



Cromwell Valley Park Council (CVPC)

Meeting Minutes

August 12, 2024, 6:00 PM

- **COUNCIL MEETING ATTENDANCE**
 - In-person: Abe Yoffe, Bill Curtis, Deb Lee, Rachel Allshouse, Carl Gold, Stacey Cruise, Rick Childs, Kelly Emerson
 - Virtually in attendance: Mia Walsh
 - Absent: Pat Novak, Joe Rector, Kim Shapiro, Kate Joyce
 - Park Staff in attendance: Kirk Dreier
 - Membership in attendance: None

- **WELCOME FROM PRESIDENT, ABE YOFFE**
 - Call to Order & Adoption of the Agenda; Establish Quorum
 - Call to order: 6:05 PM
 - The meeting was hybrid via Google Meet and in-person.
 - The Agenda was adopted. A quorum was present.
 - Thanks to everyone, especially Kelly Emerson, for making the Chesapeake Shakespeare Company (CSC) event a great success.

- **GOVERNANCE**
 - CVPC approved July 2024 Minutes – Rachel Allshouse
 - Treasurer’s Report – Mia Walsh
 - Review Profit & Loss Statements and Budget vs. Actuals
 - **YEAR-TO-DATE 2024**
 - 19% over budget for membership dues and 30% over budget for annual donations.
 - Arts in the Park and Fall Harvest Festival: President is reviewing the Contract for this event. The County is requesting 50% of any surplus income CVPC receives.
 - We received \$70 from the donation box at the Nature Center (plus some additional loose change I need to take to the bank). The County has ordered that all donation boxes are removed from Park grounds.
 - It is time to begin working with Staff to see if there is anything they would like to see added to the park in 2025.
 - As we look towards “Reimagining Recreation”, there will be several budgeted expenses which we will not incur for the remainder of the year. Items in the Staff expense categories, such as Animal Expenses (\$1,900 remaining in budget), Public Programs (\$800 RIB), Displays (\$1,000 RIB), Conferences (\$1,380), will not be spent.
 - ***It would be interesting to hear from Park Staff if all their needs are being met by BCRP in a timely/efficient manner one month into the crossover.***

- This week is the last Art and Nature Camp with Rangers Mimi and Anne.
- August saw 51 kids for the 3 weeks of camp.
- Virtually all of the evaluations registered excellent.
- A few concerns about kids with learning disabilities (parents did not disclose) and parents/guardians lying about a child's age.
- Awaiting property management's decision to allow Maxalea (an outside contractor who has been used before) to come and do the maintenance on the Honor Garden. No word yet.
- The Board discussed the Sherwood Herb Garden Patio.
 - Who is responsible for its long term maintenance, the county or the garden club? Is there an agreement in place?
 - Debbie Trout has reached out to the Garden Club, but it has probably been too hot to do it recently.
- No word concerning the meeting about Gifts and Grants fiscal accounting with administration and CVPC. Ranger Kirk will let us know when he knows.
- Night Out With Nature (NOWN) or "Cromwell Valley Park Speaker Series"
 - Administration allowing the event to run with a complimentary staff member.
 - The county will pay a staff salary to be here, let you in, out and lock up.
- African American Cultural and Heritage Festival, September 21, 2024.
 - Location and Time: Patriot Plaza, Towson, 10:00am-7:00pm
 - Will have Nature represented there at the County table.
 - Further details to come from Jessi Jeanetta.
- A sad note on trees:
 - One tree at the Eck House broke during the thunderstorms in July.
 - The giant spruce in front of the Willow Grove House has stress fractures running up both sides. A large white pine in front of and adjacent to the flag poles has massive stress cracks and fractures running up its trunk.
 - Spruce and pine are dangers to the public and infrastructure.
- The Polaris had so many problems the company says they will replace it.
 - Expected in a month. Hopeful to get it before Kubota's next maintenance and before the Fall Harvest Festival.
- We recently received the newly refurbished Raptor Mew
 - Done by Officer Jennifer Scott's (of the county's JOINS program, <https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/departments/police/community/youth-mentoring>) son who will receive his Eagle Scout Award.
 - It was delivered last Tuesday and will probably be used for an owl.
 - The one we had is soiled from turkeys and needs to be power washed.
- Kona Ice contacted Debbie Trout and would like to be added to the vendor list.
- A large tree is down in the park on the Baldwin Barran's trail.
 - Ranger Kirk has not yet inspected the site to see how bad it is.
 - Trails Crew can help with the trail around the down tree, but if it is large, they may be unable to handle it.

- Very successful event; facebook compliments and emails. Great vibe. Guests were appreciative, well behaved, and left happy.
- CSC were very happy. Largest attendance yet.
- Attendance count varies (600 park staff and 800 CSC).
- Kelly Emerson has access to an informal download link. Formal download when season concludes.
- ASL interpreters MUCH appreciated.
 - No response from BCRP.
 - TALMAR donation to CVPC to fund this.
 - Discussion about CVPC splitting cost with TALMAR? \$800 each if split.
 - Motion must be made since it is out of budget expense. Consider pending insurance CVPC may need to purchase depending on MOU.
 - Future donation back to TALMAR if approved?
- Food trucks well liked
 - Once Upon a Potato generator was very loud.
- CVPC table successful. Cash and venmo donations.
 - \$173 donations total.
- Council, park staff and volunteers stepped up to help.
- Polish
 - High volume attendance. We planned for 75 cars. Even with rain, event was hugely popular. How to manage in the future? Free ticket through event brite? Sherwood lawn was beautiful, but do we plan a Willow Grove placement?
 - Parking-there was almost not enough and darkness came sooner than we thought
 - Re-evaluate parking plan. The added travel lane reduced parking lines from 5 to 4.
 - Should we generally plan a divided egress Willow grove and Sherwood.
 - For evening events we need to think about additional means of lighting the parking lot. CSC may be willing to help.
 - More volunteers would be welcome.
 - Port a pot placement and signage could be improved.
 - How many attendees per how many pots?
 - Think about this for the fall harvest festival. County will provide hand washing stations. Can also use the Willow Grove building too.
- Ponder
 - What does an ongoing relationship with CSC look like?
 - What else can we take away from this event?
- Fall Harvest Festival - Saturday 9/28/2024

- A proposed fall harvest agreement with the county was sent to Abe Yoffe, Kelly Emerson, and Mia Walsh on 8/2. A response is being prepared. Main issues are:
 - What revenues will be shared with Baltimore County Recreation & Parks (BCRP) and how?
 - What Liability/indemnification CVPC will need to hold?
 - What Liability/ indemnification individual vendors/ exhibitors will need to hold?
 - **FOCUS THIS WEEK ON CONSOLIDATING COMMENTS, FINAL REVIEW, SEND BACK BCRP.**
- Planning, Focus, Budget, Donations, Volunteers, Timeline
 - Budget
 - 2024 budget prediction was for \$2,500 in expenses, \$3,500 in income. (this is in line with past years, more or less*)
 - This would yield a \$1,000 revenue for CVPC.
 - More than one factor will impact this yield:
 - Revenue sharing with the county
 - The need for an additional tent
 - Solicitations and donations
 - The Committee proposed/planned that we reinstate the process of soliciting donations for yearly council events.
 - A sample solicitation letter was shared for review.
 - A potential donor list was shared for review.
 - Volunteers: CVPC asked to review and share sign up genius link.
 - A detailed timeline document and other planning documents are available for review.
- Future Events
 - Holiday Celebration date
 - Member Appreciation date
 - Fall Harvest Festival 2025
- Communications – Mia Walsh
 - Website Updates: Fall Harvest Festival
 - CampBrain Updates: Directing users to CivicRec
 - Email Blasts: Directing users to CivicRec
 - **ACTIVITIES OR ITEMS FOR THE UPCOMING MONTH**
 - Need to record two Hike Through History audio files for Deb Lee and upload to the website so she can create the QR Codes for the project. (Sorry, Deb!)
 - Interested to hear how Stacey Cruise will utilize the college students for the project on which she is working.
 - **SPECIAL RECOGNITION:** Deb Lee and Stacey Cruise for their work.
- Volunteers – Abe Yoffe on behalf of Pat Novak and Kim Shapiro
 - The tally of reported JULY volunteer hours and estimates of known activity for board members is shown below. 442.5 Total hours.

Last Name	Hours	Category/Event
Allshouse	27	Inventory, CSC Event, Agenda, Bd. Mtg, Minutes, email, Shining Star
Childs		
Cruise	18.5 (corrected)	History & Culture Cmte, phone calls, emails, mtg to present during Council meeting, planning August cmte mtg, meeting with Towson University, Council report, and reading various documents.
Curtis	4	Council business
Emerson	62 (updated from email Aug. 11)	8 - CSC- event planning, paperwork, marketing, feedback conversations, 16 -Beyond Shakespeare - parking set up, day of set up and presence, clean up, 15-Fall Harvest Festival-meetings and planning, emails, marketing conversations, 15 - Park History - Document scanning and meetings with Jim Kelly, 4-Ad hoc committee meetings and document reviews, 4-council meeting and documentation
Gold	20	Guided hikes, research and writing articles for newsletter and email communications, MOU work, Ad Hoc committee work.
Lee	17	Hike Through History project, Fall festival planning, CSC
Novak	2	Volunteer hours
Rector		
Reed	6	Trail maintenance
Schroeder	0	
Shapiro		
Walsh		
Yoffe	20	Meeting prep, emails, MOU negotiations, figuring out postal rates, CSC

- How are we recording non-council member hours? Likely many hours non recorded. Consider further discussion as future new business.
 - Each committee could document for their own committee.
 - Documenting an accurate record of volunteer hours helps the committee and park staff, staffing and grants, etc.
- Finance – Rick Childs
 - Nothing to report.
- Membership – Abe Yoffe on behalf of Kim Shapiro
 - Changes in membership are minimal this time of year.
 - **Coming month:** Continue to send out thank-you cards/membership cards to renewing households.
 - **Recognition:** Thanks go to Mia for gathering membership data from all of the sources, inputting membership data into CampBrain and forwarding records of membership purchases. Thanks to Dave Schroeder for including membership appeals in CVPC newsletters.
 - **CURRENT MEMBERSHIP DATA:**
 - Total memberships as of 8/6/24 455
 - Last Report (Jul) 452
 - Lifetime 16
 - Patron 6
 - Sustaining 27
 - Contributing 39

- Ad Hoc Committee - History & Culture - Stacey Cruise
 - A detailed report was provided in the August Agenda.
 - Mission Statement
 - The Committee submitted the following proposed Mission Statement for the Cromwell Valley Park Council History and Cultural Heritage Ad Hoc Committee to the Council for consideration:
 - Note: Committee member Jim Kelly crafted the original version, with minor edits contributed by other Committee members.
 - ***The Mission of the Cromwell Valley Park Council History and Cultural Heritage Ad Hoc Committee is to safeguard, promote, and celebrate Cromwell Valley Park's history and cultural heritage by engaging the community through programs, projects, and partnerships that honor the contributions of all people who have helped shape what is now Cromwell Valley Park and its environs.***
 - Towson University Project Initial Meeting Summary
 - A virtual meeting was held with Dr. Victoria McAllister, who teaches the Digital Public Humanities graduate-level course. Key points from the discussion include:
 - 1. Career Goals: Most students aim to work for NGOs.
 - 2. Academic Background: Many major in Global Humanities.
 - 3. Course Requirement: Project constitutes 60% of final grade.
 - 4. Time Allocation: Students have 30 hours to complete projects.
 - 5. Proposal Submission: Students must submit a project proposal to the partner agency and professor.
 - 6. Project Timeline: The project begins on 9/11 and concludes the first week of December. Presentations open to the public.
 - 7. Weekly Meetings: A designated point person from the partner agency will meet with the student weekly.
 - 8. Course Expectations: Dr. McAllister will provide a document outlining the project and course expectations.
 - 9. Agency Selection: Students choose their partnering agency.
 - 10. Project Development: The partner agency submits a broad project idea, which the student then enhances.
 - Carl Gold, Kelly Emerson, Kim Shapiro, and Stacey Cruise will collaborate to develop the project idea and support the assigned student.
 - Land Acknowledgement Feedback Summary from Dr. Ryan Koons:
 - Prior phrasing inaccurately suggests indigenous communities only existed in the past, a misconception scholars Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang identified as a "settler moves to innocence." This portrayal can justify non-Indigenous claims to tribal lands. Although CVP may not have a prominent Indigenous presence now, the Piscataway and Susquehannock peoples still live and thrive in the mid-Atlantic region. Clearer wording is needed to acknowledge their ongoing presence.
 - Edited Recommendation for Council Consideration:
 - ***The Cromwell Valley Park Council acknowledges the history of the land we now steward. It once provided for the Piscataway, Susquehannock, and other Indigenous peoples, who nurtured it for generations. We honor the enduring legacy of these tribal***

peoples, who live and flourish across the mid-Atlantic region today. We pledge to continue this stewardship tradition by protecting and preserving this place.

- Discussion and feedback about wording. Stacey Cruise made note of considerations and will consult and update accordingly.
- Updates:
 - Laura Jenifer joined the 8/8 meeting virtually.
 - The Committee will now meet on the first Thursday of each month until all organizational tasks are completed, after which quarterly meetings will be scheduled.
 - Stacey Cruise and Carl Gold will collaborate on a proposal to the Communications Committee for a recurring series of articles on Cromwell Valley's history and cultural heritage for the newsletter.
 - Two 36 x 24 laminated poster boards featuring the Land and Labor Acknowledgements and historical photographs are in the design phase. They will be displayed on easels in the Council's tents for the first time during the Fall Harvest Festival.
 - On Monday, 8/5, the Committee was represented at the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture convening held at the Oblate Sisters of Providence campus in Catonsville. Jim Kelly made an email introduction to Janice Greene, Maryland's official Griot. Stacey Cruise had the pleasure of meeting her in person during the convening. She also met Betty Stewart from the East Towson Preservation Society.
- **NEW BUSINESS**
 - Maintenance of Honor Garden & Sherwood Herb Garden - Mia
 - See minutes pertaining to this in Treasurer's Report and Park Staff Report
 - Suggestion to draft formal complaint to BCRP about difficulty navigating/using CivicRec.
- **OLD BUSINESS**
 - MOU with the County/R&P - Abe Yoffe
 - Waiting for county's response to nature council's comments
 - Reduced postage for non-profit mailings – Abe Yoffe
 - We now have the permit imprint
 - *Received direction on how to move forward with this. The goal is that the fall newsletter will be distributed with reduced rates.*
 - Chimney Swift Towers
 - No discussion
 - County Grant Request re: footbridges over streams – Abe Yoffe
 - Waiting for grant request from county
 - Motion to approve US Post Office Box -Mia Walsh
- The meeting adjourned at 8:04pm.
- Submitted by Rachel Allshouse, Council Secretary