

**Township of Cranbury
Parks Commission
23A North Main Street
Cranbury, NJ 08512
Tel: 609-395-0900**

Board Members

Thomas Weidner, Chair
Christine Parker
Julie Hardaker

Pat Scott
Joan Smith
Barbara Rogers

Kate Hall
Norma Swale
Thomas Connolly

February 25, 2014

Honorable Mayor and
Members of the Township Committee
Town Hall
23A North Main Street
Cranbury, NJ 08512

Re: Parks Commission
2013 Summary
2014 Goals

Dear Mayor and Committee Members:

The Parks Commission is pleased to submit this report reflecting our 2013 activities and goals to accomplish in 2014.

The Parks Commission, in consultation with the Recreation and Environmental Commissions, added a "Parks and Open Space" feature to the Township's website last year. Citizens can now review the 11 parks and open spaces and see what features they each have (tennis courts, ball fields, playgrounds, port-a-johns, etc.), where they are located, and their histories.

Simply click on "Parks and Open Space" to the left of the Township's home page and that will take you to a chart summarizing the features for each park/open space. Click on the park/open space you want and it will take you to its location, directions/parking, acreage, features, reservations, and description/history. Reservations for certain activities are necessary and, if so, there is a link to the proper application form. There are also links to maps and descriptions in the 2007 Open Space and Recreation Plan Element of the Master Plan.

Cranbury's parks and open spaces comprise over 230 acres and span over 60 years of acquisitions--from the half-acre Memorial Park originally

honoring World War I and World War II veterans in 1949 to the 61 acre Reinhardt Preserve for nature walking in 2011. Village Park, which has the most features, comprises 19 acres along Brainerd Lake, was first dedicated in 1964 and was used initially as a nursery to replace township trees.

The Parks Commission thanks Deputy Clerk Jean Golisano, Committeeman Dan Mulligan and the township website consultant for their considerable help and assistance in making this new website feature possible.

Also in 2013, the Cranbury Historical and Preservation Society (CHPS) proposed erecting a sign detailing Cranbury's history along the lake and stream, which includes General George Washington's visit to Cranbury on his way to the Battle of Monmouth. The Parks Commission heard the excellent proposal from Historian Don Davidson and recommended approval of the sign last year. There was considerable discussion between the Commission and CHPS concerning the sign. Mr. Davidson "expressed his gratitude for the suggestions to improve the sign made by the Parks' members." The Township Committee approved the sign to be erected in or near Memorial Park after the dam repairs are completed.

The Parks Commission recommended adding two small amounts to the 2014 budget—one to erect two signs in parks where there are no signs identifying the park (Heritage and Barn parks) and for attractive enclosures around port-a-johns (Village, Millstone and/or the Preserve). We thank you for your consideration of this request.

We visit the parks/open spaces each year to make recommendations concerning their status and future needs. We will meet again with Jerry Thorne and go over our recommendations for maintenance items to be performed this year, short-term goals and long-term goals for each of our parks/open spaces. This is the sixth year we have done this. Jerry has expressed his appreciation for our providing a "To Do" list for his men. We intend to highlight those items that have been on the list for several years and either eliminate them because they can't/shouldn't be done or have them completed this year.

We have continued sending letters to donors who have given gifts (typically trees or benches) to the Township over the past decades so that we can include information about the honorees of those gifts in our Memorial Book. The family or donor can include two pages about that individual in the Book. If there is additional information that won't fit on two pages, the CHPS has kindly agreed to place that information in its History Center. We hope that honoring the individuals in this way will encourage others to donate to the Township for the public's benefit.

The Parks Commission sent a letter to the Township Committee expressing its concern over the placement of two trees very close to the Village

Park gazebo and the adverse effects they may have visually and for concerts from the gazebo. We await your resolution.

Our goals for 2014 are to work with the Cranbury Historical and Preservation Society to place the historical sign in or near Memorial Park describing the history of the lake, stream and George Washington's visit. Also, hopefully we will oversee the erection of two new signs identifying Heritage and Barn parks and attractive enclosures around certain port-a-johns. We will continue to identify the maintenance, short-term goals and long-term goals to enhance the use and enjoyment of our parks and also work with Jerry to implement these goals. Moreover, we hope to finalize the identification of past gifts to the Township and include those persons in our Memorial Book with appropriate write-ups.

We will continue working with the Environmental Commission to allow our citizens to enjoy fully the Township's considerable efforts to create parks and preserve open space. For example, we will examine their efforts to enhance our enjoyment of the Reinhardt Preserve and determine if any of those efforts may be applicable to other open spaces such as along the Millstone. We hope to have a joint meeting with them soon in what we hope will become an annual event. Barbara Rogers is now a member of the Parks Commission and Chair of the Environmental Commission and that has greatly facilitated our interactions. We also intend to address the deteriorated fencing along Village Park and to enhance the entrances and retention basins in our parks. We also plan to pursue the feasibility of creating a walkway along Cranbury Brook from the middle of town to the Plainsboro border.

We look forward to discussing these matters with you as soon as it is convenient for all of us.

Sincerely,

Thomas P. Weidner, Chair