

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

Board Members

Thomas Weidner, Chair
Christine Parker, Vice Chair
Julie Hardaker, Second Vice Chair

Sally O'Grady
Joan Smith
Michele Kemper

Lisa Rue
Norma Swale
Ellie Sitrin

March 2016

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

Re: Parks Commission

- o 2015 Summary
- o 2016 Goals

Dear Mayor and Committee Members:

The Parks Commission is pleased to submit this report reflecting our 2015 activities and goals to accomplish in 2016.

As you know, we visit the eleven parks and open spaces each year and compile a list for you and Jerry Thorne, CPWM, to peruse which reflects maintenance to be performed that year, and short-term and long-term goals for each park. This is the eighth year we've created this list. We hope to meet with Mr. Thorne and go over this list again this year. Some items have been there quite a while and either should be done or abandoned for lack of money or other reasons. We would also like to incorporate the Parks' budget with this list, i.e., identify whether there is money in the budget to accomplish some of the items and to prioritize those where money is not currently available. *Our major goal is not only to clarify the projects that we can expect to be planned and/or completed, but to work more closely with Mr. Thorne and the Township Committee to accomplish this.*

Through the volunteer efforts of the O'Grady family (Sally, Patrick and John), a trail was created through Unami Woods that includes natural tree benches along the ridgeline to observe Cranbury Brook, the adjacent preserve and the farmland to the north. The trail is approximately 0.6 miles and connects with Wynnewood Drive and Woodfield Drive in the Wynnewood section of town. Although the distance is not great, it provides an excellent view from the top of the ridge north overlooking Cranbury Brook and the adjacent farmland, and provides a short walk through a natural area easily navigated by both young and old.

We also note that the kiosk along Main Street next to the drive back to the Cranbury Brook Preserve contains a wealth of information about Cranbury's 11 open spaces and parks. This information, posted by the township Environmental Commission, comes largely from our website that Parks developed a couple of years ago. We are pleased that the EC could make such extensive use of it.

At the suggestion of Mayor Taylor and with our assistance, a tot lot for 2-5 year olds was discussed and a port-a-john was installed near the back of Heritage Park. Pursuant to our suggestion, the port-a-john is neatly tucked in among the trees and therefore is not an eyesore for the park.

We reviewed and concurred with the EC's plan to create a trail on the Hagerty tract, which we understand is being completed as part of an Eagle Scout project.

We conducted orientations for all members who wanted to attend concerning the ordinances that created and govern the Parks Commission and related commissions, their powers and duties, what the Parks Commission has done over the past several years, and some ethics concerns they should consider (we had four new members last year). We believe this was the first orientation offered exclusively for any township Board/Commission.

We are in the process of finally approving an Eagle Scout project for Village Park. This has added trees along the right field line of C-1, (the main Little League field), will add signs with names to the ball fields and eventually result in a map of the features in Village Park.

We have also discussed with the Recreation Commission their thoughts for our parks, e.g., the proposed ice skating/skateboard rink for Village Park, a possible dog park, and a small-sided soccer field to be placed near the town's regulation baseball field.

Our goals for 2016 are to continue creating this list for the 11 parks and open spaces and incorporate the Parks' budget into this list and prioritize our recommendations in consultation with you. We also met with the Environmental Commission on February 22, 2016 to discuss our mutual goals and concerns.

We will work together with the EC and with Mr. Thorne to ensure that he has adequate personnel and resources to handle the increasing open spaces with which he is being entrusted (Reinhardt, Fisher and Hagerty properties).

Our goal is for Cranbury citizens to maximize their use of our parks and open spaces in the public interest. We will continue to work with Committeeman David Cook concerning the lake bank restoration. We also intend to address the deteriorated fencing along Village Park, and to enhance entrances and retention basins in all our parks. Hopefully, we will see the erection of two new signs identifying Barn and Heritage parks and attractive enclosures around certain port-a-johns in the parks.

One final note: Township Ordinance No. 32-3 provides that the Commission "shall have the following duties and responsibilities: Review, offer comment and make recommendations on ALL development of the Township's parks including...location and placement of temporary and permanent structures, equipment, facilities, playing fields, trees and other vegetation, pathways..." We hope our objectives for 2016 are consistent with this directive and the Township Committee's vision for Cranbury. We believe in order to accomplish our objectives we need more regular communication with both the Township Committee and Public Works and hope in 2016 to enhance this. In particular, we need to be advised of any actions that would alter our parks in order to bring forth our vision for those spaces. Committeeman and our liaison David Cook made an excellent suggestion that we communicate through Township Administrator Denise Marabello and we will do that.

We thank you for your continuous support of the Parks Commission and look forward to continue working with you to maintain and enhance our parks and open spaces.

Sincerely,

Thomas P. Weidner, Chair

Cc: Wendy Borg, Secretary
Members of the Township Committee
Denise Marabello, Township Administrator
Jerry Thorne, Director of Public Works