



City of Ashtabula

Ashtabula City Council

Community Development/Economic Development/Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting

Wednesday, January 7, 2026 at 5:30 PM

Council Chambers

4230 Lake Avenue, Ashtabula, OH 44004

Agenda

- 1. Opening of Committee Meeting**
 - a. Call to Order
 - b. Roll Call
 - c. Sunshine Law Certification
- 2. Welcome and Acknowledgement of Visitors**
- 3. Special Guest Presentation**
 - a. Sharone Sing, Hubbard House
- 4. City Manager's Report**
- 5. Parks & Recreation Committee Report**
 - a. 2025 State of the Parks
 - b. November 22, 2025 Parks Board Minutes
- 6. Unfinished Business**
 - a. Tree Legislation
- 7. New Business**
 - a. Appointments to Parks & Recreation Board, Lift Bridge Community Association, and Ashtabula Downtown Development Association
- 8. Next Meeting**
 - a. February 4, 2026
- 9. Adjournment**



City of Ashtabula – Parks & Recreation Board Meeting Agenda
Board Chair – Kenneth Vanyo, Sr.
Board Co-Chair – Earl Tucker

2025 State of the Parks Report

Mission Statement

“Our mission is to provide and maintain quality green spaces and recreational facilities while partnering with our citizens, businesses, and neighbors to enhance the quality of life for all who live in and visit Ashtabula.”

Overview

The 2025 calendar year marked a significant period of progress, evaluation, and public accountability for the City of Ashtabula Parks & Recreation Board. Throughout the year, the Board focused on visible infrastructure improvements, long-term planning, stewardship of levy resources, and strengthening public trust. Despite fiscal pressures and increased park usage, the Board advanced multiple capital projects, addressed policy issues, and successfully secured voter approval for the Parks Levy—ensuring continued investment in Ashtabula’s park system.

Major Achievements in 2025

- Completion and opening of the **Walnut Beach Inclusion Zone**, now one of the most popular and visible park amenities in the city.
- Installation of **new playground equipment and safety surfacing at 38th Street Park**.
- Completion of **basketball and tennis courts at Smith Field**, expanding recreational access.
- Formal recognition and naming of **MFG Unity Park**.
- Restoration of sightlines and safety improvements at **South Park**.
- Successful **Parks Levy renewal**, approved by voters and securing future funding.
- Continued high-quality **Veterans and memorial programming**, including Veterans Day and Pearl Harbor remembrance.

Parks Levy Stewardship

In November 2025, voters approved the Parks Levy, though by a narrow margin. This result underscored both public support and the importance of continued transparency. Throughout the year, levy funds were directed toward highly visible projects, particularly neighborhood parks and accessibility improvements, reinforcing public confidence in responsible stewardship.

Park-by-Park Accomplishments (2025)

Park	2025 Accomplishments
Walnut Beach	Inclusion Zone completed and opened for public use; extremely popular with patrons. Ongoing attention to restroom vandalism, rope barriers, and pavilion maintenance due to heavy usage.
38th Street Park	Foundations poured, new playground equipment installed, New & restored equipment, rubber safety surfacing completed. Board consensus to retain park as a City park following improvements.
Smith Field	Basketball and tennis courts completed and placed into service; consistent public use reported.
Unity Park	Officially recognized and named by Board vote following installation of boulder and plaque. City directed to update park listings and signage.
Kaden Park (W. 58th Street)	Conceptual planning discussion led by City Manager focusing on layout reformatting, improved access, phased low-cost improvements, informal walking paths, and naturalized areas. No action taken.
Veterans Memorial Park	Successful Memorial, Veterans and Pearl Harbor Day ceremonies; City Council resolution completed in time. Working on new, additional memorials for significant Ashtabula Veterans.
LCpl. Kevin Cornelius Memorial Park	Ongoing concerns with gazebo misuse, vandalism, and electrical damage documented; emphasis placed on permitting, safety, and enforcement.
South Park	Public Works restored sightlines, producing significant safety and aesthetic improvements.
Nappi Field	Community movie night held with moderate turnout; bench configuration identified as potential liability.

Park	2025 Accomplishments
Highland Beach Park	Bench infrastructure and placement evaluated for future improvements.
Point Park	Hillside conditions reviewed; future improvement concepts discussed.
Massucci Field	No major issues reported; continued routine maintenance.

Veterans & Community Engagement

The Board continued to prioritize veterans’ memorial parks and ceremonies as core community responsibilities. Veterans Day and Pearl Harbor events were highlighted as examples of respectful coordination between the Board, City administration, and community partners.

Low-cost programming such as outdoor movie nights demonstrated opportunities for neighborhood engagement without large capital investments.

Policy & Governance

A significant portion of late-2025 Board activity centered on **tree ordinance revisions**, including species lists and removal of height restrictions. While discussions were at times contentious, the Board reaffirmed collaborative governance and approved key policy updates unanimously.

Board appointments and vacancies were monitored to ensure continued quorum and effective governance.

Looking Ahead to 2026

Key priorities entering 2026 include:

- Continued visible use of levy funds
- Seeking timely appointment by City Manager for vacant board position
- Addressing vandalism and safety challenges at high-use parks
- Advancing long-range planning concepts into phased action
- Maintaining public trust following a closely decided levy vote

Conclusion

The 2025 State of the Parks reflects a system that is active, improving, and responsive. Through targeted investments, transparent governance, and community engagement, the Parks & Recreation Board has positioned Ashtabula’s parks to continue serving residents and visitors while honoring public trust.

Prepared for the City of Ashtabula Parks & Recreation Board

Respectfully submitted,
Timothy A. Dibble, Acting Secretary
Ashtabula Parks & Recreation Board



City of Ashtabula – Parks & Recreation Board Meeting Agenda
 Board Chair – Kenneth Vanyo, Sr.
 Board Co-Chair – Earl Tucker

Mission Statement: “Our mission is to provide and maintain, quality Green Spaces and Recreational Facilities while partnering with our citizens, businesses and neighbors to enhance the quality of life for all who live in and visit Ashtabula.”

AGENDA

Date: November 22, 2025

Location: AC Council Chambers

Meeting Called to order (Time): 5:18 PM **By:** Chairman Vanyo

Roll Call of Board Members:

Role	Name	Present	Absent	Term Expires
Council Representative	Jane DiGiacomo	X		N/A
Chairman	Kenneth Vanyo, Sr.		Exc.	11/03/29
Co-Chairman	Earl Tucker		Exc.	5/21/26
Acting Secretary	Timothy Dibble	X		9/17/26
Member	Emory Moore	X		5/21/26
Member	Len Jury	X		5/21/26
Member	Blake Hinkle	X		6/15/28
*Member	VACANT			*****

*Denotes City Manager Appointment x3. Others are Council appointees x4.

Note: Len Jury had to leave early.

Guests: City Manager Jim Timonere

Reading of Minutes from Previous Meeting

Motion to bypass reading of minutes due to email distribution

Motion to Approve – E. Moore Second: B. Hinkle

All in favor - Passed

Any Corrections: None

Any Correspondence: None

Old or Unfinished Business:

Election of Officers: No nominations or elections held due to absence of Chairman Co-Chair and members. Elections to be held at January meeting. Acting Secretary to review election procedures.

Tree Legislation / Ordinance Review: Councilwoman DiGiacomo requested additional review time prior to advancement. Item expected to return after January.

December Meeting: Consensus reached to cancel December meeting.

New Business: None

Specific Park Concerns:

Walnut Beach: (Earl Tucker) rope barriers missing at Inclusion Zone parking area, bathroom vandalism, damaged fixtures, pavilion roof needs attention.

Point Park: (Earl Tucker) Hillside discussion & improvements

Smith Field: (Len Jury) No issues at this time.

Highland Beach Park: (Blake Hinkle) Discussed present infrastructure for benches.

Kaden Park (W.58th): (Tim Dibble) City Manager Jim Timonere discussed reformatting layout to improve access, relocate amenities closer to parking, remove underutilized hardscape, use phased low-cost improvements, add informal walking paths, and return portions to natural or pollinator areas. Informational only; no action taken.

E. 48th St. Park: (VACANT) Equipment acceptable; lease status unclear.

Veterans Park: (Tim Dibble) Veterans Day ceremony successful. Mrs. Foltz expressed appreciation for City Council resolution and efforts by Jim Timonere and Jane DiGiacomo. Pearl Harbor Day Ceremony scheduled Dec. 7 at 12:55 PM (0755 Hawaii time).

LCpl. Cornelius Park: (Len Jury) Tim Dibble reported that while documenting damage to the gazebo, he was approached by a group of thirteen individuals gathered at the structure who **demanded** that electrical service be activated.

Dibble pointed out damaged electrical outlet and other visible damage, advising that these conditions could be the reason the electricity was not operational. Dibble informed the individuals that they could submit a permit request to the City for authorized use of the gazebo.

The interaction escalated verbally. Dibble advised the group that law enforcement could be contacted if necessary, and that individuals who did not wish to appear in damage documentation photographs should vacate the area. The group dispersed shortly thereafter.

South Park: (VACANT) Public Works has restored sightlines; major improvement.

Nappi Field: (Blake Hinkle) Movie night held; turnout moderate. Bench supported by masonry block (liability).

Massucci Field: (Ken Vanyo) No new concerns.

W. 38th St. Park: (Emory Moore) Foundations poured, playground equipment installed, rubber mulch completed. Board consensus to retain park as a City park.

W. 47th St. Park NKA UNITY PARK: (Emory Moore) MFG placed a Boulder with plaque identifying park as “MFG Unity Park.” Motion by Tim, Second by Emory to recognize park hereforth as MFG Unity Park. Board voted unanimously in agreement, requesting city update website and park identification as such.

Anything else for the good of the Parks? Board pleased Parks levy renewal was successful, though outcome was much closer than expected, passing by approximately four hundred votes. Ongoing photo survey noted.

Ken Vanyo has been reappointed to P&R board.

Board is seeking vacant board position to be filled asap so they have a vote in upcoming board positions. This is a CM appointed position.

Next Meeting Date/Time: 1/26/2026 @ 5:30 PM in Council Chambers.

Meeting Adjourned Time: 6:05 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Timothy A. Dibble, Acting Secretary
Ashtabula Parks & Recreation Board

ORDINANCE NO. 2025 - _____
AN ORDINANCE ENACTING NEW CODIFIED ORDINANCE SECTION _____ REQUIRING TREE
REPLACEMENT WITHIN CITY PARKS UPON REMOVAL, PROVIDING FOR FUNDING AND
SPONSORSHIP, AND DECLARING THE POLICY OF THE CITY TO PRESERVE GREEN SPACE

WHEREAS, the Council of the City of Ashtabula recognizes that trees provide significant environmental, recreational, and aesthetic benefits to the public; and

WHEREAS, the removal of trees within public parks reduces shade, beauty, and ecological value of community green space; and

WHEREAS, it is in the public interest to establish a uniform and consistent policy requiring the replacement of trees in City parks when trees are removed, in order to preserve and enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors; and

WHEREAS, the Ashtabula City Parks and Recreation Board unanimously recommended this ordinance to the Community Development Committee as a result of the significant loss of mature trees in City parks due to routine maintenance, disease, storm damage, and past removals, and the Board's recognition of the urgent need to ensure consistent replanting for the long-term health, beauty, and sustainability of the City's green spaces.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of Ashtabula, State of Ohio:

SECTION 1. That the following Section [redacted], entitled The City Park Tree Removal and Replacement Ordinance [Keep Ashta-Beautiful Ordinance] be, and the same is hereby, enacted as a new provision of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Ashtabula, Ohio, to-wit:

Section [redacted]

A. DEFINITIONS.

(1) "City Park" means any public land designated, owned, or maintained by the City of Ashtabula as a park or recreational green space.

(2) "Tree Removal" means the felling, cutting down, destruction, or permanent elimination of any tree, whether due to age, disease, safety hazard, or public works activity.

(3) "Replacement Tree" means a tree planted in accordance with this ordinance, ornamental or small in type, which shall not exceed twenty (20) feet in height at full maturity.

B. TREE REPLACEMENT REQUIREMENT.

When any tree is removed from a City Park, the City administration shall ensure that two (2) Replacement Trees are planted within the same park or, if not feasible, within another City Park as designated by the Public Works Department. Replacement Trees shall be planted within six (6) months of removal, except where seasonal or weather conditions make planting impractical, in which case planting shall occur at the earliest appropriate season.

C. LIMITATIONS.

The requirements of this ordinance apply only to City Parks and shall not apply to:

- (1) Trees located on private property;
- (2) Trees located in residential easements; or
- (3) Trees located within street rights-of-way outside of designated City Parks.

D. FUNDING.

All expenses for tree replacement shall be paid out of the Public Works Department budget, including but not limited to levy funds and other revenues allocated to City Parks. Private citizens, nonprofit organizations, or businesses may sponsor the planting of Replacement Trees, provided such trees conform to the requirements of this ordinance and are approved by the Public Works Department.

E. ADMINISTRATION.

The Public Works Department shall:

- (1) Maintain an inventory of trees removed and trees planted under this ordinance; and
- (2) Establish and enforce standards for the selection, planting, and care of Replacement Trees to ensure their survival; and
- (3) Administer and approve sponsorship programs in accordance with this ordinance.

F. OVERSIGHT.

Failure of the administration to comply with this ordinance shall be addressed by Council through oversight of the Parks budget and related appropriations. In addition, the Parks and Recreation Board shall maintain oversight by verifying that required Replacement Trees have been faithfully replanted in accordance with this ordinance.

SECTION 2. It is hereby found and determined that all formal actions of this Council concerning and related to the passage of this Ordinance were adopted in an open meeting of this Council, and that all deliberations of this Council and any of its Committees that resulted in such formal action were in meetings open to the public in compliance with the requirements of Section 10 of the Municipal Charter of the City of Ashtabula, Ohio, and of Section 121.22 of the Revised Code of Ohio.

SECTION 3. For the reasons stated in the preamble, this ordinance, if approved by the votes of five (5) or more members of Council, shall take effect immediately, otherwise 30 days thereafter.

PASSED: _____

John S. Roskovics
President of Council

Vote:

Yay Nay

Roskovics: ___ ___

Simeone: ___ ___

Foglio: ___ ___

Guerrero: ___ ___

Holman: ___ ___

Mills: ___ ___

DiGiacomo: ___ ___

ATTEST: _____

Stacy Millberg
Clerk of Council

APPROVED: _____

James M. Timonere
City Manager

Approved as to form and correctness this _____ day of _____, 2025.

Ceclia M. Cooper, Esq., Ashtabula City Solicitor