

Application to Serve

Committee Choice

Which Boards would you like to apply for?

Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee: Submitted

Qualifications required for the MPO SUP Advisory Committee Position.

Profile

Matthew

P

Chesser

First Name

Middle Initial

Last Name

1894 Farm Trail

Street Address

Suite or Apt

Sanibel

FL

33957

City

State

Postal Code

Mobile: (302) 535-7747

Primary Phone

Alternate Phone

matt.chesser@verizon.net

Email Address

NUMBER OF MONTHS RESIDING ON SANIBEL ANNUALLY

12

Year Round Resident

☒ Yes ☐ No

The School District of Lee County

Assistant Director of Capital Planning

Employer

Occupation

BACKGROUND: (EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE)

Required Information

Over 30 years of executive leadership, legal counsel, project management, and public agency experience across local/state government and public education—including extensive experience in parks, recreation, and natural resource management. As Environmental Program Administrator for Delaware State Parks for 15 years, I provided executive leadership for a statewide system with 26,000 acres, 600+ facilities, and over 5 million annual visitors. In this role, I directed capital improvement planning, park construction, trail network expansion (including the First State Trails and Pathways Program), land acquisition, and state/federal grant administration. My broader career includes serving as Assistant Director of Capital Planning and Assistant Director of Grants for The School District of Lee County, Senior Legal Counsel for Delaware Technical & Community College, Deputy Attorney General for the Delaware Department of Justice (Environmental Unit), and Engineering Assistant for the City of Salisbury Public Works. I hold a Juris Doctor from Villanova University School of Law, a B.S. in Environmental Health from Salisbury State University, and an A.A.S. in Civil Engineering Technology. Additionally, I am a licensed attorney (DE), a Project Management Professional (PMP®), a Certified Change Management Practitioner (CMP), and a LEED Green Associate. Please refer to my attached resume for full details.

[MPC_resume_7-22-26.pdf](#)

Upload a Resume

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Required Information

My community service and leadership reflect a long-standing commitment to environmental stewardship, historical preservation, and public engagement. I have served on the Board of Directors for both the Kent County Conservancy and the Friends of Auburn Heights, supporting local land conservation, historic site preservation, and community education programs. In my professional administrative roles, I led public outreach, stakeholder coordination, and agency partnerships for statewide open space, natural area, and trail network initiatives. Across my career, I have consistently collaborated with municipal governments, non-profits, and citizen advisory groups to align community needs with sustainable land-use and infrastructure strategies. Since moving to Sanibel, my family and I have been active with community groups, fundraisers and other events that benefit the island community.

WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN THIS APPOINTMENT?

Required Information

As a full-time, year-round resident of Sanibel, I am eager to apply my 30+ years of experience in environmental planning, public infrastructure, capital project management, and legal compliance to serve on the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee. Throughout my career—from my background in civil engineering technology and municipal public works to directing capital planning and serving as senior legal counsel—I have focused on balancing growth, environmental conservation, and public recreation needs. Having managed state park systems, statewide trail initiatives, capital budgets, and public land acquisitions, I deeply appreciate Sanibel's sanctuary philosophy and its commitment to protecting natural resources while maintaining exceptional municipal amenities. I am seeking this appointment to contribute practical, hands-on expertise in capital planning, public process, and environmental stewardship to help ensure Sanibel's parks, trails, facilities, and recreational programs remain vibrant, resilient, and accessible for all island residents and visitors.

MPO Application to submit for your respective Advisory Committee

Please be certain you have completed the "Background: (Education & Experience)", "Community Involvement", and "Why Are You Interested In This Appointment?" text box fields before submitting your application. Thank you.

Please Enter In Today's Date

7/27/2026

Name of Applicant

Matthew P. Chesser

MATTHEW P. CHESSER, ESQ., PMP, CMP

Sanibel, FL | 302-535-7747 | matt.chesser@verizon.net

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Accomplished attorney, project executive, and organizational leader with over 30 years of diverse experience spanning legal counsel, contract/grant management, program leadership, construction oversight, and change management. Skilled in navigating complex organizational challenges, negotiating contracts, and leading multimillion-dollar programs across higher education, government, and public/private partnerships. Recognized for adaptability, relationship-building, and the ability to unify teams around shared goals.

Credentials & Certifications:

- **Juris Doctor**, Villanova Law School – Licensed Attorney (Delaware)
- **LEED Green Associate (GA)** – Sustainable Development Practices
- **Project Management Professional (PMP)** – PMI, March 2018
- **Prosci Certified Change Management Practitioner (CMP)** – May 2025

CORE COMPETENCIES

- ❖ **In-House Legal Counsel & Compliance** – Contract drafting, negotiation, regulatory compliance, corporate governance, risk mitigation.
- ❖ **Project & Program Leadership** – Strategic planning, change management, process improvement, cross-functional collaboration.
- ❖ **Grant & Contract Management** – Development, compliance, monitoring, and administration of multimillion-dollar federal/state funding.
- ❖ **Construction & Facilities Oversight** – Contract management, procurement, permitting, capital improvement planning, sustainability initiatives.
- ❖ **Executive & Organizational Leadership** – Policy development, board relations, legislative testimony, stakeholder engagement.
- ❖ **Fundraising & Development** – Public/private partnerships, leveraged funding, donor and agency negotiations.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Assistant Director of Capital Planning | Mar 2026 – present

The School District of Lee County – Fort Myers, FL

- Recommend the acquisition, management, and disposal of property for the School Board.
- Supervise consulting surveyors, engineers, real estate, legal and environmental professionals in the assessment, permitting, and planning for new school sites.
- Coordinate the development and implementation of District growth management plans.
- Administer, direct, and coordinate requisite Department of Education submittals and other mandatory statutory submittals pertaining to educational facilities and capital outlay planning.

Assistant Director of Grants and Program Development | Mar 2024 – March 2026

The School District of Lee County – Fort Myers, FL

- Direct planning, development, and coordination of \$40M+ annual grant programs and \$320M ESSER funding aligned with district goals.
- Supervise and advise staff on grant compliance, administration, and program evaluation.
- Research and disseminate funding opportunities to advance strategic initiatives.
- Consult with leadership, agencies, and funding partners to align resources with community and student needs.

Senior Legal Counsel (Part-Time) | Mar 2024 – Mar 2026

Senior Legal Counsel (Full-Time) | Apr 2019 – Mar 2024

Delaware Technical & Community College – Dover, DE

- Primary legal counsel for the College's transactional and contractual issues.

- Led implementation of the College's first contract management system, updating templates, lifecycle policies, and staff training.
- Managed legal issues in construction, procurement, real estate, SaaS/software licensing, and federal grant compliance.
- Key member of the team overseeing \$63M in CARES/HEERF pandemic grants.
- Advised senior leadership on risk management, governance, and legal compliance.
- Coordinated with the Delaware Attorney General's Office and outside counsel on litigation, contracts, and investigations.

Environmental Program Administrator- Planning, Preservation & Development | Aug 2004 – Apr 2019

Delaware State Parks – Dover, DE

- Senior management team leader for a statewide system with 5M+ annual visitors, \$22.5M budget, 26,000 acres, and 600+ facilities.
- Directed planning, construction, land acquisition, trails, and grant/contract programs with a staff of 25+ professionals.
- Administrator for the Governor's Strategic Sites Redevelopment Program (overseeing \$50M+ public/private projects), Delaware Open Space Program, Delaware Natural Areas Program, and the First State Trails and Pathway Program.
- Negotiated multimillion-dollar deals, leveraging federal, state, and private funding.
- Oversaw capital improvement planning, LEED facility construction, FEMA/ARRA-funded projects, and major infrastructure development.
- Awarded EPA PISCES Award (2018) and part of NRPA Gold Medal Team (2015).

Deputy Attorney General, Environmental Unit | Jun 2000 – Aug 2004

Delaware Department of Justice – Dover, DE

- Provided litigation, enforcement, and legal counsel to DNREC.
- Negotiated contracts, drafted legislation, and represented the state in civil and criminal proceedings.
- Led task force on animal cruelty and environmental enforcement, presenting at regional conferences.

Engineering Assistant, Dept. of Public Works | Aug 1988 – Aug 1996

City of Salisbury – Salisbury, MD

- Supported design, inspection, and project management for civil and roadway projects.
- Developed budgets, contracts, bids, and procurement processes.
- Oversaw implementation of the department's IT systems and served as liaison with contractors and engineering firms.

Boards & Leadership

- Board Member, Kent County Conservancy (2019–2024)
- Board Member, Friends of Auburn Heights (2019–2024)

Awards & Professional Development

- Governor's Team Excellence Award (Winner 2008, Finalist 2018)
- Delaware Superior Court Mediator Training (2008)
- Dale Carnegie Leadership Academy (2009)
- Delaware Nature Society Conservation Award (2011)

EDUCATION

J.D., Law – Villanova University School of Law

B.S., Environmental Health (Biology & Chemistry minors) – Salisbury State University

A.A.S., Civil Engineering Technology – Delaware Technical & Community College