

CCAC MINUTES

TUESDAY, MARCH 17th, 2026 7:30PM

In attendance

Eva Thaddeus (Garden Club), Chair
John Ealer (CLEAN)
Halle Clarke (from 8:45p)
David Daly (Trails Crew) (from 7:45)
Madalyn Bozinski
Shiloh Shea

Not present:

Jason Mencher
Sherry Horowitz
Rachel Bernstein

Liaisons

Mayor Brian Pugh
Planning Board Member Steven Krisky

Recording Secretary

John Ealer

Public Attendance

None

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at approximately 7:45 pm ET in the Recreation Room. Some informal discussion took place before a quorum was established. Meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:15PM

FEBRUARY MINUTES

February minutes were approved unanimously.

RECORDING SECRETARY

Eva raised the previously discussed invitation for a member to take on the recording secretary role on an ongoing basis. Shiloh Shea volunteered and will assume the role beginning with the next meeting.

NRI UPDATE

Madalyn reported on the latest NRI meeting. The next phase involves the consultants developing narratives to accompany the GIS maps. The consultants are seeking input on priority ecological areas within Croton for focused attention.

Members and liaisons discussed potential priority areas, including:

- The Croton River corridor, including concerns about hydrilla.
- The brook on Brook Street.
- Protected areas around the golf course at Prickly Pear Hill, where land status questions arose during a prior solar panel proposal.
- Croton Point Park and its ecological resources.

Steve noted that governmental wetlands are already stipulated and will be included in the GIS overlays. Madalyn added that the consultants will also independently overlay multiple data layers to identify high-priority areas.

CLEAN

Steve mentioned that Chris Smith has expressed interest in organizing another cleanup in partnership with the committee, potentially in the spring and possibly involving the temple. John will reach out to Chris.

John reported a solo cleanup along the 129 in which approximately 50 pounds of debris were collected. The first organized CLEAN event of the season is scheduled for April 4th at North Riverside, with a second planned for May 2nd as part of the Earth Day event for upper village areas. John noted that his schedule may limit activity in June due to potential travel.

John also mentioned that a local Boy Scout and Cub Scout group has expressed interest in participating in a planting project, ideally in April.

TRAILS

David reported on Trails Crew planning and activity.

Key updates included:

- Five spring cleanup dates were scheduled: March 28th, April 11th, April 25th, May 30th, and June 13th, with a focus on early-season invasive removal while the soil is still wet.
- David raised the possibility of planting native species in disturbed areas along trails after invasive removal. Members discussed suitable hardy, low-growing, shade-tolerant plants such as ferns. Eva suggested Mid-Atlantic Natives as a source for root stock.
- Funding was discussed. An Eagle Scout donation of \$263.60 designated for trail improvement is available, and the committee agreed to allocate those funds toward native plantings, with the option to supplement \$250 from the committee budget.

- A guided hike is planned for Saturday, June 6th, for National Trails Day, likely departing from the Municipal Building.
- Trail marker placement is needed at several connection points, including where Reuben's Ridge meets Upper North Highland. David will coordinate with DPW.
- A flooded section on the Upper Highland Loop near the northern end of North Highland may require rerouting or an Eagle Scout project. David requested an introduction to the new village engineer to confirm land ownership before proceeding.
- An updated trail map is ready and will be pushed to the village website.

Eva suggested connecting the trails crew with the high school's Tiger Tuesdays program, which invites community members to offer workshops. David agreed to raise the idea with the crew, and Eva offered to help make the connection.

DARK SKIES

Jason was not present and no formal update was provided. Shiloh raised a connection between the Dark Skies initiative and the Mayor's Monarch Pledge, noting that light pollution during the May–October migration season disrupts monarch butterfly navigation and circadian rhythms. Shiloh suggested the possibility of seasonal lighting restrictions and plans to discuss the idea with Jason. Mayor Pugh confirmed that seasonal restrictions would be legally feasible.

GARDEN CLUB UPDATE

Eva reported that the Gotwald Gardens sign, designed by John, is complete and ready for installation by DPW. Eva plans to coordinate with the village for mounting.

The Arts and Humanities committee has inquired about whether the Garden Club could advise on or assist with plantings around the Peace Pole at Croton Landing. Eva will visit the site to assess conditions. The committee indicated willingness to advise and potentially do a one-time planting, but not to take on ongoing maintenance.

Eva proposed reviving the Green Living series with a screening of *The Extraordinary Caterpillar*, a documentary produced by the Homegrown National Park organization about native plants and monarch habitat.

Key details and discussion included:

- The screening fee is \$150. John noted this is a standard educational film exhibition fee.
- The preferred venue and date are Sunday, April 19th in the community room downstairs at the Municipal Building, chosen for its family-friendly time slot and suitability for hands-on activities.

- The screening would be paired with a milkweed seed giveaway, connecting to the Mayor's Monarch Pledge.
- Mayor Pugh noted that draft committee guidelines include a policy against paying for speakers, and that the village manager will be consulted on whether a movie screening fee is treated differently. Mayor Pugh noted that the village has historically paid for movie rights and does not view this as a significant concern.

MAYOR'S MONARCH PLEDGE

Shiloh reported on progress as the point person for the Mayor's Monarch Pledge, which was recently renewed for the coming year.

Key updates included:

- Shiloh has secured community garden plots behind the Municipal Building and at Silver Lake, including restoring a former pollinator plot that had fallen into disrepair.
- Several private residents have expressed willingness to convert portions of their gardens into pollinator habitat.
- Friends and contacts are creating pamphlets and guides on native planting and will donate plant supplies at no cost to the committee.
- Public planting events are planned for mid-to-late April. Mayor Pugh suggested sharing finalized details through the chair to the village manager for inclusion on the village calendar and community communications and offered the village's online registration platform.
- Eva noted that Prairie Moon Nursery and Eco59 Ecosystems (Connecticut) are good sources for native seed.

REPAIR CAFE

Halle reported on the recent Repair Cafe held at the Croton Free Library in partnership with the library. The event was successful, with approximately 100 items repaired. Members expressed appreciation for Sherry's work in organizing the event, particularly in navigating a learning curve after the departure of the prior organizer.

[Sherry's notes, previously distributed to the committee, are added here for the record]

The Repair Cafe was very successful. During the 4 hours of the event, 68 guests attended, bringing 94 items, 72 of which were successfully repaired! 20 items could not be repaired in the cafe setting, but the owners of 10 of those items were given guidance as to the next steps in the repair process.

Besides the very obvious environmental benefit of the Repair Cafe in keeping nonfunctional items out of the landfill, and in reducing energy needed to produce new replacement items, the Repair Cafe has an economic value as well by saving people money when affordability is a major challenge. And the social benefit of bringing people together in community, with neighbors helping neighbors, fixers sharing skills, guests sharing stories, might just be as important as repair in these politically polarized times. I'm personally grateful that the CAC put in the work to

find an appropriate organization to carry on the work of the Repair Cafe and the Croton Free Library proved to be the ideal partner to work with!

Here are selected comments from Repair Cafe guests:

- The event - The Cafe was great!, a most pleasurable experience! Repair Cafe is a great idea and a community resource! The service was awesome, efficient and beyond expectation! So happy!! Thank you! Yay! Gracias! Much appreciated! Will definitely return!*
- The fixers - Fixers were awesome, great, wonderful, caring, excellent, expert, outstanding, the best, friendly, helpful, charming, efficient, personable, generous with time and skill.*
- Individual repairs - I now have my favorite earrings back! And my great aunt's beautiful brooch! I am able to turn this lamp on and off with little effort! A bad sew job was rescued and my dress looks beautiful! The repair coach fixed 2 of my holey sweaters and showed me how to fix my others by myself! My sick lamp is healthy again! My bag - my fan - my iron - my sewing machine - fixed!*

Gwen Glazer of the Croton Free Library was enthusiastic about the event, and the Croton Free Library is looking forward to hosting other Repair Cafes. All in all, a very positive experience for all concerned!

Repair coaches have been asked to provide feedback. Coaches and volunteers have been thanked!

Halle provided these details, and further discussion included:

- Halle is creating a comprehensive Google Docs folder documenting all Repair Cafe procedures to facilitate future handoffs and rotation of organizers.
- Halle noted that two events per year, as Sherry has proposed, may strain committee resources and suggested rotating lead organizers.
- The committee discussed whether to continue pre-registration. Halle suggested eliminating it to reduce prep work and paper waste. Mayor Pugh recommended retaining some form of registration to deter inappropriate items (e.g., treadmills) and streamline check-in. Options discussed included a simplified one-page walk-in form and digital check-in via Google Forms or a forthcoming Repair Cafe consortium app.
- Mayor Pugh discussed the proposed dedicated committee email account, per the draft guidelines, which could serve as a persistent cloud storage location for committee documents across chair transitions.

EARTH DAY 2026

The committee continued detailed planning for the Earth Day event, confirmed for **Saturday, May 2nd, 2026** at Vassallo Park, with **Saturday, May 9th, 2026** as the rain date.

Vendors and Logistics

John reported that a vendor list spreadsheet has been finalized and sent to Amy MacNamara in the village manager's office. John has also drafted an event flier, which the committee approved, and will circulate an improved version.

Music and Activities

- House of Rock students and the Mario Giacalone trio have been confirmed as performers, each at approximately \$100.
- John has reached out to Rose Cohen regarding kids' music. Awaiting response.

Food

- Tapsmith will offer pizza from their shop. Blue Pig will bring a cart. Black Cow may offer an Earth Day special. John will also reach out to Frankie's deli.
- The committee decided against inviting an outside food truck, citing concerns about competing with local businesses and the noise and emissions from gasoline generators.
- Mayor Pugh suggested the recreation department could provide a popcorn stand and a water station, both of which were well received by the committee.

Publicity

- The village will handle social media, calendar listings, and banner installation. The committee will distribute fliers and yard signs.
- Signs must be placed on private property per village code. Rachel will coordinate neighborhood assignments for sign distribution.
- Banners are stored in the municipal building basement and will need updating. Amy MacNamara is the village point of contact.
- Halle and Shiloh discussed writing a letter to the editor for the Croton Gazette promoting the event. Details to be finalized at the next meeting.

Volunteer Hub Concept

- Halle proposed a centralized volunteer recruitment table at Earth Day where attendees could learn about volunteer opportunities across CAC committees and other local organizations, rather than each table independently seeking sign-ups.
- Members expressed support for the concept. Halle volunteered to spearhead the effort and will coordinate with organizations to compile a list of volunteer needs.
- The committee discussed signage, including a banner for the table.
- Halle suggested placing the tree giveaway at the back of the event to encourage foot traffic through exhibits.

Eva noted that the next meeting will be devoted primarily to finalizing Earth Day plans, including table assignments.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned following completion of agenda items at approximately 9:15pm ET.