

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

First Name

P

Middle Initial

Chesser

Last Name

1894 Farm Trail

Street Address

Suite or Apt

Sanibel

City

FL

State

33957

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

Employer

Director of Grants and Program Development

Occupation

BACKGROUND: (EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE)

## Required Information

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For almost 15 years I was an Environmental Program Administrator with Delaware State Parks. In that position, I was responsible for all budgeting, planning, design, permitting, and construction projects for Delaware State Parks. Our parks consisted of over 26,000 acres state-wide, 17 state parks, and the associated projects included several new or renovated LEED facilities, 2 marinas, multiple nature and education centers, a historic zoo, two golf courses, and the renovation of historic properties. Because of my abilities, I also became the leader of the Governor's Strategic Sites Program where we tackled abandoned, flood-prone sites by working closely with the local communities to develop masterplans that combined conservation and redevelopment for economic growth.

[MPCResume\\_7-9-2025.pdf](#)

Upload a Resume

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## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

### Required Information

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During my time at Delaware State Parks, I supported the initiatives and activities of over 20 "friends" groups and other non-profits that benefited the parks system and surrounding communities. In my personal life back in Delaware, I was a Board member for the Friends of Auburn Heights State Park and the Kent County Conservancy. As a family, we helped several local causes throughout the year, either through financial support or volunteering our time. Since moving to Sanibel, I have helped serve on the CHR Construction Committee.

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## WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN THIS APPOINTMENT?

### Required Information

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I am looking for ways to support the island and give back to my community. Given that I have broad parks and recreation experience, I thought I could be an asset to the committee in its work and would be happy to serve.

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## MPO Application to submit for your respective Advisory Committee

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**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

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8/15/2025

### Name of Applicant

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Matthew P. Chesser

## Matthew P. Chesser, Esq., PMP, CMP

1894 Farm Trail, Sanibel, Florida 33957, 302-535-7747, [matt.chesser@verizon.net](mailto:matt.chesser@verizon.net)

### SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

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Energetic professional with over 30 years of legal, planning and management experience. Proven track record of building relationships and working with a broad range of constituencies on the most complex projects or issues. Excellent communication skills, a diverse educational background, and talented with contracts, grants, procurements, and the other areas of management that must be tackled on a daily basis. A truly dedicated employee with the ability to move teams together towards common goals and objectives.

### EXPERIENCE

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#### ***Director of Grants and Program Development***

March 2024 to present

The School District of Lee County, Florida

- Direct the planning, development, implementation, and coordination of Title I, Migrant, and Magnet Programs and other grant proposals in support of District goals and priorities. (\$40M+ annual budget, \$320M ESSER Budget)
- Supervise the development, analysis, approval, and assessment of grant-funded special projects and pilot programs.
- Collect, analyze, and disseminate information relating to grant funding opportunities, partnership opportunities, research opportunities, and relevant information related to District goals and priorities.
- Consult with District employees, external agency and organization officials, funding representatives, and community members to assess needs and recommend appropriate grant opportunities.
- Advise grant administrators in ensuring compliance with applicable laws, rules, policies, standards, protocols, regulations, and agreements pertaining to grant administration.
- Advise the senior leadership regarding strategic planning for grant funding, grant liability, and grant compliance.
- Monitor and assess federal and state governmental action and public policy recommendations that may affect future federal and state grant funding and advise appropriate District employees of most likely trends and changes in federal and state grant funding.
- Research professional literature, compile research summaries, and communicate research findings in support of new, experimental, research, and pilot projects.

#### ***Senior Legal Counsel***

April 2019 to March 2024

Delaware Technical and Community College, Office of the President, Legal Affairs Office

- Provided primary legal support to the Collegewide Director of Facilities regarding contracts and construction issues, procurement, state and local permitting, planning, and project implementation. Drafted and reviewed AIA construction contracts, professional service agreements, and other agreements.
- Provided primary legal support on all real estate matters – public/private partnerships, leases, facility use agreements, etc.
- Project manager for implementation of the College's first contract management system. Oversaw the reworking of all contract templates, establishing new contract lifecycle related policies, and updating signatory authorities.
- Key member of CARES/HEERF funding team responsible for the creation and implementation of a procurement plan for \$63M in Federal pandemic grants to the College.
- Review, negotiation, and approval of all SaaS and other software agreements for the College.
- Provided advice and counsel to other senior college management and affiliated non-profit entities related to contracts, corporate governance, state procurement, business and commercial transactions, insurance, and estate planning.
- Reviewed grant applications for consistency with college policies and other applicable laws and regulations.
- Conducted regular reviews of existing agreement templates, worked with affected stakeholders to review changes, and implemented new templates for college-wide use, with roll-out training for affected staff.
- Provided training in key knowledge areas, such as: general liability, procurement, facility use, and contracting.

- Provided legal interpretations and ensures compliance with applicable laws, rules, regulations, and policies to minimize legal claims, lawsuits, and liability.
- Coordinated legal matters encountered by the College with the Delaware Attorney General's Office and private counsel.
- Prepared responses to lawsuits, regulatory complaints, and otherwise assisted in the representation of the College and its related non-profit entities in judicial, regulatory, or administrative hearings/proceedings.
- Researched, developed, and recommended policies and procedures to promote compliance with federal, state and local laws and regulations.
- Coordinated investigations into allegations of non-compliance with rules, laws, and regulations and developed appropriate remedial action.

***Environmental Program Administrator- Planning, Preservation, and Development Section***

August 2004 to April 2019

State of Delaware, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), Division of Parks and Recreation

- Senior member of the Division's 4-person management team responsible for 150+ full-time employees, 700+ part-time and seasonal employees, a \$22.5M operating budget, 5+ million visitors annually, a State Park ranger police force, 18 miles of beaches, 26,000 acres of land, 600 buildings and structures, a waterpark, a marina, two golf courses, 160 miles of trails, and 41 miles of roads. The Division was 65% self-funded through entrance fees, event rentals, and commercial partnerships.
  - This management team was awarded the 2015 National Recreation and Parks Association Gold Medal for Excellence in Parks and Recreation Management.
  - Direct supervision of a staff of 22 to 25 full-time planning, construction, engineering, survey, and land acquisition professionals.
  - Testified at hearings as needed to various committees of the General Assembly.
  - Provided quarterly presentations to the Delaware Parks and Recreation Council.
- Project Manager for the Governor's Strategic Sites economic redevelopment program utilizing public/private partnerships for \$50M+ projects.
  - NVF Project -Created the concept for the Auburn Valley Master Plan – revitalizing a flood-prone, contaminated, industrial site to create flood relief and eliminate contamination while rehabilitating a reduced industrial footprint with a private development partner. The balance of the site became Auburn Valley State Park with new infrastructure.
    - Negotiated all the agreements for the project, some through bankruptcy court proceedings, while leveraging millions in federal and state funding for the purchase and demolition of portions of the site.
    - Project was awarded the EPA Performance and Innovation in the SRF Creating Environmental Success (PISCES) Award in 2018.
  - Fort DuPont - Team leader in developing the Fort DuPont Master Plan – redeveloping a state-owned, flood-prone, former military installation on the Delaware Bay into a vibrant walkable, bikeable community.
    - Implemented a master plan that accounted for sea level rise and included natural infrastructure to deal with flooding issues.
    - Worked to create the Fort DuPont Redevelopment and Preservation Corporation through legislation and corporate documents.
  - Coordinated both projects with FEMA and DEMA staff and the Delaware Natural Hazards Program Manager
- Administrator of the Division's Capital Improvement Program
  - Responsible for generating the Division's annual and 5-year capital improvement plans and budget requests.
  - Identified the need for, and supervised the creation of, a database inventory of capital and maintenance backlogs and a system for ranking and tracking projects.
  - Leveraged funding through various sources – state bond bill funding, FEMA flooding mitigation funding, EPA Clean Water SRF Revolving Loans, Federal ARRA funding, and private donations.
  - Oversaw all contracting, RFPs, and the selection and management of outside A&E firms and legal counsel for the implementation of the Division's projects, which included several new or renovated LEED facilities, 2 marinas, nature and education centers, a historic zoo, two golf courses, and the renovation of historic properties.
- Administrator of the First State Trail and Pathways program for DNREC.
  - Multi-agency initiative under Governor Markell increasing funding for the construction of new trails statewide.

- Managed the construction of the first trail completed under the initiative and several other large trail projects.
  - Coordinated stakeholder input with community groups, local governments, and other state agencies.
- Administrator of the Delaware Outdoor Recreation Parks and Trails Program.
  - Matching grant program assisting local, county, and state governments with public park land acquisition and outdoor recreation facility development.
  - All grant requests were negotiated with the local agencies and presented to the Delaware Parks and Recreation Council for approval.
- Administrator of the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program in Delaware.
  - Matching grant program for state and local public outdoor recreation projects.
  - Once projects were built or acquired with LWCF funds, oversaw monitoring of project sites for compliance with Federal restrictions. Worked with the National Park Service on violation issues (a.k.a. conversions).
- Administrator of the Delaware Open Space program.
  - Land acquisition program for land protection for conservation or recreation use with a \$9M+ annual budget.
  - Worked directly with landowners to negotiate sales contracts (bargain sales and fee simple), and negotiate donations of fee simple property and conservation easements.
  - Worked with private foundations and public sources to leverage additional funding for acquisition projects.
  - Provided staffing to, and advocated for project approvals in front of, the Delaware Open Space Council.
- Administrator of the Natural Areas Program.
  - Voluntary land protection program established for conservation purposes.
  - Worked directly with landowners for the dedication of nature preserves.
  - Provided staffing to the Delaware Natural Areas Council and advised on issues of mapping revisions and regulatory changes.
- Flood Avoidance Workgroup Member for Governor Markell's EO 41 (climate change) implementation team. The workgroup created the document "Avoiding and Minimizing Risk of Flood Damage to State Assets: A Guide to Delaware State Agencies" in March 2016.
- Key member of Division team for community organization meetings, public and stakeholder outreach (utilizing social media, open houses, workshops, and hearings as necessary), and media relations.

#### ***Deputy Attorney General***

June 2000 to August 2004

State of Delaware, Department of Justice (DOJ), Environmental Unit

- Provided litigation and enforcement support and legal counsel to DNREC and the DOJ, including personnel related issues.
- Reviewed and negotiated various forms of agreements for all divisions of DNREC.
- Represented DNREC in administrative and civil proceedings before various Courts and Boards.
- Prosecuted criminal cases for environmental and animal cruelty offenses.
- Assigned to the Attorney General's Task Force on Animal Cruelty.
  - Drafted legislation generated from the task force.
  - Presented at regional conferences on the subject.
- Worked with various other agencies to develop legislative initiatives for DNREC and DOJ, including having primary responsibility for drafting and reviewing proposed legislation.
- Dealt with inquiries about proposed legislation from members of the General Assembly and affected constituent groups.
- Drafted and reviewed State and Federal regulations.

#### ***Engineering Assistant***

August 1988 to August 1996

City of Salisbury, Maryland - Department of Public Works

- Assisted in the design and construction inspection of major civil, concrete, and roadway projects and maintenance projects.
- Prepared drawings, cost estimates, budget requests, contracts, requisitions, and other construction-related documents.
- Assisted in preparing invitations to bid and supporting documents for the annual city-wide concrete construction and patching contracts.
- Prepared a list of the City's short and long-term goals and objectives for capital and maintenance projects.

- Oversaw the design, implementation, and maintenance of the entire Public Works Department's computer system, including budget preparation and procurement.
- Worked as the point of contact with contractors, engineering and survey firms, and property owners on a variety of issues.

## EDUCATION

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*Juris Doctor*, May, 2000

Villanova Law School, Villanova, PA

*B.S. in Environmental Health*, Minors in Biology and Chemistry, May, 1997

Salisbury State University, Salisbury, MD

*A.A.S. in Civil Engineering Technology*, May, 1997

Delaware Technical and Community College, Georgetown, DE

## ASSOCIATIONS/TRAINING/AWARDS

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Prosci Certified Change Management Practitioner, May, 2025

Board of Directors – Kent County Conservancy, Dover, Delaware, 2019 to 2024

Board of Directors – Friends of Auburn Heights, Yorklyn, Delaware, 2019 to 2024

LEED Green Associate Certification, December, 2018

Project Management Professional (PMP) Certification, March 2018

Governor's Team Excellence Award Winner 2008, Finalist 2018

UD Project Management Certificate Program, Fall 2017

Conservation Award, Delaware Nature Society, 2011

Dale Carnegie Leadership Academy, October, 2009

Delaware Superior Court Mediator Training October, 2008

Delaware State Bar ID# 3935, December, 2000