

Chester Township Park Committee

Mission Statement:

To identify the current and long term opportunities that will enhance Chester Township's parks and open spaces. Additionally, to manage Chester's resources to balance the needs of our community with the area's ecology.

The Park Committee Aims to:

1. Advise the mayor and town council on the status of owned parks and open space and make recommendations for improvements to those facilities.
2. Preserve the current open spaces that the township owns, acting to ensure the health of the open spaces in both the short and long term.
3. Ensure that money allocated to the care and maintenance of the parks is prudently spent to benefit Chester.
 - a. Review past budgets to understand the impact that they have had on the parks.
 - b. Recommend budgeting requirements for future needs and enhancements.
4. Provide safe areas of recreation (playing fields, playgrounds, hiking paths, etc) for the enjoyment of Chester's residents.
 - a. Routinely review and update the master plan.
 - b. Encourage community involvement and evaluate new ideas for uses of the parks and facilities.
 - c. Consider the impacts, of changes to the parks.
5. Provide a means for community groups to reserve and use the recreation areas and facilities in the parks (permitting process) with an emphasis on supporting youth recreational activities while also trying to balance the needs of all the local community groups (aka the adult groups).
 - a. Provide a standard process for requesting park use
 - b. Review the applications submitted for parks and facilities use.

Goals:

1. Enhance communication and collaboration between the Township of Chester's various departments (including the school systems) relative to the assessment, planning, development and use of our recreational facilities, parks and trails.
2. Solicit feedback from Chester township residents to influence decisions that are made by the parks and recreation committees.
3. Investigate and propose ways to improve access to the parks.
4. Provide a superlative park system that responds to the community's needs and to its budget.

2017 Parks Committee Objectives:

1. Monitor current facilities and their use
 - a. Identify deficiencies and safety issues
 - b. Ensure that facilities are being used as they are intended to be used
 - c. Recognize utilization and recommend ways to accommodate changing needs
2. Enhance communication with the community about Park issues
 - a. Solicit recommendations from the Chester community for improvements
 - b. Educate the Chester community about our assets
 - c. Inform the Chester community of our concerns
3. Ensure that our assets are used properly and equitably
 - a. Enforce the permitting process
 - b. Educate the users as to our expectations of them

2017 Action Items:

1. Improve website to more accurately and completely identify our park system.
2. Work with community groups or individuals or businesses to adopt a trail and to monitor it regularly.
3. Work with Environmental Committee, Recreation Committee and Trails Committee to identify synergies.
4. Solicit feedback via survey/social media, etc. to identify the needs of the community.
5. Identify changes required by expected demographic trends.
6. Review all park assets to provide a safe and barrier free environment.
7. Encourage a long term lease with the West Morris School District for the use of their fields.
8. Continue to implement or modify the Park Master Plan.
9. Seek opportunities to improve the park system.
10. Administer the permitting process for group use of our parks and assets.
11. Educate all asset users about our requirements (concussion training, liability insurance, respect for assets, etc.)
12. Encourage the use of our assets.
13. Improve signage for our trail network.
14. Consider recommendations of the the Chester Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan in future park planning.
15. Identify invasive species; educate the community and work to eradicate them from our parks.
16. Identify Ash trees, close to pedestrian areas, which could become a safety issue as they die.
17. Identify and propose a solution to fire prevention and control in our parks.
18. Consider forest conditions and forest fire protection in establishing forest management practices.
19. Identify opportunities to coordinate the resources of the Township and the Borough to strengthen our park system and reduce our costs.

Adopted June 12, 2017