

# Park honors Frank Casula, former mayor

BY JOE MURCHISON

The city and a tree service company have joined forces to build a small park overlooking the Patuxent River in honor of the late mayor, Frank Casula.

The city will dedicate Casula Point, at the northern end of Ninth Street by the Municipal Pool, on March 28.

The park, a grassy spot with benches, picnic tables, flower planters and an information board about Casula, was completed in late fall with the help of the Adirondack Tree Service of Beltsville.

Adirondack owner John Anna said he wanted to be involved in honoring Casula, who "did a lot for a lot of people."

Anna said he is one of those recipients. When Anna got out of the Marines in 1985 and was trying to open a pizza shop in Beltsville, Casula, then a Prince George's County Council member, tried to help him resolve a zoning issue.

The issue could not be solved, but Anna said he appreciated Casula's efforts on his behalf, especially since Casula did not know him. "It was nice to be in position to come back years later and do something like this for him," he said.

Casula's political affiliation as a Democrat wasn't an obstacle for Anna, who is a Republican activist with close ties to Gov. Robert Ehrlich and Lt. Michael Steele. Both will be at the Casula Point dedication, Anna said.

The park sits on top of an abutment of the former Ninth Street Bridge. The bridge carried vehicles across the Patuxent River until it was washed away by tropical



STAFF PHOTO BY JUNE LEE

**Mike Lhotsky, director of Laurel Parks and Recreation, and John Anna of Adirondack Tree Service check out Laurel's newest park, Casula Point.**

storm Agnes in 1972. It was then replaced by the current Seventh Street bridge.

Anna said his company spent about four months clearing trees and trash from the area and excavating around the abutment. He also hired someone to build a fence, he

said. When asked about the cost to his company, Anna responded, "I don't want to say. ... It's not about the money. It was important to do it."

Mike Lhotsky, director of the Parks and Recreation Department for the city, said Mayor Craig Moe had the initial vision for honoring

Casula at that spot. Lhotsky mentioned this in passing to Anna, who volunteered to help.

Casula died in 2001 after three decades in elective office. Having retired from his position as director of personnel and community activities at Fort Meade, Casula was

elected to the Laurel City Council in 1970. In 1974 he began 20 years as Laurel's representative on the County Council, and in 1994 he became mayor of Laurel, a post he held until his death.