



Cromwell Valley Park Council, Inc. Minutes – December 11, 2023

CVPC Board Meeting

Working Board Meeting at McFaul's IronHorse Tavern

Board members in attendance: Rick Childs, Bill Curtis, Kelly Emerson, Carl Gold, Kate Joyce, Deb Lee, Pat Novak, Joe Rector, Kim Shapiro, Dave Votta, Abe Yoffe, Mia Walsh

Park Staff: None

Absent: Stacey Cruise

Council Members: David Schroeder

1. WELCOME FROM PRESIDENT, ABE YOFFE

- a. The meeting was called to order at 6:13 pm, the agenda was adopted and quorum for voting was established. The Secretary was not able to be in attendance, so the Treasurer took the minutes for the meeting.
- b. The President thanked the Park Staff and all the volunteers for a great Holiday Open House.
- c. Due to a conflict, the final agenda, financial statements and Board Reports were not distributed prior to the meeting. The President was able to obtain pertinent documents from his laptop and display on the projector in the meeting room.

2. GOVERNANCE

- a. Approval of November 2023 Minutes – *Stacey Cruise, not in attendance*
The draft of the November minutes were emailed to the board on 12/4/23. It is unclear if any changes or adjustments were made. Thus, both the November and December Minutes will be voted upon for approval at the January 2024 meeting. Upon acceptance, they will be posted on the CVPC website: <https://cromwellvalleypark.org/about-cvpc/park-council/>
- b. Treasurer's Report – *Mia Walsh*
 - i. The Treasurer reviewed the Profit & Loss Statements and Budget vs. Actuals Report.
 - ii. The Treasurer presented the final 2024 budget and discussed the line item change for a Volunteer Appreciation event. A motion was made by Bill Curtis to accept the final 2024 Budget. The motioned was seconded by Pat Novak and approved unanimously.
 - iii. The website was updated with both Venmo and a new credit card look for any purchases made, in addition to the existing PayPal buttons.
 - iv. Donations/Fundraising
 1. Dave Votta discussed the use of donation funds for the construction of a chimney swift tower. These can be up to 12 feet tall, free-standing, and designed for nesting and small numbers of roosting birds). The cost would be roughly \$600 in materials to construct and are very successful at attracting chimney swifts. They should be installed 25' away from a forest edge or in any open field around the park. A possibility would be to combine this with a kiosk structure as well. Winter construction is preferable.



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2. We discussed the possibility of a Boy Scout project or doing a Citizen Generated Request after speaking with Kirk.
 3. Approval was made to purchase the Chimney Swift Tower Book, which includes different designs and construction plans. Most people preferred the kiosk style chimney swift roost.
 4. More information may be found on <http://chimneyswifts.org/>.
 5. Funding is already available for this project through the Kingman donation.
 6. Chimney Swifts are aerial birds which feed on aerial plankton and roost in chimneys. Because old buildings are being torn down, their habitat is disappearing.
 7. Ranger Laura L. should be contacted to get her thoughts on the project and potential locations as well.
- c. Background Checks- *Abe Yoffe*
- i. All Board members are current with their background checks.
- d. Committee Structure Changes - *Kim Shapiro*
- i. Committee met in November with Kim, Pat, Joe and Carl and they reviewed the ideas in the changes in the committee structure. The two biggest changes would be regarding meetings, voting and Section 10, which includes Standing Committees.
 - ii. The Board will need to vote on the changes and then forward to the R&P Board, before returning to the General Membership meeting for a vote. The Council will work with our R&P Board liaison, Corey Johns.
 - iii. Kim noted that our membership in Maryland NonProfits was helpful in developing the organization structure. Of note: Finance Committee would be inward facing, while Membership committee would be outward facing.
 - iv. Abe will send out the Committee Structure chart when the minutes are distributed, which will include a final proposed structure. Please submit back comments and questions with the hope to vote on it at January meeting.
3. MANAGEMENT
- a. Park Staff Report – *N/A*
 - b. Leaseholder's Report - *Talmar - Kate Joyce*
 - i. Winter means the workload is slowing down at Talmar, except for the tree sales. Christmas trees are still for sale – Venmo or leave check.
 - ii. Talmar is hoping to add a full time employee farmer in 2024.
 - iii. Talmar hosted Low sensory Santa (Thank you, Corey Johns) – 15 signed up for the event and only 4 attended. They are hoping to change the sign up for a drop in time period, rather than specific. Talmar had to borrow ramps from the County for our visitors in wheel chairs.
 - iv. Seedling sale will be focused on items in a sensory garden (aromatic and textures)



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- v. Talmar will be creating an Advisory Board. This would develop a committee of participants and volunteers, but not have the legal and fiscal responsibilities that a normal Board Member would have.
 - vi. WYPR did a story on Talmar. Check out their website to read it.
 - vii. People are having a difficult time finding the park since the GPS is not affiliated with a street address. Discussion ensued about signage to assist with helping people find Talmar better as well as the park. For the County capital project on parking and entry/egress, perhaps large numbers with the street address could be included.
 - viii. A blind person also contacted Kate to attempt to visit the park, but it is inaccessible without the help of audio. This is not making the park very inclusive.
 - ix. Signage was discussed about multiple languages, which may include Spanish, Korean, Chinese, Russian and Arabic. Kate noted that there is a cultural idea of sunset, so the actual time of day that the gates closed is more beneficial than just sunset. We need to have cultural sensitivity in our messaging.
- c. Friends of Sherwood Report – *Mia Walsh*
- i. Mia distributed plans which were designed by Charles Suter for the Honor Garden. All Giving Tuesday and Year-End donation social media and website campaigns were directed for the Honor Garden.
 - ii. Mia met with Maxaela about doing some of the heavy lifting for the Honor Garden project. They offered to provide the materials for the stepping stones out of their inventory. We are awaiting a proposal for the work, to include bed preparation, native plants and planting.
- d.
- e. Standing Committees –
- i. Building and Grounds - *Rick Childs*
 - 1. Mowing schedule: The County has at the Council to layer two documents on top of each other to demonstrated the mowing schedule we are proposing. The County has not done any of their Fall field mowing at this time – November through February is when they should be addressing the fields. Dave Votta has agreed to combine the mowing documents to send to Property Management.
 - ii. Programs - *Kelly Emerson*
 - 1. No additional PPI's for upcoming events requiring approval have been submitted.
 - 2. Kelly discussed the Art Festival / Migration Celebration combination and the Secretary sent out financial and post-event review documents to the Board. Many things went well and the Council agreed to run these two events together again in 2024.
 - a. President Abe Yoffee said that he would send an email to Elizabeth at TAC to receive our portion of the liquor sales. We already cut a check to them for their portion of the parking sales.
 - 3. Dates for 2024 events – TBD waiting on County.



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iii. Communications – *Mia Walsh*

1. Thank you to Dave Schroeder for his excellent work on the newsletters. It was suggested that we include article submission deadlines in the minutes so writers know when items are due.
2. As soon as the Year-end books are settled and final donations entered, the Annual Report will be created for distribution.
3. CampBrain, Instagram, Facebook and Constant Contact were all used to publicize our Giving Tuesday and Year-End fundraising efforts. The CVP website was updated with that content, as well as financial updates to make it easier to make a payment.

iv. Volunteers – *Pat Novak*

1. Night Out with Nature: Park Staff has always handled speakers in the past, but they would like the Council to arrange those. They wish to move NOWNs to Friday nights in March, April and May. Speakers that were suggested were Eric Duce (Goats Eating Invasives), Bill Curtis (Critter Cam) and Dave Votta (Birding at CVP). Pat will coordinate those speakers and dates.

v. Finance – *Rick Childs*

1. Membership – *Kim Shapiro*
 - a. Current membership is at 530, our highest number ever.
 - b. Mia will try to extract membership birthdays to see what our demographics are in membership, and also will attempt to export a Zip Code listing for areas.

4. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Dates for Summer Camp 2024 – *Mia* Summer Camp dates have now been added to the CVPC website and CampBrain. Registration opens January 16th at 10:00 a.m.
- b. Summer camp price increase? – *Mia* Mia discussed the rising labor costs, which are passed to the Council for Summer Camp, as well as the membership fees we collect as part of Summer Camp Registration. A motion was made by Bill to increase Summer Camp fees by \$10, Deb Lee seconded it and it was approved unanimously. The fees will be recorded in the CampBrain system and the website.
- c. Our current insurance excludes loss by pollution. The premium for this coverage is high, while the risk is very low on part of the Council. These would include gasoline and oil spills, with a reportable number of more than 5 gallons. The Council agreed the risk was too low to justify the cost of several thousand dollars.

5. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Plexiglass on dining room walls- *Deb Lee* Deb Lee presented an option for a plexiglass covering with standoffs, which provide ventilation for the fabric wallpaper in the dining room. She did speak to the Historic Preservation Commission regarding what can and can not be done and



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provided their response on that subject. She did note that the paper is peeling in some areas now. The Board discussed a theatre rope line with stations or to make the dining room off-limits to the public or off-limits for big functions. This was not well received. The Council agreed we should not drill through the wallpaper and Deb will look into roping.

The meeting was intertwined with dinner, but adjourned roughly at 9:00 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 8th at 6:00 PM in person at Sherwood House and virtually via GoogleMeet.

Respectfully submitted by Mia Walsh, Treasurer 12/30/23



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2024 CVPC Meeting Dates

Approved on November 13, 2023 Meeting

All meetings will be held in the Sherwood House and via Google Meet unless otherwise indicated

Meeting Date	Time	Class of Meeting
Monday, January 8	6:00 p.m.	Executive Board (open to public)
Monday, February 12	6:00 p.m.	Executive Board (closed)
Monday, March 11	6:00 p.m.	Annual Meeting (open to public)
Monday, April 8	6:00 p.m.	Executive Board (open to public)
Monday, May 13	6:00 p.m.	Executive Board (open to public)
Monday, June 10	6:00 p.m.	Executive Board (open to public)
Monday, July 8	6:00 p.m.	Executive Board (open to public)
Monday, August 12	6:00 p.m.	Executive Board (open to public)
Monday, September 9	6:00 p.m.	General Meeting (open to public)
Monday, October 7	6:00 p.m.	Executive Board (open to public)
Monday, November 4	6:00 p.m.	Executive Board (closed)
Monday, December 9	6:00 p.m.	Executive Board (open to public)

* Park office closed for Federal holiday



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Executive Board Roster
As of 12/11/23

OFFICERS	Name	Email Address	Term
President	Abe Yoffe	President@cromwellvalleypark.org	April 2023 – March 2025
Vice President	Joe Rector	vicepresident@cromwellvalleypark.org	April 2023 – March 2024
Treasurer	Mia Walsh	treasurer@cromwellvalleypark.org	April 2023 – March 2025
Secretary	Stacey Cruise	secretary@cromwellvalleypark.org	April 2023 – March 2024
DIRECTORS – Members at Large			
Director	Carl Gold	cgold@carlgoldlaw.com	April 2022 – March 2024
Director	Bill Curtis	curtiswbc@gmail.com	April 2022 – March 2024
Director	Deb Lee	urspiders2@verizon.net	April 2023 – March 2025
Director	Dave Votta	dgvotta85@gmail.com	April 2023 – March 2025
STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS			
Finance	Rick Childs	rikchilds@aol.com	Current membership year – voted annually *
Building & Grounds	Rick Childs	rikchilds@aol.com	^
Programs	Kelly Emerson	emersonkel@yahoo.com	^
Communications	Mia Walsh	mia@cromwellvalleypark.org	^
Volunteers	Pat Novak	pnovak8525@aol.com	^
LEASEHOLDER REPRESENTATIVE			
Talmar	Kate Joyce	katejoyce@talmar.org	

Section 1 - Members

The Executive Board will consist of the Officers, Directors, Leaseholder representatives, and the Chairpersons of the Standing Committees.

***Section 4 - Chairpersons**

All standing committee chairpersons shall be elected by the current Executive Board to serve for the current membership year. The elections shall take place at the Executive Board Meeting subsequent to the Annual Meeting. If a standing committee chair position is vacant due to resignation or termination, the President shall appoint a chairperson to fill the remainder of the vacant term.

President, Treasurer – elected in odd-numbered years / two directors in odd-numbered years
 Officers, Directors, Leaseholder Representatives and Chairpersons of the Standing Committees



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CURRENT MEMBERSHIP DATA:

Total memberships

as of 12/5/23: 530

Last report (Nov.): 520

Lifetime: 13

Patron: 4

Sustaining: 26

Contributing: 31

New high-level memberships: Noon (Life), Renggli (Sustaining), Rhyne (Contributing)

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Dec. totals	356	357	449	437	530

SUBMITTED BY: VOLUNTEERS Committee – Pat Novak & Kim Shapiro

The tally of reported November volunteer hours and estimates of known activity for board members is shown below.

Last Name	Hours	Category/Event
Childs		See Office records
Cruise	6	Preparation of minutes, Family Event
Curtis		Critter Cam
Novak	6	Decoration Sherwood House, Speaker NOWN
Rector	4	Check signing, meetings, onsite visits
Shapiro	32	Membership,communications,bylaws,gen. admin.
Walsh	25	Honor Garden, Giving Tuesday, Website, Finance
Yoffe	10	CVPC business

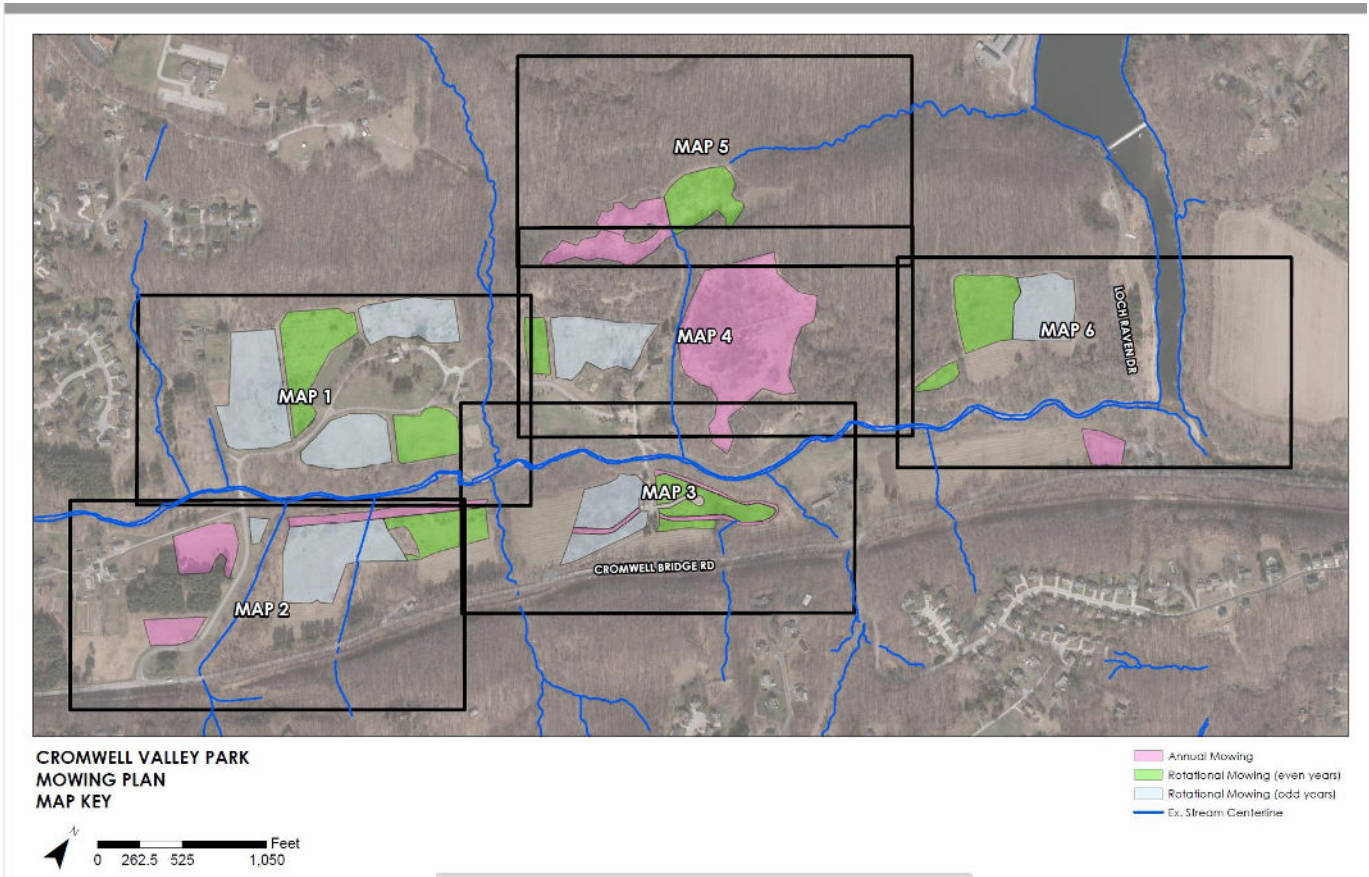
83 Total hours



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Updated Mowing Map by Dave Votta for Property Management:





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SUBMITTED BY: Mia Walsh – TREASURER’S REPORT

REQUEST TO ADD ITEM TO MEETING AGENDA? Yes No

- 1. ALL EXPENSES FOR 2023 MUST BE SUBMITTED BY FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15TH.**
- 2. Kirk: Please make sure that BC deposits the \$10,000 check early this month.**
3. Stripe was installed on the CVPC website and has been functioning well. It takes 8 days for a payment made on the website to hit our bank account, so our December year end donations may actually post in the bank in the 2024 budget. Since we are a cash method accounting, it is as such. If a donor uses PayPal, we should be able to post any donations made up until about the 23rd of December as that, as well, takes a few days to transfer into our account.
4. Holiday Open House is not a money-making event, and that’s okay. \$852.68 in expenses (\$175 from last year), with \$574 as income. Over 200 people in attendance. \$165 in sales of ornaments on site that day (under fundraising line item).

SUBMITTED BY: Mia Walsh – 2023 FUNDRAISING UPDATE

REQUEST TO ADD ITEM TO MEETING AGENDA? Yes No

1. Giving Tuesday: Facebook Fundraiser raised \$621.00, which we probably won’t see until 2024.
2. Honor Garden Giving Tuesday donations through Paypal, Venmo and Website were moved off the balance sheet into the Restricted Fund for Honor Garden. Currently, that is set at 7,354.42, however, \$5K of that is the Pat Kingman donation, which will likely be split for the chimney swift project, if that is approved.

BOARD MEETING MONTH: November

YEAR: 2023

SUBMITTED BY: Mia Walsh – COMMUNICATIONS

REQUEST TO ADD ITEM TO MEETING AGENDA? Yes No

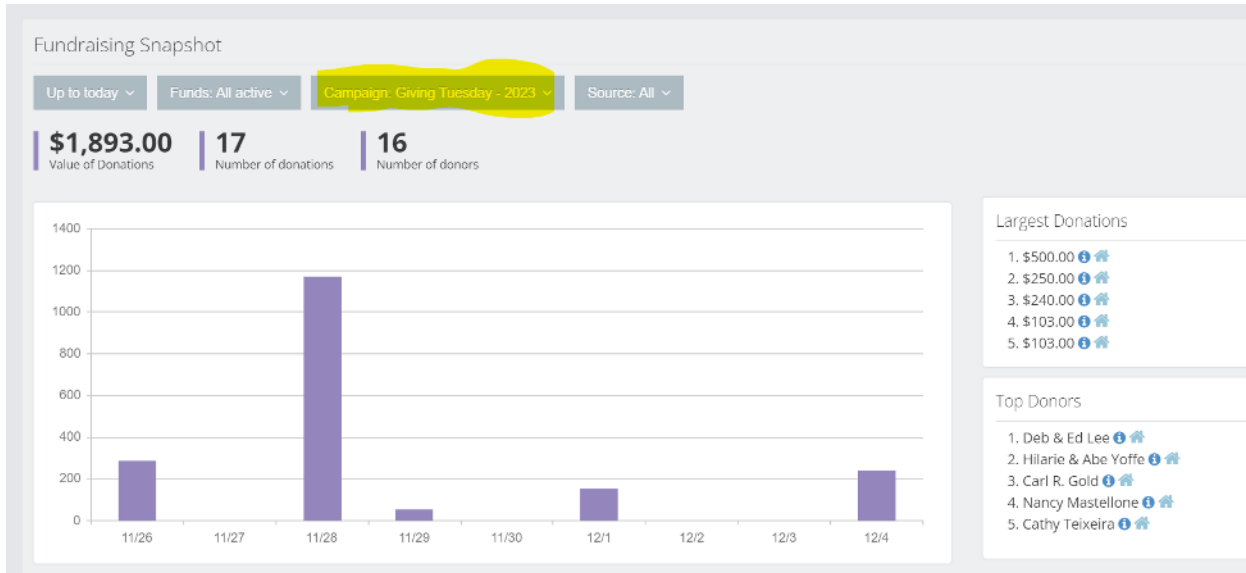
1. Winter Newsletter brought forth some early membership renewals, as well as lots of compliments on the job done by David Schroeder.



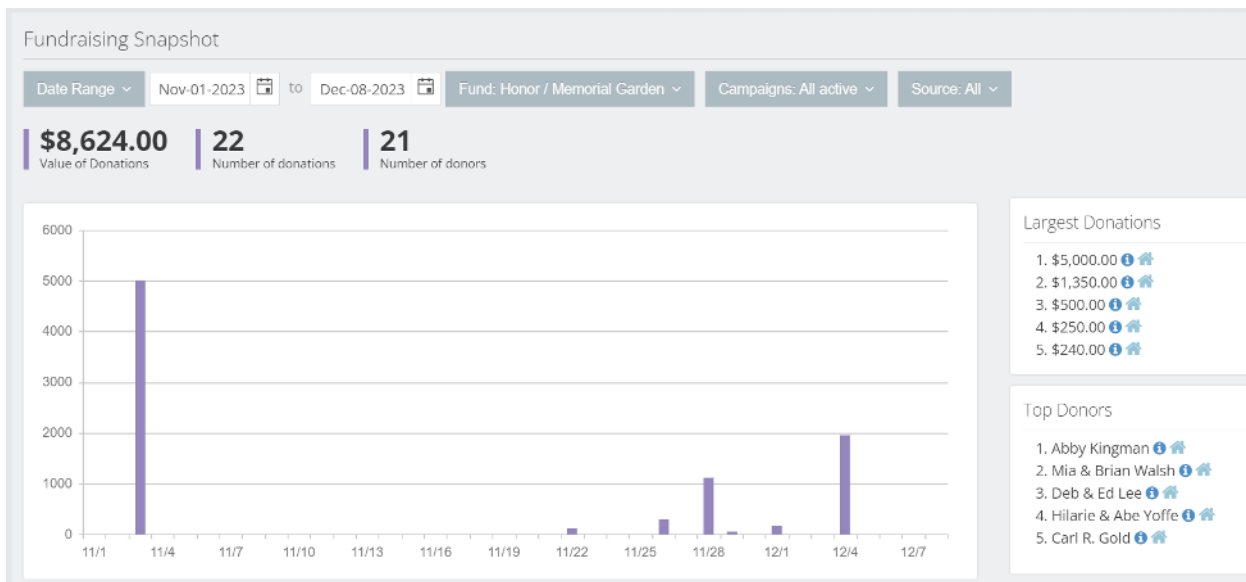
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GIVING TUESDAY:



HONOR GARDEN SPECIFICALLY – NOT NECESSARILY ON GIVING TUESDAY





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Civic Rec Registration System

From: President CVPC <president@cromwellvalleypark.org>

Sent: Wednesday, December 20, 2023 8:15 PM

To: Stacey Cruise <secretary@cromwellvalleypark.org>; Dave Votta <dgvotta85@gmail.com>; Carl Gold <cgold@carlgoldlaw.com>; Deb Lee <urspiders2@verizon.net>; Kelly Emerson <emersonkel@yahoo.com>; Treasurer CVPC <treasurer@cromwellvalleypark.org>; Kim Shapiro <everydance@aol.com>; Mia Walsh <mia@cromwellvalleypark.org>; Rick Childs <rikchilds@aol.com>; Joe Rector <joe@pelicanmgt.com>; Bill Curtis <curtiswbc@gmail.com>; Vice President CVPC <vicepresident@cromwellvalleypark.org>; Pat Novak <PNovak8525@aol.com>; Kate Joyce <katejoyce@talmar.org>

Subject: Rec & Parks / MOU

Good evening everyone,

Tonight I participated in a virtual meeting hosted by the Department of Rec & Park about an assessment they commissioned about their own form and function and the resulting proposed changes. The biggest change for us is that the department will attempt to establish a Memorandum of Understanding between itself and the rec/nature councils that defines roles and responsibilities for each. There may be some changes regarding collection of registration fees for programs that are run by park staff, but those details still have to be worked out. Bob Smith (the head of the department) stressed multiple times that this will be a collaborative process and that there will be room for accommodating unique situations. They are committed to making sure the councils remain an important part of the fabric of the Rec & Parks system. They are also going to try to bring back maintenance/property management functions under Rec & Parks control to some extent, which would be good for us in several ways. He also mentioned an improved/quicker process for approval of Community (formerly Citizen) Generated Project Requests.

The department has set up a web page with a variety of info about this process, including the assessment report and the presentation that was delivered tonight. Please feel free to review: <https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/departments/recreation/reimagine-recreation>

I believe this is a positive development and look forward to seeing things improve.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Happy Holidays,

Abe