

The 2024 Annual Meeting

Saturday, December 7th, 2024 12:00 pm Chestnut Ridge Park Casino Open to the Public



The 2024 Annual Meeting Call to Order

Good Afternoon Members, Guests and Conservancy Directors.
Welcome to the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy 2024 Annual
meeting.

Our Annual Meeting is officially called to order Saturday, December 7th, 2024 at 12:00pm

We appreciate your interest in the Conservancy and it's mission and hope you enjoy listening to and viewing our information and achievements here in.



Agenda

Annual Meeting Call to Order – Gordon Panek President **Determination of Quorum** Approval of October 2024 meeting minutes. (Motion required) **Election of Officers for 2025 Term (Motion required) Election of Board of Directors for 2025 Term (Motion required)** Submission of signed "Conflict of Interest" and "Whistle Blower" forms. About the Conservancy – Mission Statement **Board of Directors 2025 Guardian Award Presentation - Michnik** 2024 Highlights - Panek CRC Financial Statements 2024 v 2023 - Corbin CRC 2025 Proposed Budget - Corbin (Motion required) 2024 Party for the Park - Corbin 2024 Capital Projects Summary - Panek 2024 Trail Maintenance Initiative - Fred Bristol Special recognition - Trail Maintenance 2024 Egale Scout Project - New Tennis Court Benches - Chris Rushton 2024 Eagle Scout Project - Boy Scout Trail Bridge - Zachary Restorff 2024 Annual Tree Planting - Roger Restorff Special recognition - M & T Bank Volunteer & Teams 2025 & Future Initiatives - Panek Erie County Parks Update & Questions — Commissioner Troy P. Schinzel **Open forum for Additional Questions Annual Meeting Conclusion**



Approval of October 2024 Minutes

- All in receipt of the October 2024 meeting # 5 minutes?
- Motion to approve the October 2024 meeting # 5 minutes?
- Second?
- On the question? Any changes / amendments or comments?
- All in favor? Opposed?

CHESTNUT RIDGE CONSERVANCY MINUTES

2024 Board of Directors Meeting #5
Wednesday October 2, 2024 5:30 pm - 6:42 pm
Chestnut Ridge Park Casino
Orchard Park. NY 14127

<u>Executive Committee Members Present</u>: Gordon Panek, President; Michael Corbin - Treasurer /Secretary

<u>Directors Present:</u> Liz Cash, Andy Gernold, Robert Barnashuk, Ronald Michnik and Roger Restorff.

<u>Directors Absent:</u> Edward Murphy, William Thornton, and Troy Schinzel

Recording Secretary: Michael Corbin

President Gordon Panek called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

 $\label{eq:continuous} Determination of quorum: (5) 50\% \ board \ member \ quorum \ required - Quorum \ achieved \ (7) \ board \ members \ present \ .$



Election of 2025 Officers and Board of Directors

- 2025 Officer Nominations....
 - President Gordon Panek
 - Vice President Neil V. Farrell
 - Secretary-Treasurer Michael Corbin
 - Motion to approve officer nominations for the 2025 Term? Second? Discussion? All in Favor? Opposed?
 - 2025 Board of Directors "Et Al" Nominations...
 - Robert Barnashuk
 - Liz Cash
 - Andy Gernold
 - Ron Michnik
 - Roger Restorff
 - Bill Thornton
 - Troy P. Schinzel Ex Officio Commissioner of Parks
 - Motion to approve "et al" Board of Directors for the 2025 Term? Second? Discussion? All in Favor? Opposed?



About the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy

- In an effort to assist the County of Erie in preserving and restoring Chestnut Ridge
 Park in the midst of budget cuts and rising expenses, a dedicated group of
 concerned citizens came together in 2008 to form the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy.
- Incorporated in 2010 as a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization the Conservancy was established to support the restoration and preservation of the rich natural, recreational and historic resources that comprise Chestnut Ridge Park.
- The Conservancy is a all-volunteer organization comprised of a non-paid Board of Directors. We work in partnership with Erie County Department of Parks,

 Recreation and Forestry through a Memo of Understanding with Erie County.
- Our funding stream is based on memberships, general donations and a once a year Gala fund raiser.



The 2025 Board of Directors

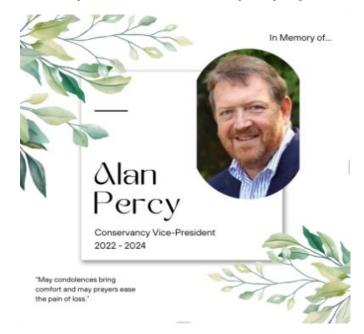
- Gordon M. Panek President
- Neil V. Farrell Vice President
- Michael Corbin Secretary-Treasurer
 - Troy P. Schinzel Erie County
 Parks Commissioner Ex Officio

- Robert Barnashuk
- Liz Cash
- Andy Gernold
- Ron Michnik Founding Trustee
- Ed Murphy
- Roger Restorff
- William Thornton
- The CRC Board of Directors is a 100% volunteer Board.
- There are no paid board members or other paid executive positions.
 - We strive to have our Board Members contribute their time and efforts on our community outreach events as well as coordinating our capital project initiatives with Erie County Parks and outside yendors.
 - To this end we owe our board members much gratitude for their time and support for the Conservancy's mission.



In Memory Alan Percy — Conservancy Vice President

Our Vice President – Alan Percy passed away unexpectedly this year much to our shock. We wish the Percy family our deepest condolences. Alan's passing is a sad and significant loss to the Conservancy but even more so to his family & friends.





2024 Raymond A. Fabiniak Guardian Award - William Thornton

Each year, the Conservancy gives recognition to an individual who has given a considerable amount of their time and talents to the mission of the Conservancy for the good of Chestnut Ridge Park... This year the Conservancy's Board is awarding its distinguished Raymond A. Fabiniak Guardian Award to William Thornton, Conservancy Board Member since 2013



Bill Thornton has been our elder statesman and guidance counselor at the Conservancy for over ten years. He has seldom missed any board meetings over the years and has actively participated in our community outreach events whenever and wherever we conducted them. Bill has been an excellent watchman for the Conservancy's internal governance and has always provided the board specific mindful insights relative to the boards decision making processes. His previous employment as Deputy Commissioner for the Erie County DPW has given him a knowledgeable base on how the County infrastructure works and transferred that knowledge and experience to the various preservation and restoration projects the CRC has undertaken within Chestnut Ridge Park. Bill also has many years as a Boys Scouts Leader. We are blessed to have a board member in Bill with so many years of experience to help guide us in partnering with the Erie County Parks on projects the CRC should or should not be doing. It is with unanimous consent the Board of Directors of the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy honor William Thornton with this award. Congratulations Bill!



2024 vs 2023

2024 vs 2023		2024F	% of Rev		2023	% of Rev		Change	%	202	5 Proposed
<u>_</u>											
Revenues		0.60=	- 0.4			00/		(4.000)	=40/		
Membership Dues	\$	2,605	7%	\$	3,935	3%	\$	(1,330)	-51%	•	2,850
General Donations	\$	2,614	7%	\$	1,840	2%	\$	773	30%	-	500
Event Sponsors, Donations, Fees	\$	-	0%	\$	-	0%	\$	-	-100%	•	-
Grants (Playground Grants & Donations)	\$	20,000	53%	\$	96,780	81%	\$	(76,780)	-384%	•	-
Party for Park Gross	\$	9,960	26%	\$	14,329	12%	\$	(4,369)		•	10,250
Misc Sales	\$	1,321	3%	\$	428	0%	\$	893	68%	•	800
Other Revenues (Interest)	\$	1,457	4%	\$	2,552	2%	\$	(1,095)	-75%	\$	1,250
<u> </u>	_			_			_	(2			
Total Revenues	\$	37,957	100%	Ş	119,865	100%	\$	(81,908)		\$	15,650
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Expenditures			% of Exp			% of Exp			%		
Administrative - Marketing, Office, Ins.	\$	5,765	23%	\$	4,837	3%	\$	(929)	-16%		4,975
Professional - Consulting, Acctg, Taxes	\$	2,490	10%	\$	2,975	2%	\$	485	19%	•	1,600
Capital - Park restoration/maintence	\$	5,357	21%		137,036	90%	\$	131,679	2458%	•	18,925
Events - Inc Party for Park	\$	8,057	32%	\$	4,688	3%	\$	(3,369)		•	6,700
Other Expenditures	\$	3,410	14%	\$	2,377	2%	\$	(1,033)	0%	\$	900
<i>d</i>											
Total Expenditures	\$	25,079	100%	\$	151,912	100%	\$	126,833		\$	33,100
Net Revenues Less Expenditures	\$	12,878		\$	(32,047)		\$	44,924		\$	(17,450)
eti .											
Ending Fund Balance	\$	57,035		\$	44,157		\$	12,878		\$	39,585
Reserved (Hunter Kelly Playground Project		36,780		\$	26,780		\$	10,000		\$	36,780
UnReserved	\$	20,254		\$	17,377		\$	2,878		\$	2,805
Party for Park Net	\$	2,798		\$	10,782		\$	(7,984)		\$	4,000



2025 Proposed Budget

Chestnut Ridge Conservancy Proposed Budget for 2025 Summary

20	025 Revenues - Memberships, Donations, Party for Park	\$	15,650.00
To	otal Revenues	\$	15,650.00
20	025 Capital Project expenditures	\$	18,925.00
20	025 Gala, Programs and Events expenditures	\$	6,700.00
20	025 Operational / Administrative expenditures	, \$	7,475.00
To	otal expenditures	\$	33,100.00
Su	ırplus / (Deficit)	\$	(17,450.00)
20	025 Net Residual	\$	(17,450.00)
Fu	ınd Balance		
20	025 Beginning fund Balance - Un-Reserved	\$	20,254.49
20	025 Ending Fund Balance - Un-Reserved	\$	2,804.49
Cu	arrent Reserve for Hunter Kelly Playground	\$	36,780.35
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Motion to approve proposed budget for 2025? Second? Any Discussion? All in Favor? Opposed?



Party for the Park 2024 - Halloween Bash

The Halloween Bash concept was great, wonderful Halloween ambiance inside the
casino.
Lot of folks in costumes.
18 Piece Big Band was awesome. The sound effect inside the casino was perfect.
Band cost \$2,500 total. That's \$138 for each band member for three hours of musi
Our new food caterer "Kevins Catering" was the best with lot of food options.
\$1,200. Willing to work with us next year even on sponsorship at some level.
We nixed the tent idea because of the lower than expected turnout trend saving us
\$1,700 in cost.
Our net gain from the 2024 Party was \$2,700 vs \$11,000 in 2023 attributable to
lower ticket sales (64 in 2024, 74 in 2023) and mainly lower total sponsorship
contributions accompanied by higher party costs for marketing/decorations,
entertainment, food & beverage. We threw a more upscale party in hopes of
attracting more attendees.
Perhaps changing the party date to a Saturday next year may be something to try.
If you've read my "social media metrics" email, it seems like we still need to figure
how to improve on those stats as well as over all marketing. We'll discuss further a
our January board meeting.



Party for the Park 2024 Sponsors & Advertisers

- ☐ Rupp Pfalzgraf, LLC
 ☐ Farrell Financial, LLC
- The Chambers Family
- Litwin-Castle Insurance
- HoganKamp Optics
- Lawley Insurance
- Parkitects, Inc.
- ☐ Restorff Landscaping
- American Legion Post 567
- American Legion Auxilary 567
- ☐ Brown & Stromecki Agency, Inc.

- ☐ XOAR Printing
- ☐ FE Brown & Sons
- ☐ Illio Dipaolo Restaurant
- ☐ Chestnut Ridge Nursery
- ☐ Images in Glass, Inc.
- ☐ GRX Renovations
- □ Orchard Park Chamber of Commerce
- ☐ Ten Thousand Vines Micro-Winery
- Hamburg Brewing Company

Thank you to all for supporting the Conservancy!

Party for the Park Halloween Bash – October 2024



Party for the Park – October 2024













Capital Projects Trail Maintenance



Trail Maintenance 2024 Highlights

- Held multiple trail clean up days with CRC volunteers. Cut and cleared logs blocking trails. Removed trash and improved irrigation on trails. Assessed other improvements that could be made to the trails. Focused on Orienteering trail primarily the upper portion of trail near Seufert Road.
- Clean Up of junk on Boy Scout trail (trail marker 80). Organized volunteers from multiple groups to assist in removing junk from the trail site (old junk yard). Orchard Park Highway Department also assisted in the clean up with the use of two dump trucks and a bobcat for loading the junk. Removed 11 truck loads of junk from the trail site in a single day. The junk removal event restored the site to its natural state and removed an eyesore from a popular park trail.
 - Special thanks to Ed Kasperek who helped organize the event and granted use of his property as an access point to the site.
- Boy Scout Troop 285 Trail Bridge Project on Boy Scout Trail
 - Thanks to JJ Thomas and the maintenance staff at Chestnut Ridge Park for removing many downed trees blocking key trails and restoring the creek bridge.















Trail Maintenance 2025 Plans

Continue work on Orienteering trail:

- ☐ Small bridges needed over areas with poor irrigation
- Continue removing downed trees blocking trail
- Use wood chips in certain areas to mitigate poor irrigation
- Improve drainage at certain points on the trail
- Realign certain trail paths around consistently wet areas where wood chips will not be sufficient to solve the problem.

These activities will make the trail safer and more enjoyable for hikers while also preserving the ecology of the park by reducing the need for hikers to take unnecessary detours from the trails.

Remove junk from other areas in the Park. Similar to junk site that was cleaned up in 2024 there are other small areas in the park where there is metal trash and junk that needs to be addressed.

Develop plans for trail signage in certain areas along the trail.

Trail Head signage and Wayfinding signage.



New Tennis Court Benches

- In the Spring of 2024 we engaged with Troop 285 Eagle Scout Christopher Rushton to build eight new tennis court benches to replace the old ones as an Eagle Scout Project.
- Christopher assembled a team, built a prototype, purchased the materials and within a month built the remaining seven court benches for the Ridge Courts.
- The project was successfully completed by the end of May with the benches delivered and put in place.
- Congratulations Chris and his team for an excellent job.







Boy Scout Trail Bridge Project

- Zachary Restorff, Eagle Scout from Troop 285 proposed replacing a bridge along Boy Scout Trail at Trail Marker 26. Bridge traverses a culvert for drainage.
- ☐ Existing bridge was made up of branches, leaves, etc and was deteriorating.
- Zachary used a bridge design previously approved by the Erie County Parks

 Department and purchased all necessary materials and supplies for the project

 with the financial assistance of the CRC. Total CRC Cost of Project was \$1,186.
- Project was completed over a 3 day span in early November with assistance from the boy scouts of troop 285 and Zachary's parents and grandfather.
- New Bridge is solid wood construction that will last many years and provide for greater safety when hiking over the culvert.
- Bridge project is another example of the positive outcomes from CRC and Boy

 Scout Troop collaboration.
- ☐ Thank you to Zachary and your team!







2024 Annual Tree Planting

- Completed November 2024
- Trees planted included 3 Red Maples, 3 Sugar Maples, 3 Gary Birch, 3 Serviceberry, 3 White Pines, 3 BurrOaks, and 12 Northern Bush Honeysuckles
- PLANT WNY member firms
 - Restorff's Landscape Service McMillian Landscaping of WNY
 - NYS CNLPs Certified Nursery and Landscape Professionals:
 - Roger Restorff, lifetime CNLP of Restorff's Landscape Service
 - Andrew Palinski, CNLP of Restorff's Landscape Service
 - Josh Konovitz Erie County Forester
 - SUNY Niagara Horticulture program student
 - Peter Handy
 - Orchard Park Class of 2025 students earning community service hours
 - Drew Slotman Ryan Coyle
 - Callum DeBorka Noah DeAngelis
 - **♦ Boy Scouts of Troop 285**
 - Drew Slotman Zach Restorf

Thank you to all involved in the 2024 Tree Planting!















Tennis Court Light Pole Painting

☐ Working with the Erie County Parks Ridge Staff, we were finally able to have the tennis court poles painted to match the new lighting fixtures the CRC funded three years ago. Thank you to the Parks Dept for doing the labor on this project. Looks so much better.







M & T Bank Volunteering for Special Projects

- Each year for over the past ten years the CRC has been receiving volunteer help from M & T Bank coordinated through M & T Bank VP Mike Krugel.
 - The CRC calls/emails Mike on a project the CRC is engaging in and askes if Mike can send a team of volunteers to help.
 - Whether it be the Playground install, staining the Commissioner's cabin, tennis court wind screens, or various painting, gardening, and cleanup projects, Mike Krugel and M & T Bank volunteers have come through for us each and every time!
 - Special recognition must be given to M & T Bank for all their years of supporting the Conservancy in its projects throughout Chestnut Ridge Park.
 - The Conservancy could not have done all that it has done without the continuous volunteer help from M & T Bank.
 - Thank you to all at M & T Bank who have helped us all these years!!!



















Many Accomplishments

New tennis court benches Troop 285 - 2024 (\$1,200)
Eagle Scout Project - Troop 285 Boy Scout Trail Bridge Build - \$1,20
Tennis Court Light Pole Painting - (\$800)
Annual Tree Plantings — (\$6,500)
On-going volunteer trail maintenance - 2024
Eternal Flame trail safety enhancement - 2023 (\$135,000)
Playground for All - 2021 (\$750,000)
Tennis court lighting (\$30,000)
Casino interior stone work – 2020 (\$10,000)
Casino floor refinishing - 2020 (\$19,000)
Eternal Frame trail head rest area - 2020 (\$5,000)
Annual tree planting - (\$2,000+)
Casino murals restoration (\$40,000)
New park entrance signs (\$29,000)
Stonework restoration - water fountain, bee-hive monuments,
Park entrance rest station bathrooms (\$15,000)
New wildflower garden (\$10,000)
Boy Scout Legacy 11 Project (Pier, Shelter & Bridge) (\$7,500)
New park benches & swing (\$5,000)
Tennis courts wind screens (\$2,500)
Fifteen Oak Tree Planting Eternal Flame Trail Head (\$1,500)
Tennis court benches (\$500)
Portable bicycle/sled racks (\$3,000)
Binocular viewer at casino - Yearly Fee (\$650)
Hamilton Ward memorial plaque (\$1,200)
Commissioner's cabin re-staining (\$1,000)









Chestnut Ridge - Erie County Parks



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Capital Projects - Future Initiatives

- ☐ Annual Tree Planting 2025
- Trail Maintenance & Trash removal
- ☐ Pickleball-Tennis Court Lighting
- Ward Memorial Stonework & Rededication 2025
- ☐ 100 Steps remediation and restoration longterm
- Other restoration, maintenance or preservation projects as suggested or brought to our attention.



Iconic 100 Steps Structure Preservation Initiative

The 100 steps structure is in a significant state of decay & crumbling. It truly is a monument to the WPA program. The Conservancy is currently seeking a plan to remediate the water drainage into and behind the walls of the structure which is causing the erosion damage. This would only be a phase one part of the effort to save the 100 Steps. The cost of "full restoration" is estimated to be very significant and likely in excess of \$1.5 million. It will take many years and multiple phases to save the 100 steps if it can be done.





Special Acknowledgement

The Conservancy, it's board members would like to give a sincere nod of appreciation and thank you to Commissioner Troy Schinzel, and all the Ridge Park staff who have helped and supported the CRC over the past year. The Conservancy accomplishes good things for Chestnut Ridge Park with the blessing and help of Commissioner Schinzel and Erie County Department of Parks, Forestry and Recreation. We are grateful to have a good working relationship Erie County and the Parks Department and look forward to many more years of continued partnership for the benefit of Chestnut Ridge Park.







Erie County Parks Update

Welcome Erie County

Parks Commissioner Troy P. Schinzel

- Chestnut Ridge Park Update
- Questions to Commissioner Schinzel







Conservancy Memberships, Directorships & Volunteers

We are always looking for new members as well as new directors that can help out with the Conservancy's mission. If you would like to only occasionally volunteer, we have needs for you as well!

For Memberships and Volunteers

Go to our website and click on the "Join us" tab and select from the drop down menu.

If your interested in becoming a Conservancy Director please email me and your resume to gpanek@chestnutridgeconservancy.org

Thank you for your interest in the Conservancy.

