



Cromwell Valley Park Council, Inc. Minutes – March 8, 2021

CVPC General Meeting

Board members in attendance: John Canoles, Rick Childs, Bill Curtis, Sya Kedzior, Kristin McFaul, Pat Novak, Joe Rector, Kim Shapiro, Mia Walsh and Abe Yoffe.

CVPC Members: Kelly Emerson, Kelly Goles, Pat Maher and Michelle Monaghan

Park Staff: Kirk Dreier

Absent: Kate Joyce (Talmar, Inc.), Ken Keady

1. WELCOME FROM PRESIDENT – MIA WALSH

- a. Mia called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. The meeting was conducted online using the Zoom meeting app, due to safety considerations during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Mia welcomed board members and guests from the Council. Mia presented the agenda and board packet information, which had been distributed by email. As only two board members were absent, we had a quorum.
- b. Donations – Mia presented an overview of donations as part of a PowerPoint document.
 - 1) Valentine's (Galentine's) last minute push on Facebook yielded monetary donations. Mia provided "certificates" that could be printed and presented to the honored Valentine.
 - 2) The Halten Garden Club is covering five new bluebird boxes, which Mia purchased from Wild Birds Unlimited. During her visit to purchase these, the Wild Birds staff indicated an interest to partner with CVPC on potential future projects.
 - 3) Four ADA rated picnic tables were purchased: 2 with cost covered by the Rolon family and 2 with cost covered by Mia and her dad, Ted Potthast.
 - 4) Dog Waste Stations – a year end campaign provided 3 full waste stations, two Mutt Mitt dispenser stations and 1000 waste bags.
 - 5) Gazebo – The Burdick family has provided substantial funds for restoration of the gazebo. The contractor that will be doing the restoration has been paid the first third installment. (The Council is also covering some of this work.)
 - 6) Mia has designed and purchased plaques for recognizing donors and those honored or memorialized. Buildings and Grounds is providing support on preparation for installations, assembly as well as performing installations.
- c. Registration through CampBrain – Spring programs and Summer Camp – Mia is working through the last issues with processing e-checks (AHC) for program payments. There are no processing fees assessed by the Forte, the secure system provider, however the fund transfers will take 3 to 5 days.
- d. Towson University Occupational Therapy program students have provided proposals for projects at the park. These proposals address providing educational enhancements that can served vision-impaired visitors. This addresses our interest in enhancing accessibility in our park. Two projects are under consideration:
 - 1) Audio explanations of structures based on visual text provided through a prior Boy Scout project, and
 - 2) Audio reading of the text from the signage along the Lillian D. Jenifer mobility path.
- e. Volunteer thank-you – Mia recognized the board members and other hard-working volunteers at the park, as well as the dedicated staff, for keeping the park in shape to serve its many visitors.

2. GOVERNANCE

- a. Meeting minutes acceptance from February meeting: Kim asked if there were any changes needed to the meeting minutes distributed within the week following the February meeting. There were no changes requested. The minutes were accepted by the Board. These are on the Park website. <https://cromwellvalleypark.org/about-cvpc/park-council/>.



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b. Finance

- 1) 2021 Financial Documents – Kristin distributed current Balance and Profit & Loss sheets in advance and presented the Budget vs. Actuals at the meeting. Items of interest were:
 - The level of donations standing at over \$14,500 are already exceeding the budgeted amount of \$10,000. Mia said that there is another \$500 as well that hasn't yet been entered in Quickbooks. Kristin remarked that despite the pandemic, people are still giving.
 - On the Profit & Loss, Mia asked about the \$2000+ expense attributed to Buildings and Grounds. Kristin found that this was primarily the first payment to Award, the contractor for the gazebo work, and a few miscellaneous expenses. There were no other comments on the P&L.
 - On the Balance Sheet, Mia said that money in CampBrain has been moved forward to be available for 2021 registrations. (These were funds left in CampBrain due to program cancellations in 2020.)
- 2) Financial Review for Baltimore County: Kristin has assembled and organized checks and documents from 2020 for the annual financial review. Mia will do the same with documents she is holding. Bill Curtis and Joe Rector will be performing the review again this year. Bill will take it first, then pass it to Joe.
- 3) Fundraising Donation Update – Mia presented the review of fundraising efforts through reports generated by CampBrain's new fundraising module. Mia said that this module has made work associated with fundraising so much easier and clear. Tracking functions enable looking at categories of sources and targets of funding. The data is included in the PowerPoint document Mia shared in advance of the meeting and on the screen during the meeting. Please reference this for details. Particular points raised during the meeting are listed below:
 - ~\$7500 has been received through donation envelopes distributed by mail.
 - Primary sources are: Remittance Envelopes/Mail and via the website
 - Target breakdowns are: General, Membership, Mobility, Gazebo, Water Features, Animal Care and In-Kind

c. Election of Officers and Directors – Kelly Emerson brought attention to the slate included in the board packet. She read through the Officer and Director positions and individuals slated for them, and she reminded attendees that nominees from the floor are accepted. (The positions of Standing Committee chairs are also listed, but these will be voted on by the board in the April meeting.)

- President – Abe Yoffe (term April 2021 through March 2023)
- Vice-President – Kim Shapiro (term April 2021 through March 2022)
- Treasurer – Kristin McFaul (term April 2021 through March 2023)
- Secretary – Mia Walsh (term April 2021 through March 2022)
- Directors: John Canoles and Joe Rector renewing for term April 2021 through March 2023 (Terms of Sya Kedzior and Bill Curtis continue through March 2022.)

Kelly moved that the slate of nominees be approved. Pat seconded. Mia asked Kim to explain the CVPC Bylaws requirements about the voting privilege. Kim said that anyone voting must have attended two meetings within a year's time. This brought the voting group to the board members themselves. Mia also said that each person on the slate should abstain from voting for oneself. To this end, we voted on the slate of Officers and Directors. All individuals were approved unanimously for the positions for which they were nominated. These changes are effective April 1.



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- d. State Highway Administration Grant – Abe said that there was little progress over the last month, as a meeting with County staff is critical to the success, and this meeting has been difficult to schedule.
 1. Jeff Budnitz made some suggestions for the trails project regarding bridge structures that could be purchased. He also suggested getting some engineering help early on, but Abe felt that we should not incur that expense before we get some help from the County on the grant application.
 2. A contact at the Hampton National Historic Site suggested that we consider a metal ramp may be useful in the trail project.
 3. Kirk asked that Abe provide him some details to enable him to help get the meeting with the County to happen. The likely County staff are Pat McDougall and Bryan Sheppard. Abe said that he had been trying to schedule a walk through the trail area of interest, but the requests are not getting the necessary response.
3. MANAGEMENT (Mia reminded CVPC members attending the meeting to feel free to ask questions during the discussions.)
 - a. Park Staff Report – Kirk (See attached report for details.)
 - 1) Kirk stated that he is inundated with emails and that this effects his ability to respond quickly.
 - 2) The staff at CVP have received a Ford F 250 truck that they are calling “The Beast”. It is equipped with a snowplow attachment and 4-wheel-drive. A back-up warning device will be installed. During plowing this past month, some damage was done by contractors. Staff is working on getting repairs done.
 - 3) With the help of a listing in the Towson Times, Maple Sugaring Weekend was well-attended. The staff was able to maintain COVID rules even with the attendees counted at 236.
 - 4) In support of the Parker the Frog program, the staff have completed two videos and are working on a third.
 - 5) Susan Schepers, the park custodian, has been out of medical leave and is expected to return on March 15. In the meantime, we are benefiting from some custodial work-sharing.
 - 6) Deer culling was successful, with the removal of 86 of the population, providing about 3000 pounds of meat for charity.
 - 7) Summer Camp programs – The staff is working on the modifications for the upcoming summer camp season. Needing the most work are sessions for the younger campers who will need more attention to maintain COVID requirements. Mimi is making some changes to the summer art session, combining Art and Primitive Technology.
 - 8) Dog Stations – two have been installed by volunteer and honoree Bob Newton. The third will be installed by Buildings and Grounds.
 - 9) Susan Dorsey’s retirement date is not yet clear, as the County needs to approve the approach that Susan and Kirk have discussed. Retirement may be anytime from May to August, depending on what is agreed.
 - 10) Wellington Woods area of the park will need some modification to a portion of the trail due to the survey and sale of a property adjoining the park. A small part of the trail that is not within the bounds of the park needs to be shifted.
 - Mia showed the map of the survey and the trail layout, as well as the position of a bench. Rick said that there is a mismatch in the understanding of bounds and that the County staff will be involved in sorting that out.
 - Kirk said that the survey is happening on Tuesday morning (March 9) and the property lines will be flagged.



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- Kelly asked and got clarification on what is affected by the survey, as her property adjoins the affected area.
- 11) Kubota – question from Kim – At the last meeting Kirk mentioned that the Kubota was not working properly. Kim asked if the Kubota had been fixed. Kirk said that it has been, and the issue he discussed was that two tires had been damaged through sabotage. Someone placed nails in the path of the Kubota whether it was backed up or moved forward.
 - 12) Mowing request – Mia showed a park map with an area highlighted in purple that is near the birders' path. Kirk said that this has been requested. Rick said that mowing had started earlier this day.
 - 13) Community Garden – Kirk said that he has submitted a three-phase plan, but he has not heard back from the County with respect to support of the plan. Mia said that, since the last board meeting, she polled the board members by email as to their interest in supporting this project as the Council. She said that the responses were unanimously opposed to a Council role in this. Kirk asked what the reasons were for rejection, and he was disappointed that he was not involved in the exchange.
 - Abe and Rick talked about parking issues that would result. Abe also said that there were concerns about successful management of the project.
 - Mia reminded Kirk of Kate Joyce's experience with these gardens and the issues that were common.
 - Kirk talked about the benefit of funds generated through rental of spaces. Mia said that this anticipated revenue is nominal given the potential maintenance issues. Kirk said that the staff would be responsible for the work, and the Council would only have to manage the registrations and money.
- b. Leaseholder's Report – Kate Joyce was absent. No report.
 - c. Friends of Sherwood – Mia reported that the Halten Garden Club is discussing a plan for the gardens that would reflect back on the historic gardens on the property. Pat suggested that historic plans did not focus on native plants and were known to introduce invasive plants. Pat said that the garden club should focus on native plants. Mia said that this club is likely aware of that, but she would mention it to them.
 - d. Buildings and Grounds – Rick
 - 1) Fields have been cleared in preparation for mowing.
 - 2) The gazebo area has been cleared ahead of the start of the construction project. Joe said that will talk to the contractor and see if he can get a start date.
 - 3) Dog waste stations are being installed.
 - 4) ADA-compliant picnic tables have been assembled.
 - 5) Wellington Woods Trail – looking ahead at this, the project shouldn't be a lot of work.
 - 6) Green blazed tree placed across a stream – Joe Rector had taken photos of this. Rick and Kirk think that it was cut from the Barrans-Baldwin area and carried to this stream. Kirk said that the tree was dead before it was cut. Rick said that it has been taken care of and is no longer there.
 - 7) Mia shared the report made by Mary Starr of beech trees, the bark of which is being carved. Mia said that the trees in question are likely on Loch Raven property, but that we should have a role in educating the public in order to discourage this behavior.
 - John Canoles prepared an article on beech trees that addresses this issue. This article will be included in the weekly email that goes out on Wednesday of the current week.
 - Kirk said that he could provide a sign exhibit, and Mia said that we as the Communications Committee



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considered this but decided that those who carve trees would likely not be the ones influenced by signs.

- After the email goes out, Mia will post a message addressing this on social media.
- e. Programs – Mia addressed this in Ken’s absence. Kelly Emerson will be assuming the Chair position of this committee following the April meeting.
- 1) Baltimore Road Runners are anticipating holding their picnic this year. Proposed dates are the 26th or 27th of June.
 - 2) The Towson Arts Collective is interested in bringing Art in the Park back to CVP in June 2022. Mia spoke to Michelle and Pat about the significant need of volunteers for this event, but will put more onus of securing volunteers also on the Arts Collective.. Kelly Emerson said that she is looking forward to this event coming back to CVP and is glad that we have more than a year to prepare. Mia also suggested we use Sharon Childs’ prior history and knowledge of this.
 - 3) Night Out with Nature – Pat asked if the board is interested in continuing the NOWN program, and should it be only conducted in-person on site or should we extend it to a virtual platform?
 - Pat described the history of the event and talked about the approach.
 - Keep it – Several board members felt that it is a program we should keep, and the best approach is in-person.
 - ◇ Pat felt that in-person allows a community connection.
 - ◇ Kelly said that we shouldn’t drop something that has been successful.
 - ◇ Abe said we should wait for the fall to start it back up.
 - ◇ Kirk said that the other nature parks have similar programs.
 - ◇ Pat wants to make sure that there is adequate support from the board to maintain the program. In the past, it has been mostly her effort with regular help from Michelle. Several board members offered support.
 - Mia suggested that it looks good to go ahead with NOWN in the fall.
 - Pat suggested that we should get permission to include beer and wine. She also suggested that we consider incorporating some of the Sherwood family videos. Rick said that these are mainly Sherwood family trips. Kelly suggested that this may serve if they are curated for a presentation. Mia said that these are all now digitized and can be edited.
- f. Membership – Kim reminded the board that this is the time for high membership numbers, but at the changeover to April, these numbers drop drastically due to March 31 expirations.
- g. Communications
- 1) Signs – Bill offered for consideration his idea that we take the opportunity to “toot our own horn” to visitors by placing a sign at the site of a project completed through efforts of the Council. The sign would show visitors the value of the Council. He suggested that the sign, besides showing text that tells of the Council’s project ownership, that it also shows a QR code that leads to the website donation page. He envisions the sign to be aluminum and sturdy enough to last for 3 to 5 years. The sign would move from project to project. Joe said that this would be good for marketing the organization. This idea was well received by the group. Mia offered to design the sign, and Bill and Rick will work to implement its use.
 - 2) Preservation Maryland – Through support from Mia associated with her own property, Preservation Maryland offered a 30-second podcast spot. The audio of the podcast has been recorded and it will first air on Monday,



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March 15th on any podcasting app. Search for PreserveCast in your podcasting app or you may hear it at www.preservecast.org. The spot will feature the Historic Lime Kiln Bottom at Cromwell Valley Park.

- 3) Social Media review – (Refer to the PowerPoint presentation for details.) Facebook postings are finding good reach, especially particular ones. Mia shared some of the most-seen and most-shared ones. Instagram following has increased significantly over the last two years, with now over 1200 followers, with women making up the greatest proportion, but the percentage of male followers is increasing.
- 4) Newsletter – Sya introduced a discussion about the future of the Council newsletter. She offered that she has no particular position on the decision for the future but wishes to share options for consideration.
 - Current situation:
 - ◇ Newsletter goes out in paper mail form in the spring and fall, and it is associated with the Park Calendar that is mailed out four times a year. The Council is responsible for the content of the Newsletter and the Park staff is responsible for the Calendar. Council funds pay for printing of both, which totals ~\$2400 for the year. These are assembled and mailed to Council membership, and digital copies are posted on the website. About 20 of our membership households do not provide us with an email address.
 - ◇ Weekly emails – John Canoles provides articles that are part of weekly/biweekly promotion of programs. These emails go out to households registered in CampBrain, which far exceeds the reach of the mailed newsletter.
 - ◇ We have no data on the number of recipients who are actually reading either the paper or the emailed issues.
 - An option is to turn to a virtual format using email distribution. This would require use of an email platform with a paid subscription. Sya shared the appearance of a recent Oregon Ridge email as well as an Audubon promotion that John Canoles forwarded. Approaches include sending out the newsletter as a pdf attachment or a link to a pdf, or using a designed email with a series of links to details. This could be done with higher frequency as cost is less of a consequence, and there is less labor involved compared to the paper version.
 - Discussion:
 - ◇ Pat likes having the paper version. Extra copies can be handed out to park visitors who react favorably; enjoys John “blog” articles, which are a quick read.
 - ◇ Kelly – Who is looking at it? – Sya said that the cost of email platforms includes analytics. Abe said that Mailchimp, Constant Contact and other email blast systems offer this. Sya said that there are more than just two choices. It would help to have some goals to guide the decision.
 - ◇ Joe suggested that we take a year and do both mail and digital, considering results of analytics. Sya asked – What would analytics make us do differently?
 - ◇ John said that the digital format allows us to move more quickly; it can be smaller/have less content; it can be more timely; it can look good; and it can be forwarded/shared.
 - ◇ Abe said that having the paper version allows one to pick it up at any time to read it, and the calendar on paper can be kept handy. Emails tend to be handled immediately and then pushed aside.
 - We recognized that there was no decision needed at this meeting. Mia was surprised, given this group, that no one addressed the ecological issue of printed paper, and she admitted to enjoying the paper format, too. Sya thanked all for the feedback.



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- 5) Volunteers – Kim thanked those who provided volunteer hours.
5. OLD BUSINESS – None.
6. NEW BUSINESS – Mia announced that Summer Camp registration opens on March 16th.
Mia asked for a motion to adjourn, which Sya provided and Kristin seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m,

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 12th at 7:00 p.m. – Executive Board meeting.

Respectfully submitted by Kim Shapiro, Secretary
3-10-21

2021 CVPC Meeting Dates

Approved at November 9, 2020 Meeting

MEETING LOCATION: REMOTE via ZOOM or SHERWOOD HOUSE

DATE 2021	MEETING	Open to Public?	Time
Monday, January 11	Executive Board Meeting	Yes	7:00 p.m.
Monday, February 8	Executive Board Meeting (closed to Board only)	No	7:00 p.m.
Monday, March 8	Council Meeting (open to Public – Annual Meeting)	Yes	7:00 p.m.
Monday, April 12	Executive Board Meeting	Yes	7:00 p.m.
Monday, May 10	Executive Board Meeting	Yes	7:00 p.m.
Monday, June 14	Executive Board Meeting	Yes	7:00 p.m.
Monday, July 12	No Meeting		
Monday, August 9	Executive Board Meeting (closed to Board only)	No	7:00 p.m.
Monday, September 13	Council Meeting	Yes	7:00 p.m.
Monday, October 18 th (10/11 is Columbus Day)	Executive Board Meeting	Yes	7:00 p.m.
Monday, November 8 th	Executive Board Meeting (closed to Board only)	No	7:00 p.m.
Monday, December 13 th	Executive Board Meeting	Yes	7:00 p.m.