UPDATE

- a. Summer Hybrid Video Series – Posted through Week 6 <https://cromwellvalleypark.org/summer-programs/online-activities/>. Mia credited the staff for the great job on these videos.
 1. Mia said that she checked the view data on these postings. It shows that views cluster around initial posting, although these are available at any time. John suggested that we consider doing weekly, more energetic, email promotions to generate more interest.
- b. Live Virtual Programming – week-long camp planned for 2 separate sessions
 1. Due to low enrollment, the first planned week was canceled. Mia said that this was not surprising as a survey among Summer Camp parents conducted through the CampBrain camp cancellation process revealed low interest in a virtual form of camp.
 2. The second week is still on the calendar at this time.
- c. In Person Programming – Mia included data in the board packet that shows that people are not registering for these programs. Joe asked of we are adequately promoting the safety considerations that are included in our programs. Mia suggested that perhaps it is an opportunity for another video from the Council President to assure our community of the safety assurances in our planning of programs. Abe suggested that the use of a banner may be used to help remind our community of our staff's work to assure safety in programming. The Communications Committee will come up with ideas for a banner to install as County schools are not returning to in-person school, which may push some educational aspects to our park.

4. GOVERNANCE

- a. Meeting minutes acceptance from July meeting: Kim asked the group if there were any issues with the minutes, and there were none. The minutes were accepted and are posted to the website to <https://cromwellvalleypark.org/about-cvpc/park-council/>.
- b. Shining Star Awards – Mia for Pat Novak
 - Mia said that Shining Star awards are presented to volunteers for exemplary work. Up to two individuals are chosen based on numbers of nominations by board members and park staff. Mia suggested that Abe coordinate these nominations. Abe agreed and will send out a reminder in about a week's time from this meeting.



Cromwell Valley Park Council, Inc.
Minutes – August 10, 2020

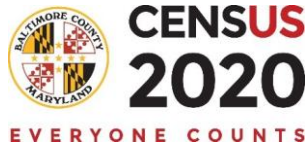
CVPC Board Meeting

5. FINANCE – Mia for Kristin

- a. Kristin is on vacation and was not able to produce reports. Mia went into the QuickBooks data and recognized that some line items need to be updated. Check requests were up to date.
- b. Financial Review – Joe/John taking over for Bill
 1. Mia asked Joe for top of mind thoughts following his review of records. Joe said that all the items he has reviewed appear to be legitimate. John will do his review separately.
 2. Mia has a Word template for the final report. It is based on the report from last year.
 3. Rick said that we need to make sure that any questions get answered. Mia said that it would be best for these answers to come from Rick, as Mia, Abe and Kristin have check-signing authority and, due to potential conflict of interest, should not provide answers.
 4. Mia recalled that last year's review pointed out a few checks for which documentation was not found in the records.
- c. Fiscal Year 2021 for Baltimore County – The agenda includes an update stating that the approved budget detail as of 8/7 was not yet posted to the County Office of Budget and Finance website, however there was no discussion of this during the meeting.

6. MANAGEMENT

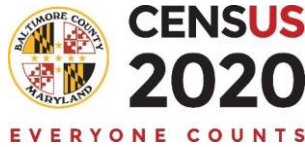
- a. Leaseholder's Report – Kate (Talmar, Inc.)
 1. Kate reported her biggest issue that continues is the absence of lavatory facilities. The County has not been answering her need to provide this for program participants. Because of the absence of handicapped accessible restroom facilities, Talmar lost a contract for programming for veterans.
 - Mia asked how Kate is battling for what she needs. Kate has been working through Therapeutic Services and Property Management, but no help has been coming. She feels that, as a leaseholder, the organization is vulnerable and so has not been heavy-handed in the approach. Part of the vulnerability is the absence of a renewed lease, although a holdover letter was issued. Kate also stated that having septic facilities is part of her lease agreement and the County is contractually obligated to provide this to them.
 - It was suggested that Kate consider ordering such portable facilities, though cost could be a factor. Abe suggested that perhaps the County would reimburse for this. Mia suggested crowd-sourcing to fund this. Kate was reluctant to give "bad publicity" to the County for not providing basic services, however.
 - Mia asked Kirk if there was anything he could suggest. He agreed that going to local politicians would not be a good way to go. He said that he would get some information to Kris Mervine on this.
 2. CSA – Joe asked how the CSA is going. Kate said that participation is good. Abe is enrolled in that program and he said that it seems well organized.
- b. Park Staff Report – Kirk
 1. Opening of Willow Grove - Kirk said that procedures have been put in place to allow for social distancing and sanitary procedures at the Nature Center. Visitation is low enough that people movement is easy to manage. Not everyone realizes that the Nature Center has reopened.
 - Staff time is devoted to animal care, maintenance and program creation. Staff is keeping lavatories clean, and Housekeeping is back at the facilities, with her work time shared at Loch Raven Fishing Center.



Cromwell Valley Park Council, Inc.
Minutes – August 10, 2020

CVPC Board Meeting

2. Parking lots – Kirk said that gravel was provided by the County to repair the parking lots, but the gravel provided was not the quality needed, so it also washes away in strong rains.
3. Mia asked about the effect on staff of low interest in programs
 - Kirk said that the staff seems to be taking it in stride. We need to reach out more to our contacts to draw more participation. Kirk will reach out to the Bio-Science program and he believes that the programs would be helpful to teachers who are looking for ways to engage kids.
 - Mia suggested hiring a teacher to review programs for the fulfilment of curriculum requirements within the County school system. Kirk said that he would check with Alisa, as she brings with her those credentials.
 - John asked about procurement of additional equipment for creating the virtual programming. In a recent conversation with Breena, he thinks she is expecting some additional resources. John would like to see them get what they need. Mia said that she was responding to requests but did not hear of needs other than the wireless microphones.
 - John also suggested that we consider doing more promotion of programs through email, describing the appealing promotions he receives from another organization. Kim agreed to providing weekly program reminders to our email list heading up to late summer and fall programs.
4. Review of Staff Report (See Kirk's written report.)
 - Traffic count is still high but manageable.
 - Two "exhibit maps" have been installed to help hikers get their bearings.
 - Additional in-depth virtual program elements have been recorded and are awaiting editing. Breena has been dedicating a huge amount of time to editing. Mia asked about the intern resources that were offered, and Kirk said that Breena feels she needs to do a lot of setup before handing work over.
 - Park visitors have been responding to some of the virtual programs and stopping by to get equipment to do the learning activities suggested.
 - The menu of programs for teachers has been rewritten to reflect current changes.
 - Plans are being made to provide remote "meet a ranger" through virtual events organized by teachers. The staff is hoping that there will be some onsite programs for home schoolers and private schools.
 - The first week of virtual summer camp was canceled. Kirk will check with Christy Davis to raise some interest in the second planned week scheduled for late August.
- c. Buildings and Grounds – Update on the Sherwood gazebo. Rick/Abe/Joe
 1. Abe requested input from KBK Builders. Their assessment of what remains of the gazebo is that it was purchased as a kit. They also reported that the kit is still available at the cost of \$17,000. Restoration of the existing structure was estimated at about the same amount.
 2. Rick was anticipating that restoration would not be that expensive, at only about \$3,000.
 3. Joe has submitted for bids of restoration to two other potential contractors. Joe said that materials are very expensive now. He proposed that he could approach these companies with a \$3,000 and \$6,000 wish and ask them for a creative plan.
 4. Mia asked if going for the high-priced restoration was something that we want to do. Instead the discussion considered ways to keep the project inexpensive through keeping it simple or engaging volunteers to do some construction. John said that he'd be willing to offer time to this project.



Cromwell Valley Park Council, Inc.
Minutes – August 10, 2020

CVPC Board Meeting

- d. Membership Subcommittee under Finance – Kim (No Report.)
- e. Friend of Sherwood House – Mia (No Report.)
- f. Volunteers – Kim (No Report.)
- g. Communications Committee – Kim for Pat – Sya completed layout, upload to printer, assembly and labeling of the newsletter. These were delivered to the Park Office earlier today.
- h. Programs – Ken
 1. Yoga program proposal – A yoga teacher approached the Park Council about holding yoga classes at the park on a regular basis. The request is that the Council consider owning the program, as well as providing insurance. The teacher would offer her services at no charge. Neither Kirk nor Mia felt that this was a good fit, and there were no arguments in support of it. Ken will deliver that message.
 2. Talmar Picnic – Kate has proposed a fundraiser to be held onsite at Talmar in September. It involves a safe gathering of picnickers who have been a part of the Talmar community, many of whom who have not been on the Talmar campus during the season. Kate wants it to be a simple event. The onsite event would be in coordination with an online peer to peer fundraising platform, with an opportunity for people to picnic in their own areas as well, not just on Talmar property.
 - Mia suggested that Kate look to get registration and donations in advance, as this will help manage the on campus attendance. Mia asked about the current statewide gathering limit. As the event is outside, there is no applicable gathering limit at that point in time.
 - Kate said that the online site allows photos and comments from participants in the fundraiser.
 - Ken asked about Talmar's parking availability. Kate said that there should be no issue as expected attendance should not test it.
 - Restroom facilities may still be an issue then, and perhaps portable facilities could be rented for the event.
 - In general, the board members felt that this event seems a good idea with no significant issues.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for September 14th, a general meeting.

Respectfully submitted by Kim Shapiro, Secretary

8-11-20

(Yoffe, Canoles - revisions incorporated 9/11/20)

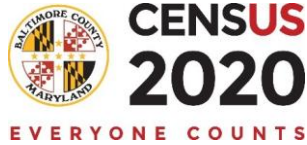


CENSUS
2020
EVERYONE COUNTS

Cromwell Valley Park Council, Inc.
Minutes – August 10, 2020

CVPC Board Meeting





Cromwell Valley Park Council, Inc.
Minutes – August 10, 2020

CVPC Board Meeting

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	Brief Executive Board Meeting	No	7:00 p.m.
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.