



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

FOR REQUESTS TO ACCESS

HISTORIC DOCUMENTS OR ENGINEERING INFORMATION

The Essex County Parks Department Historic Documents Library preserves documents of the Essex County Park Commission (1895 – 1979). The historic documents, as well as subsequent related materials, engineering information, and maps, are available to researchers. Our collection is irreplaceable. Please help us to preserve it.

Requests for Documents

Viewing of documents is available by appointment during regular business hours. A request may be initiated by phone or using the Essex County Request for Public Records form.

Historical and Engineering documents are not loaned out under any circumstances. Essex County's policies for viewing documents conform to the New Jersey Open Public Records Act.

Requests to view documents or obtain copies of documents must be made on the county's Request for Public Records form. A specific description of the item(s) requested must be provided. If requestors are not able to provide specific descriptions, they may request research time within the Engineering Office. A fee structure, on the Request for Public Records form, has been set by the county for research and copying services.

Research Assistance

Research assistance is available to help requestors determine which specific documents they may be interested in. A letter of request to the Director of Parks is required. The requestor will be contacted to make an appointment. The first hour of assistance is free. Consultants working on bid proposals for Parks projects will also receive free copies during that hour. After the first hour, charges may be imposed at \$25.00 per hour. For Park Conservancies which have a formal agreement with Essex County, five hours of assistance will be provided free per year with free copying service during this period. Research assistance policies are set by the County and are not regulated by the New Jersey Open Public Records Act.

Viewing of Documents

No eating, drinking, or smoking is allowed in the Engineering Room or Archive. Ordinarily the archivist will oversee use of the requested materials in a designated research area. Briefcases, backpacks, packages, etc. must be kept away from the work table. Laptop computers are allowed. Permission to use digital cameras is at the discretion of the archivist.

Only pencils or laptop computers may be used for note taking. The use of pens is NOT permitted, to prevent accidental marking of documents.

To preserve delicate original records, microfilm must be used where available. Instruction will be given on the use of microfilm equipment. Original records that have been microfilmed will be furnished at the discretion of the archivist.

Access may also be denied due to fragility of materials or the unprocessed state of that portion of the collection. Limited amounts of material may be provided to a researcher at a time at the discretion of the archivist.

Handling of Archival Materials

Researchers will be asked to wash their hands before handling any archival materials. If necessary, they will be furnished with gloves to handle original documents.

Records shall be handled with care. Materials may not be traced over, marked upon, leaned upon, folded, ripped, or altered. Marks may neither be added nor erased from materials. Pages must be handled by their edges. Manuscripts must be kept flat. Do not lay papers, note cards, books, or other objects on top of archival materials. Do not place open books face down.

Maintaining the exact order of material in a folder, and folders within a box is of singular importance. Do not separate materials from folders. If a mistake in arrangement is discovered, please bring it to the attention of the archivist. Do not rearrange documents yourself.

The Archives reserves the right to deny further access to anyone who mishandles material.

Copying

Photocopies are provided at a fee set by the county (see Request for Public Records form). A special service charge may be added for non-standard copying, such as copying certain historic documents. Copies of certain historic documents may be denied due to risk of damage in copying. Payment in advance is required for all photocopies that must be mailed. Postage for mailing will be added to the cost. Essex County's photocopying policies conform to the New Jersey Open Public Records Act.

After the requestor's acceptance of the copy fee, and in certain cases submission of a required deposit, the copies will be made by staff and made available to the requestor within seven business days. Requestors are not permitted to make their own copies. The researcher must assume full responsibility for conforming to copyright laws which may be involved in the use of manuscripts and other archival materials.

Each copy will be marked "Courtesy of Essex County, NJ Parks Department". The first or last page will also be marked with identifying data, such as the document type, box and file number, and title. This is done so that the document can be properly cited and/or retrieved again.

For digital photo images, the requestor will be charged the cost of a CD or may provide their own recordable CD.

Permission to Publish

If permission is given for the use of material for publication, it must credit the Parks Department and be clearly cited in sufficient detail that it can be easily retrieved in the future. A copy of the publication should be sent to the Archives. Unless otherwise stated, any permission granted is for one-time use only.

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