

**TOWN BOARD MEETING**  
June 2, 2016, 7:00 PM  
Tracy Memorial Village Hall  
77 Main Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
**RECREATION INFORMATIONAL MEETING**

**PRESENT:** Supervisor Maria Lull, Councilman Bob Balcom, Councilwoman Landra Haber, Councilman Henry Swartz, Councilman John Wapner, Town Clerk Beth Anne Rippel, plus various members of the public

**CALL TO ORDER:** Lull called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM, led the pledge to the flag followed by a moment of silence for members of the community who recently passed, and thanked the Village Board of Trustees for hosting the meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Lull read her regular statement. There was no public comment.

**RECREATION INFORMATIONAL MEETING:**

History: The informational session was led by Wapner and Haber to discuss the vision of Crellin Park and the overall recreational needs of the community. Wapner took some time to relate key events within the history of Crellin Park, Crellin Corporation, the Morris Memorial, and the Town of Chatham. (See Attached)

Summer Program: Recreation Director Mike West, also Executive Director of the Morris Memorial, explained the upcoming summer program including the registration details, dates, and involvement with the Disc Golf Club, Garden Club, Skate Park, Morris Memorial soccer teams, Chatham Reds Baseball Team, and more. West related his personal experience as a youth and as an employee at Crellin Park and concluded by mentioning that all summer details are on the Town website recreation department page and on the Crellin Park Facebook page.

Finances: Wapner explained that the Town is facing a deficit and they do not know what their finances will be at the end of the year, so they will need to be careful going forward with the projects they hope to accomplish. There was some discussion among the Board and others about the financial situation and possible projects.

Crellin Park Foundation (CPF): Town Clerk Beth Anne Rippel related information about CPF, a non-profit organization that is exclusively charitable and originated with a group of parents who raised funds to construct the Skate Park. CPF is also responsible for raising funds for the new pavilion and other specific elements, writing grants for the Children's Garden Program, and currently has \$18,000 earmarked to finish the Skate Park. Some members of the community asked questions about CPF, with one man encouraging CPF to consider setting up a donation process that would allow their RMD to go tax-free money toward charity. Another individual asked about the Crellin Park priorities and encouraged CPF and the Town Board to work together so that their priorities aligned in the future.

Recreation Committee Goals: Wapner spoke about the larger Recreation Committee that was made up of himself, Haber, Carol Hegeman, David O'Conner, John Thorsen, Al Meyer, Anita Fiorillo, Beth St. Dennis and Village Trustee (TBD) and several other members. The Committee will focus on revising their goals so that they would work toward what is best for the whole community. The Committee will figure out which "umbrella" makes more sense for this group to fall under. There was some discussion about other involvement, especially as Mayor Tom Curran

mentioned that two-thirds of the Village of Chatham is in the Town of Ghent and no Ghent officials are part of the current process. Wapner agreed, adding that only the Town is taxed for the Park, even though they receive a registration break for the summer programs. Recreation funding comes through the Town of Chatham. Recreation is “park focused” at this point. Carol Hegeman stated that the current definition of “recreation” is a narrow one. “Recreation” is far more what it looks like now, it should include all ages. Haber doesn’t feel that Crellin is the “end all be all”. Linda Ziskind encouraged the Town to consider addressing underserved demographics since there are many age groups who do not even know about the Park’s existence. Other members of the community encouraged the Town to consider County involvement and bringing in other local events that would draw residents to the Park. Toby Van Alstyne stated that in order to bring people to the Park there has to be something for them to go to the Park for. We need to build organized programs for people from 1-191. We should focus on education to fulfill our full potential.

**Board Discussion:** The Board discussed some of the future goals and Town finances that would need to be worked out in order to move forward. Wapner concluded that he and Haber would come up with an agenda for another meeting after sorting through the helpful information gathered today. Haber also encouraged residents to email their thoughts for consideration. Lull thanked everyone for attending the extremely productive meeting. There was also some discussion about the Chatham Reds and wanting to get moving on the field work. Lull said the attorney has the contract at this time. Van Alstyne said that they wanted to keep the agreement as simple as possible. Lull said that the Town Board will need the contract before any work begins.

## **RESOLUTIONS**

**RES. 119-16** Resolution for Inter-municipal agreement between the Town of Chatham and the Town of Kinderhook for conducting the summer swim program. Supervisor Maria Lull moved, Councilwoman Landra Haber seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

### **VOTE**

Ayes: Lull, Balcom, Wapner, Haber, Swartz Nays: None

**RES. 120-16** Resolution to approve the Town Accounting firm of Pattison, Koskey, Bucci & Howe to conduct audits for 2014/ 2015 for the Town of Chatham Justice Courts for \$4,000 to \$5,000. Supervisor Maria Lull moved, Councilwoman Landra Haber seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

### **VOTE**

Ayes: Lull, Balcom, Wapner, Haber, Swartz Nays: None

## **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

A female resident asked about how the Park had changed and Lull explained that the new pavilion did not have restrooms but that there would be portable toilets available.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN:** Haber moved, Wapner seconded, and the motion carried unanimously to adjourn the Board meeting at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Beth Anne Rippel, RMC,  
Town Clerk/Collector

7P/11  
June 2-16 Town Board Meeting  
held at the Tracy

## **Recreation**

### **A Vision for Recreation in Chatham**

The townspeople of Chatham are highly aware of and engaged in recreational activities. They make use of the many and diverse opportunities available within the town on a year-round basis, such as: soccer, swimming, basketball, tennis, softball and gardening at Crellin Park; bird watching and hiking at the Powell Sanctuary and the Rutland Rail trail; fishing in the Kinderhook Creek and Sutherland Pond; cycling or jogging along our roadways and pathways; equestrian activities; and hunting on private lands. Our youngsters enjoy many recreational programs provided by The Crellin Morris Association, public schools and other public and private organizations. Residents also benefit from other regional opportunities available nearby such as golfing in Ghent and Kinderhook, skiing in the Berkshires and boating on area lakes, streams and rivers. We especially value the town's rural character and those recreational activities that allow them to appreciate Chatham's natural beauty. The recreational emphasis in Chatham complements the town's rural character, minimizing any negative environmental impacts and, more importantly, promoting an appreciation of the land.

### **Goals and Strategies**

**Goal 1. Recreation in the Town encourages present and future generations to actively participate in indoor and outdoor activities for the benefit of their physical and emotional health. The Town's recreation programs provide high quality, active and passive recreation for all ages and abilities.**

#### Strategy 1.1

Provide for a permanent Parks and Resource Lands Committee to assist the town in implementing the recommendations that follow. This group could also develop a comprehensive recreation and open space plan that identifies locations for creek access, trail and greenways, and lands suitable for recreational use. The Town Board shall appoint this committee and ensure that people representing the various interests outlined in this plan be members. This committee shall actively work with the Keep Farming CAP to accomplish the goal of linking agricultural land, wildlife habitat, blocks of contiguous forest lands and public and volunteered private recreational lands.

#### Strategy 1.2

Town and Village governments are cooperative and coordinate resources to establish an effective recreational program. One way to build a collaborative relationship to accomplish the recreation goals would be to include a village representative on the above suggested Parks and Resource Lands Committee.

56

#### Strategy 1.3

Create and develop dedicated and predictable funding for recreation.

- a) Based on the recommendations of the newly created Parks and Resource Lands Committee, develop a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan to identify and address recreation and facility needs for current and increased populations.
- b) Secure the services of a grant writer to aggressively pursue and take advantage of all private, state, county and federal aid that may be available.
- c) Establish a per lot recreation fee to be assessed for every lot subdivided within the town.

d) Explore use of a recreation user-fee for programs and facilities, where appropriate.

#### Strategy 1.4

Work with the school districts serving the town.

- a) Promote cooperation between the town and the school districts in innovative ways such as joint planning and land acquisition for recreation and/or facilities costsharing.
- b) Encourage increased municipal use of existing school facilities during non-school hours.
- c) Provide a link between Crellin Park and the school property to enhance school use of improved athletic facilities.

#### Strategy 1.5

The Town's recreational program addresses the needs of all residents

- a) Involve teens and senior citizens in any park planning efforts to make sure that their needs, concerns, and interests are considered at those town facilities.
- b) Assess the need for, and feasibility of developing a teen center, and if indicated, plan and provide for one.
- c) Ensure that the recreational experiences of people with special needs are integrated with those of the community at large.

#### Strategy 1.6

Foster diverse partnerships in recreational planning. These partnerships could include public, private, civic, and not for profit interests. Work with service groups in the area to help with meeting recreational needs and to supplement municipal financial resources and volunteer labor.

### **Goal 2. The residents of the Town will sustain and enhance their appreciation for the Town's rural character through outdoor recreation.**

#### Strategy 2.1

The natural resource base, which provides the foundation for outdoor recreation is protected and enhanced (See natural resource and other goals established in this plan for this purpose).

57

#### Strategy 2.2

Work with parties with mutual goals, such as the Columbia Land Conservancy and the Hudson River Valley Greenway to find ways to further the development of greenway connections and multi-use trails through town.

- a) Work to link trails within Chatham to the proposed Countryside Corridor of the Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail System along the Kinderhook Lake.
- b) Find ways to link preserved lands and other trails to the proposed Harlem Valley Rail Trail starting in the Village of Chatham.

#### Strategy 2.3

Provide multimodal connections between the parks and the Village center.

#### Strategy 2.4

Establish greenway along Stony Kill between the Park sites and the Hudson River Valley Trail (and the Rutland ROW).

#### Strategy 2.5

Develop a watchable wildlife program that includes wildlife viewing pull-offs (where appropriate) along with signs and maps. This can be modeled after the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation program, or similar programs.

#### Strategy 2.6

Add winter recreation activities such as sledding and skating to existing facilities.

#### Strategy 2.7

The Town seeks to create a network of trails through voluntary easement and public acquisition for use as a linear park. A future goal would be the acquisition of the Rutland Railroad, the Dorland Road property and other vital links into the network of trails.

### **Goal 3. Careful planning will determine the most effective recreational utilization of Town owned land.**

#### Strategy 3.1

Implement the Crellin Park Plan and plans for recreational enhancements on townowned lands behind the Town Hall. This plan recommends that Crellin Park shall be the active recreational component of Chatham's future center of activity for art, entertainment and outdoor recreation and that the new Town Park will be the focus of passive recreation and outdoor interpretation in keeping with community appreciation for open space and the natural environment.

### **Goal 4. The Town encourages interested private land owners to make land available for public recreational uses.**

58

#### Strategy 4.1

Work with willing landowners and the appropriate organizations (ex. The Columbia Land Conservancy) to donate lands for recreation use, especially those lands that would have access to the creeks and to potential multi-use trails.

a) Develop land use agreements with willing landowners to allow for public use on their property.

b) User groups or the Town of Chatham could consider making lease payments to landowners on a per acre basis for recreational uses of woodlands and pasturelands.

c) Help landowners understand their options, benefits and implications of providing public access on their lands for recreation. Provide information on the New York Recreation Use Statute that indemnifies landowners from liability.

### **Goal 5. The Town has quality, aesthetically pleasing, and safe roads and pathways for vehicular traffic, walking, horseback riding and cycling.**

#### Strategy 5.1

Develop signed and mapped scenic road routes

#### Strategy 5.2

Utilization of trails and shared roadways around town will be encouraged through the creation and distribution of guides and other written materials.

#### Strategy 5.3

Initiate community beautification programs to ensure that town roads are aesthetically pleasing.

#### Strategy 5.4

Consider the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists in any local, county and state road project and build facilities to accommodate shared use of roads accordingly.

a) Identify roads in Chatham that are desirable as bike and/or pedestrian routes.

Work with State and County highway departments to explore and implement improved multi-modal roadways. This discussion should explore shared use of

the highway, designating a bicycle route, designating and building a bicycle lane, and development of a separated bicycle path. For many of the state and county roads, traffic speeds may make it uncomfortable for pedestrians to use shoulders. Therefore, separate bicycle paths are likely the preferred alternative to explore.

b) Rural road standards for new town roads could be modified, where appropriate, to provide adequate paved shoulders as part of the typical required cross section, where needed.

59

**Goal 6. The Town encourages growth and development that supports recreation.**

Strategy 6.1

Zoning shall protect stream banks, wetlands, floodplains and agricultural lands.

These lands are not only important for environmental protection, but for recreation.

Strategy 6.2

Create new open spaces and parkland via dedications made during the existing subdivision process (Section 170-19), or through land or easement purchases through payment-in-lieu of land dedication.

Strategy 6.3

Existing hamlets and any new hamlets or housing clusters to be created in the future shall be pedestrian friendly and planned with small pocket parks for passive recreation. Each hamlet shall be linked with a town-wide multi-use greenway trail system.

Strategy 6.5

During subdivision and/or site plan reviews for any nursing, retirement or other type of senior housing facility, ensure that small, passive-use parks and gardens with walkways are included in the site plans.

Strategy 6.6

When land is preserved as a result of a clustered or conservation subdivision design, work to link these protected lands with trails and greenways pursuant to the town's plan for paths and trails. Use the Town's GIS to assist in this endeavor.

Strategy 6.7

Develop greenways to connect hamlets, business centers, and other regional locations.

a) Ensure that the local subdivision and zoning law has standards that bring about development of new greenways. Local laws can require various types of improvements and developer dedications to help foster hiking and biking. There is a great need for paths within Chatham. All decisions related to new subdivisions shall incorporate the need for planning for greenway trails.

b) Work with other communities in the region to develop a regional bikeway plan. Also, work with the Hudson River Valley Greenway to expand that Greenway trail into Chatham.

Strategy 6.8

Continue the town's tradition of equestrian trails'. Catalog and include on the town's digital mapping system, the network of equestrian trails for landowner cooperative. Encourage real estate agents and new landowners to work together to protect access to these trails and enlighten them on the town's equestrian tradition.

60

Strategy 6.9

The town shall use tax incentive policies as tools to encourage landowner participation for the achievement of the goal listed above.

Strategy 6.10

For new developments where the only possible ingress and egress is a dead-end road, a public trail with interconnection to a public road (i.e., a road other than the one where the cul-de-sac originates) will be provided.

Article featured recently in the Chatham Press.....

By Taitia Shelow

CHATHAM – Today, when people refer to the piece of land on Route 66 where kids gather each summer, fall and spring to swim, play soccer and whack baseballs into the sky, they generally use the name by which it's more commonly known, Crellin Park. But the park's full name is Crellin Community Park, a moniker that aptly describes the park's origins 35 years ago. An unprecedented community effort literally built the park, and the recreational space has remained a vital part of the local community ever since.

The community park idea had been brewing in the minds of residents for years when, in 1973, Crellin Plastics Co. (now Sonoco Crellin) began building a pond for fire protection across from the Route 66 manufacturing plant. "The pond was there and we needed a space for kids to swim safely. Kids were killed along the creek that flows from Spencertown, so we decided to have a place kids could go to that would be safe and guarded," recalls Robert Crosby, a member of the now-defunct Exchange Club and one of the first directors of Crellin Community Park.

The town's four service clubs - the Lions Club, Rotary Club, Business and Professional Women and Exchange Club – jointly became the driving force behind a park project. The Alan Devoe Bird Club also lent assistance. "The clubs thought it would be nice if we could join hands and promote a village park," recalls Larry DuBois, a longtime Lions Club member and first president of the park's Board of Directors. As DuBois remembers it (admitting his recollections are a bit hazy after all these years), he ran into the late Richard "Dick" Crellin on the street one day and mentioned the pond. Wouldn't it be nice to have a park in conjunction with the pond? DuBois asked. Crellin didn't answer immediately, but later said his company would consider leasing the 24 acres containing the pond for a minimal fee, with a long-term lease. "That started the whole thing. It was Dick Crellin who was the instigator. He saw it our way, anyway," jokes DuBois.

Dan Crellin, Richard's nephew and now a local business owner himself, emphasizes that his uncle and father, John Crellin Jr., who ran the business along with their father, John Sr., were private guys who preferred to stay out of the limelight. They were moved by how emotional the issue was for the community and how everyone, especially the service club members, picked up the ball and ran with the idea. "It was less a Crellin thing than it was a community thing, which is how my family wanted it," he says. "They were rural kids who grew up here. They both felt strongly that rural kids should learn how to swim."

#### Raising Money to Get Started

Their first hurdle cleared, the park organizers set about raising money to finance their dream of a park that would "provide swimming facilities, a picnic area, a nature trail, basketball courts, ice skating and possibly tennis courts." They set a \$25,000 goal, and by the time construction started the next year they had raised most of the money.

On a rainy day in June 1974, 200 energetic residents turned out to erect the pavilion walls and rake, seed and mow the land. The *Courier* reported: "young and old alike pitched in as little ones carried rocks, the middle ones raked and dug horseshoe pits, and the older ones manned wheelbarrows and tractors with scoops to transport the rocks to culvert areas." Many local contractors and business owners donated services too, recall DuBois, Crosby and Dan Crellin.

An interesting anecdote from the *Courier* says that Chatham Rescue Squad members Deputy Chief Donald Tubbs, Leon Law and Mark Huvar toured the back roads and village streets in the ambulance, recruiting volunteers by "reminding everyone there was work to be done" on a loudspeaker. Supporters braved the rain again a few weeks later on June 15, 1974, when the official ribbon-cutting ceremony was held under the pavilion, witnessed by a standing-room-only crowd.

#### The Early Years of the Park

The headline in the August 8, 1974 Chatham Courier proclaimed: "Crellin Park: A Community Dream Come True." The original board of directors included people who would become longtime, key supporters of the park: DuBois as president; Bill Lees, vice president; Marion Mickle, secretary; Crosby, treasurer; and members Mary Gunn, Richard Eigenbrodt and Richard Crellin.

Crosby remembers with fondness those early days when he was park director. He worked with the "tiny tots" and their parents giving summer swim lessons, while other trained lifeguards worked with swimmers up to the advanced stage. Like today, the lessons were divided into two different morning timeslots. Newspaper clippings claim up to 500 people a day visited the park, and Crosby agrees. "We enjoyed it a lot. It was a very good thing for the community."

Plans for a man-made ice skating rink were scrapped in favor of lighting the pond for evening swimming. Eventually that plan was ditched as well, since springs in the pond kept it from freezing enough for safe skating.

The first year of Crellin Park's operation, a \$25 family membership fee was charged, largely to generate matching state park funds so the fee could be dissolved the following year. A fee was later reinstated but in recent years was dropped again. Today, there is a minimal charge for swimming lessons and the summer recreation program, but public swimming remains free.

#### The Park's Unique Origins Attract Attention

Ellen Irose, who served on the park's board of directors (as both secretary and president) from 1976 until it merged with the Morris Memorial in 2000, says Crellin Community Park attracted quite a bit of attention. "It was unique because it was started by service clubs," says Irose. When she and former Chatham Town Supervisor Fran Blake wrote a state park grant, they found out just how unusual Crellin Community Park was. "The

state had never really heard of a park like that. People kept coming to see the park because it was unique. It was very much a community project." Irose is still awed by the park's beginnings and the tremendous support. She remembers receiving checks as small as \$5 from elderly ladies who thought the park was wonderful. "It was just amazing and wonderful and everyone was involved, and everyone felt a sense of ownership in it."

One of Crosby's fondest memories is taking special needs children in the water for some splashing about, head dunking and breathing practice. "I can remember (State Senator) Joe Bruno was down one day because he was interested in the program for special needs kids."

### The 1980s and '90s

Schoolteacher Roberta Rose served as park director for 12 years, from 1987 to 1999. For her, going to the park was a family affair every day. Some of her children and children-in-law worked there and all her grandchildren took lessons. Rose can't say enough about all the teenagers she worked with over the years. As many as 17 worked each summer as lifeguards or helped run other programs. Whole families and multiple generations like the Tassinaris, Greitzers and Pauls worked at the park. "I have wonderful, wonderful memories. We really had a lot of fun."

The first year Rose was director, about 40 kids were enrolled in summer swim programs; by end of her 12 years up to 150 kids a day came for lessons, and many stayed for the new afternoon program. A girls' softball league operated for a few years and other activities came and went "depending on which lifeguards I could talk into doing stuff," jokes Rose. Rose and the teens did a lot of fundraising as well, she recalls, and that was an almost year-round task. They sold food at the county fair and the annual car show at the park. For many years the kids held a swim-a-thon, which raised a few thousand dollars each year. "It was amazing the things you could get kids to do once you got them riled," laughs Rose.

The grant that Blake and Irose, with Rose' help, worked on, was successful and allowed for the park's biggest expansion to date. For Rose and the kids, it meant the traveling swim team they had started could finally hold meets in its own backyard. Grant money purchased special docks, lane lines, rafts and more for the pond.

### Changing and Expanding Over Time

The grant also allowed the Town of Chatham to purchase an additional 25 acres of adjoining land. A major park expansion in the early 1990s included the addition of the basketball and tennis courts, new softball and soccer fields, bathhouse, concession stand with restrooms, and maintenance building, as well as a tot lot and trail work. By that time, the era of the service clubs supporting the park was coming to an end. For its first 17 years, the non-profit Crellin Park Corporation ran the park, with funding from the clubs, the village and town of Chatham, and Columbia County Youth Bureau. More than 50 percent of the money to run the park came from fundraising.

But the park and its programs were growing while the service clubs were not. "All of us pledged to keep it going financially. Unfortunately, one organization after another died out or funds dried up," says DuBois. The Lions Club continued giving several thousand dollars a year as long as it could. The park still holds a special place for the Lions Club, and they continue to sponsor an annual Easter egg hunt and fishing derby there. "We still have fond memories," emphasizes DuBois. "It's still part of us."

As of 1989, the Crellin Plastics land was leased jointly to the town and village of Chatham, who contracted with Crellin Park Corporation to run the park. In 2000, Crellin Park merged with the Morris Memorial, which had also been running youth programs. The idea was to avoid an overlap of services and duplication of fundraising. The Crellin-Morris Association ran programs for youth living in the Chatham School District's towns all year round – from swimming to track, soccer and basketball as well as educational and arts programs. Shari Franks became the director and continues to run park programs today.

Last year, the Town of Chatham finalized an agreement with Sonoco Crellin, in which the company donated the original acreage to the town in exchange for waterline and fencing improvements at its adjacent parking lot. Town leaders said the move was necessary to further expand the park's offerings, since it would be easier for the town to obtain grants with complete ownership of the land.

The town now runs the park programs under its Recreation Department, and the Morris Memorial continues to run an after school program at its Park Row facility, and sports programs throughout the community and at Crellin Park.

### Planning for the Future

The Town of Chatham and Recreation Director Franks are applying for grants and other funding so they can expand and improve Crellin Community Park. Though traditions like twice daily swim lessons and the summer recreation program continue, the 35-year-old gathering spot is beginning to show its age. Improvements to the beach, pavilion and bathrooms are becoming imperative. Tops on the wish lists of local kids (and some adults) is the addition of a skateboard park. No such facility exists nearby, and teens skateboarding through the streets of Chatham village has become an issue for some people.

The town recently received a \$50,000 grant from the Ellsworth Kelly Foundation, toward construction of the skate park. But they have a ways to go because skate parks are expensive. A committee of adults and youth has been organized to spur fundraising efforts. "This extremely generous contribution gives us a good start to our fundraising campaign for the park," says Franks. "The town has realized for a long time that we need a safe place for our residents, particularly our youth, to skate within. We are very thankful to the Ellsworth Kelly Foundation for their support."

The skate park committee meets twice a month on Wednesday evenings. Keep track of their progress via a new blog (weblog) at: [www.chathamskatepark.org](http://www.chathamskatepark.org)