

**Township of Cranbury
Park Planning Commission
23A North Main Street
Cranbury, NJ 08512**

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March 4, 2011

Cranbury Township Committee
23A North Main Street
Cranbury, NJ 08512

RE: Parks Commission – 2010 Summary

Dear Mayor and Committee:

The Parks Commission has embarked on two major programs over the past three years. The first is that we visited all the parks in 2008 and made recommendations for each park as to maintenance to perform in 2009, short term goals, and long term goals. We sent you a summary of these recommendations on January 26, 2009. We also visited the West Property and Unami Woods later in 2009 and sent you a list including those properties on December 18, 2009. We revisited all those areas again in 2010 and enclose a revised list for your consideration. We gave this list to Jerry Thorne in a meeting last December and he was most appreciative of our doing so. We emphasized to him that he should undertake those items only if he would otherwise do so or with authority from his supervisor(s). In other words, we are only an advisory body and are not in a position to tell him what to do.

With respect to Unami Woods, there is a ridgeline that provides a beautiful view of Cranbury Brook and the extensive, undeveloped farmland to the north. You can almost imagine yourself back in the 1800s as Cranbury farmland might have been then. We are discussing how best to make people aware of and obtain access to the ridge. With respect to the preserve, it represents another beautiful area in town. The Scout trail along the brook is one of the best in this area. It would be nice (perhaps as a Scout project) to make a map of the trails in the preserve with approximate distances. This could include the adjacent Barclay strip, which the Township now owns. There are a few low areas that should be filled in, the trails should be mowed periodically and poison ivy in the trails should be removed. As we've said in the past, Jerry's crew has done a

great job maintaining the extensive park network we have.

The second program has been to identify easement areas along our streams as part of the 2007 Open Space and Recreation Plan. We have focused primarily on Cranbury Brook and the Millstone River, although we plan to examine Cedar Brook eventually. As you know, we recommended placing markers painted either on the curb or in the street to delineate the five (5) easements in Shadow Oaks, which provide access from Washington Drive to the 46 acres of Township owned land along the Millstone River. You appointed a subcommittee, which voted 5-1 to place those markers along with similar markers in other areas of town. No final action has been taken on the subcommittee's (or Parks Commission's) recommendations.

As we reported to you on December 18, 2009, we also examined in detail the tax maps and town records for the area along Cranbury Brook. There appears to be only three property owners with whom we need to discuss possible easements along the brook in order to create a trail that can extend from the West property in the middle of Cranbury to the middle of Plainsboro. We would have to have each of them agree, because we do not believe we should proceed without their consent (which we may not be able to do in any event). Win Cody led a large group of enthusiastic youths and adults along the brook in 2009 and, while there are clearly obstacles, this has the potential for being a very desirable long-term project. We did not pursue this in 2010 given the issues concerning the Shadow Oaks easements. We should discuss this in further detail either with the full Committee or our liaison to the Committee.

We also enclose a slightly revised proposed Guidelines for Memorials and Gifts. The essential change is to reduce the maximum size of the plaque commemorating the donation of trees from 6" x 10" to 4" x 6". This is because our experience is that this slightly smaller size will make the markers in our parks look less like a cemetery, yet still allow the individual to be honored. This is especially so since we purchased a Memorial Book in which the family may include more detailed information about the honoree's life and contributions to Cranbury.

We look forward to discussing these matters with you as soon as convenient for all of us. We thank the Township Committee for its support in the past and your continued cooperation and assistance in making our parks the tremendous resource they are for us and our future generations.

Sincerely,



Thomas P. Weidner, Chair
Park Planning Commission

Cc: Jerry Thorne, Public Works Manager

Enclosures