



Manchester Township

1 Colonial Drive • Manchester, NJ 08759 • (732)657-8121

Office of The Mayor

Kenneth T. Palmer
Mayor

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release: August 11, 2016

From the Office of Mayor Kenneth T. Palmer

PARK REVITALIZATION PLAN

Growing up in Pine Lake Park, the Sixth Avenue Park was a mainstay for me and my friends. Whether it was basketball, baseball or football, we always seemed to be playing at the park. The park was within a short bike ride distance so when the street lights came on, I could get home in five minutes. Unfortunately, over the years, Sixth Avenue Park, like a number of our parks in town, have been in decline for a myriad of reasons. One of my goals after being elected, was to develop a systematic plan to revitalize our parks. Some of our parks need a major overhaul (Sixth Avenue Park), while some other parks can use some updating (playground equipment at Bowker Field) and some other parks are in great shape (World War II).

With the cooperation and help of the Town Council, we are implementing the Park Revitalization Plan. The plan is to revitalize one park per year. This year we have already begun revitalizing the Sixth Avenue Park. To date, we have ripped up the black top that covered half of the field. I am proud to announce that the Town Council has approved the purchase of new playground equipment and we plan to construct a small pavilion so parents can sit in the shade. We are resurfacing the basketball and tennis courts, improving the beach volleyball court and installing an irrigation system so the field will be green and lush. We want to make this park a place where parents and kids look forward to using.

Importantly, we are paying for the Park Revitalization Plan from our Open Space Fund. As a part of your tax bill, each tax payer pays 1 penny per \$100 of their assessed value towards our Open Space Fund. This past year, the Open Space Tax yielded approximately \$320,000 in revenue. That seems like a lot of money, however, the majority of the Open Space revenue is used to pay the bonds taken by the town to fund some large purchases of Open Space along County Route 571. Thanks to Martin Lynch's diligence (our tax assessor), Manchester Township was reimbursed over \$800,000.00 from the State of New Jersey's Open Space fund for those purchases. Please note, this money is specifically earmarked to maintain our parks and open space.

For those who have lived in town for a number years and can recall when the town previously improved this park, vandals were not far behind. As a deterrent and protection to town property, we are installing cameras that provide 24 hour surveillance. I have also asked our police department to increase their watch of the park.

When completed, my hope is to drive by the Sixth Avenue Park and see kids playing football in the fields, toddlers swinging on the playground swings, and parents enjoying some shade under the pavilion. After we complete Sixth Avenue Park this year, we will turn our attention to the next park. Slow and steady wins the race.