

# Essex County Parks Archives

Essex County Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs

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ISSUE 25

## News:

### 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Calendar

Throughout 2020, Essex County is celebrating the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Essex County Park System, the first of its kind in the nation. Right now that can happen only through social media. Follow “Archives of the Essex County Park System” (on Facebook) or “Essex County Park System”. Once events can be rescheduled, please check <https://www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar>. Follow us to learn more about when your memories can grow again in the Essex County Parks!

## Upcoming:

### NAOP Symposium Tours

The National Association for Olmsted Parks’ annual symposium has been postponed because of COVID-19. We are hoping to reschedule the program in the fall. The symposium and the guided tours throughout the Essex County Parks are both open to the public.



Essex County Executive  
Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr.  
and the Board of Chosen Freeholders

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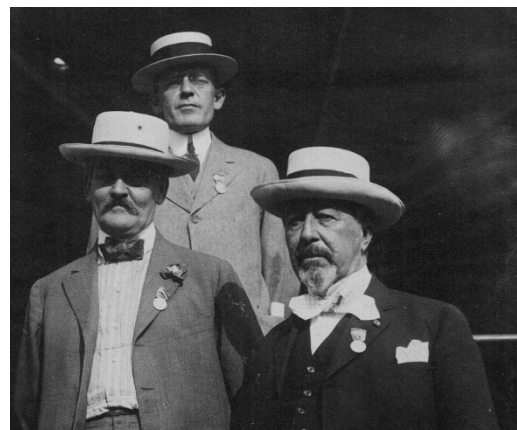
*Putting Essex County First*



## The Essex County Park Commission is Founded

As mentioned in the January newsletter, the bill to create the Essex County Park Commission was signed into law by Governor Werts on March 5, 1895 while the referendum to show public support was set for early April.

On April 9, 1895, Essex County voters overwhelmingly approved the legislation to establish the Essex County Park Commission. The State Legislature had passed the bill and Governor Werts signed it, but the public vote was an important step to ensure buy-in from county residents and taxpayers. The referendum validated the idea that a county-wide park system had the people’s blessing.



A few of the original commissioners at the 1914 opening of the Weequahic Golf Course

The Essex County Park Commission, that would develop the nation’s first county-wide park system, met for the first time on April 20, 1895. The first commissioners were Cyrus Peck, Frederick M. Shepard, Franklin Murphy, Frederick W. Kelsey and Stephen J. Meeker. They immediately set to work on parks in the north, east, south and west of Newark, as well as one in Orange and the mountain reservations.

The Park Commission, and its successor the Essex County Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs, built and maintain a system of parks and reservations of over 6,000 acres in this densely-populated county.