

March 2013

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

Re: Parks Commission
2012 Summary
2013 Goals

Dear Mayor and Committee Members:

The Parks Commission is pleased to submit this report reflecting our 2012 activities and goals to accomplish in 2013.

We created web pages with input from the Environmental Commission and Recreation Commission that are now on the Township website for all of our eleven parks and open spaces. We spent a great deal of time creating these web pages, which describe the location, features and a description/history for each parcel. These parks and open spaces comprise well over 230 acres and include our first park – Memorial Park, dedicated over six decades ago – to the Reinhardt Preserve of over 61 unimproved acres dedicated just two years ago. The website has a summary and chart that lists each area and details the amenities for each one. Citizens can click onto our description for each parcel and further click onto that portion of the 2007 Open Space and Recreation Plan Element of the Master Plan for each parcel (except Reinhardt) for a map and further description. One can also click onto the appropriate reservation form for those parcels that require reservations.

Committeeman Dan Mulligan and Township Deputy Clerk Jean Golisano were extremely helpful in quickly and efficiently arranging the web pages. We understand that there will soon be a direct link to these descriptions from the main page of the Township web site. These web pages should make it relatively easy and convenient for all of our citizens to know what parks and open spaces they have to enjoy, where they are, and what amenities each offers.

We met with Jerry Thorne and went over our recommendations for maintenance items to be performed this year, short-term goals and long-term goals. He expressed his appreciation for our providing a “To Do” list for his men and commented as to why a number of items had not been done (either budget constraints or they were not necessary).

We have begun sending letters to donors who have given gifts (typically trees or benches) to the Township over the past decades and to include information about the honoree 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 Historical Society 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.

The Parks Commission met in January with the Environmental Commission and discussed our mutual concerns. We discussed all Township owned parcels that might be used for active or passive recreation and agreed to cooperate in making those areas useful to the public. We specifically discussed in some detail the Cranbury Brook Preserve, Umami Woods, and Reinhardt property and generally agreed on common goals to protect and preserve those lands. We worked together to have Jerry Thorne fill in areas on the trails in an environmentally appropriate manner in the Cranbury Brook Preserve to make them passable.

We recommended that the Downtown Beautification Committee consider placing a sign for the Cranbury Brook Preserve at its entrance. We understand the revised geographic area for the improvements eliminated that request. We also worked with the Turnpike Reforestation Subcommittee to place trees in our parks that needed them.

The Cranbury Historical and Preservation Society 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 Don Davidson and approved the concept of erecting the sign in or near Memorial Park.

Our goals for 2013 are to continue identifying the maintenance, short-term goals and long-term goals to enhance the use and enjoyment of our parks. We will work with Jerry to implement these goals and expect to report later this year on the number of goals that have and have not been implemented. Moreover, we plan 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. We also will fine tune our website describing the eleven parks and open spaces. Lastly, we will work with the Cranbury Historical and Preservation Society to place the historical sign describing the history of the lake, stream and George Washington's visit in or near Memorial Park.

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

Sincerely,

Thomas P. Weidner, Chair
Parks Planning Commission

TPW:wwb
Cc: Township Committee Members
Jerry Thorne, Public Works Director
Enclosures