



City of Ashtabula

Ashtabula City Council

Community Development/Economic Development/Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting

Wednesday, September 2, 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. Ashtabula Downtown Development Association
- 4. City Manager's Report**
- 5. Parks & Recreation Committee Report**
 - a. August Meeting Minutes
- 6. Unfinished Business**
- 7. New Business**
- 8. Next Meeting**
 - a. October 7, 2026
- 9. Adjournment**



City of Ashtabula – Parks & Recreation Board Meeting Minutes

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/MINUTES

Date: August 24, 2026
Room

Location: AC Council Chambers – Pugliese

Called to order (Time): 5:45 PM

By: Secretary Tim Dibble

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	Blake Hinkle		EXC	6/15/28
Secretary	Timothy Dibble	X		9/17/26 – E
Member	Len Jury		Unexcused	5/21/30
*Member	Jennifer Shannon	X		5/21/29
*Member	Anthony Oquendo	X		5/21/29
*Member	Jacob Dinsmore	X		5/21/30

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

E – Denotes Term expiring soon – declare intent for reappointment or not.

Quorum of four members established.

Guest(s): NONE

Reading of Minutes from Previous Meeting

Motion to waive reading previous Minutes: Motion by J. Shannon Second: A. Oquendo
All in favor – Passed Any Corrections: None

Any Correspondence/Announcements:

- Board Secretary Tim Dibble advised the Board that he is seeking reappointment and that his current Council Appointment expires **September 17, 2026**.

- No additional correspondence or announcements were received from Council or the City Manager.

Old or Unfinished Business:

A. Hometown Heroes Banner Program – City Discussion

The Board continued discussion regarding development of a Hometown Heroes banner program.

City Manager Jim Timonere has recommended utilizing the same banner company used by Ashtabula Township, particularly following information previously received from Sports & Sports, so the City would be working with a known product and vendor.

Potential locations discussed included:

- Collins Boulevard
- Park Avenue
- Utility poles surrounding LCpl. Kevin M. Cornelius Memorial Park
- Route 20
- Lake Avenue
- The northern portion of Main Avenue approaching Cornelius Park

The newly installed decorative poles in the renovated section of Main Avenue were discussed. Concerns were expressed regarding the smaller available banner size and the relatively low height of the banner mounting hardware, which could potentially create pedestrian interference or make banners more susceptible to damage.

The Ashtabula Township banners were noted as approximately 30" x 60", with an estimated cost of approximately \$160 per banner including hardware.

Veterans Park was also considered; however, there appears to be only one unsuitable pole immediately adjacent to the park.

The Board will continue evaluating possible locations and banner configurations before making a final recommendation.

B. Anna Lundi Memorial

Secretary Dibble reported that he had not yet followed up on the proposed Anna Lundi recognition due to the recent illness and passing of his father.

Previous discussion with City Manager Timonere indicated that the matter may ultimately be referred to the Harbor Museum.

Follow-up with the museum remains pending.

C. LCpl. Kevin M. Cornelius Memorial Park Programming / Splash Feature Concept

The Board continued discussion regarding ways to increase positive activity and family use within Cornelius Park.

Member Jacob Dinsmore presented the concept of using a positive recurring activity as a "pioneer species" to increase legitimate use of the park, place more eyes on the area, and naturally discourage undesirable activity.

Considerable discussion centered on converting or adapting the existing fountain area into a decorative interactive fountain/splash feature.

The Board discussed several possible designs, including:

- Ground-level water jets;
- Intermittent rather than continuous water operation;
- Recirculating-water systems;
- Designs that retain the appearance and dignity of a decorative fountain while allowing children to interact with the water.

Members noted that an appropriately designed feature could serve several purposes:

- Increase family use of Cornelius Park;
- Provide a long-requested cooling/splash feature for children;
- Generate additional pedestrian activity downtown;
- Support programming involving the library, food trucks, concerts and businesses;
- Increase public exposure to the LCpl. Kevin M. Cornelius memorial and other veteran-related features within the park.

Potential alternative locations, including South Park and Kadon Park, were also discussed so that the Board does not limit itself to one site before costs and feasibility are known.

The Board discussed researching comparable splash features, including examples in Cleveland Public Square and other nearby communities.

Potential outside funding sources connected with county bed-tax revenues were also discussed.

Members will research comparable projects, designs, costs and potential funding opportunities for future discussion.

D. Holiday Programming – Cornelius Park Christmas Tree / Parade

The Board discussed participating in the planned holiday tree display at Cornelius Park.

A patriotic red, white and blue theme was suggested for the Parks & Recreation Board's tree.

Council Representative DiGiacomo will seek additional information regarding:

- Number of available electrical outlets;
- Number of participating trees;
- Electrical and extension-cord limitations;
- Deadlines and installation requirements.

Because the holiday season is approaching, the Board agreed that a decision should be made as soon as practical.

The Board also discussed possible participation in the Christmas parade. A Parks & Recreation themed float or decorated pickup/flatbed truck was discussed as an alternative if participation in the tree display is not practical.

For 2026, the Board's first preference is to pursue the Christmas tree while keeping parade participation available as an alternative.

E. Walnut Beach Skate Pavilion

The Board discussed the status of the skate pavilion project at Walnut Beach.

Members reported that donated labor may be available to complete the pavilion roof, leaving the City primarily responsible for approximately \$1,000 in roofing materials.

Concern was expressed regarding the lack of progress despite previous indications that the project had City support.

The Board also discussed reports and photographs of the skate pavilion being used by individuals for activities unrelated to skating, including use as a general gathering/picnic area and reports of smoking.

Members noted that the pavilion itself has nevertheless substantially increased legitimate use of an area that previously had little activity.

Secretary Dibble indicated that he would address the project's status directly with City Manager Timonere.

New Business:

A. Downtown Halloween / "Ghoul Fest" Concept

Member **Jenni Shannon** proposed investigating a future downtown Halloween event similar to Geneva's "Ghoul Fest."

Possible elements discussed included:

- Downtown businesses distributing candy;
- Main Avenue trick-or-treating;
- Trunk-or-treat;
- Costume contest in Cornelius Park;
- Food trucks;
- Face painting;
- Bounce attractions;
- Vendors;
- Halloween displays within the park;
- Vintage or specialty car displays;
- Downtown seasonal decorations;
- Temporary Main Avenue street closure for pedestrian activity.

Council Representative DiGiacomo advised that a downtown ribbon cutting is being planned for **October 22, 2026**, potentially involving the Governor, along with a Chocolate Walk and other downtown activities.

Because of the short planning window remaining for Halloween 2026, the Board generally agreed that a larger coordinated Halloween event should be developed for **2027** rather than rushed this year.

Specific Park Concerns:

Walnut Beach Park: (J. Shannon)

No significant new maintenance concerns were reported.

The Board discussed the absence of a flag on the large flagpole near the concession area at Walnut Beach. Members noted that the flag should ordinarily be flown during daytime park hours.

The skate pavilion usage issues discussed under Old Business were also noted.

Point Park: (J. Shannon)

No significant new maintenance concerns were reported.

Highland Beach Park: (B. Hinkle)

Previous discussion concerning additional seating and signage remains unresolved.

The Board previously discussed use of backless benches in areas where maintaining lake views is a concern.

Nappi Park: (B. Hinkle)

No new report was presented.

Smith Field: (Len Jury)

No new report was presented

South Park: (A. Oquendo)

South Park continues to appear generally clean and improved.

The Board discussed:

- Status of repairs to walking-track lighting;
- Possible need for an additional trash receptacle near the central circle/grill area.

The dramatic improvement in park visibility following trimming and vegetation work was also noted.

E. 48th St. Park: (A. Oquendo)

The deteriorated swing set previously discussed has been removed.

No significant additional concerns were reported.

Clifford Kaden Presidential Park: (T. Dibble)

The Board noted that fencing has been removed and the former garden area has been cut back.

The City appears to be moving forward with allowing portions of the area to return to a natural habitat, with a mowed walking trail potentially being developed through the area for nature observation, birdwatching and similar passive recreation.

Graffiti was reported on the park rules sign and has been reported through the City's reporting system.

A Ward 5 resident also asked about the future of the existing basketball courts.

The Board discussed:

- Preserving and rehabilitating the basketball/tennis courts rather than removing them;
- Opening or improving access from Jefferson Avenue;
- Creating a modest gravel parking area closer to the courts;
- Rehabilitating the existing court surface;
- Possible donation of basketball hoops;
- Salvaging the existing small bleacher frame and rebuilding it for portable use elsewhere in the park system.

Members expressed support for preserving recreational opportunities for youth in the surrounding neighborhood.

Massucci Field / Ballfields: (K. Vanyo)

Masucci Park was reported as receiving considerable use.

Serious concern was raised regarding sidewalks along the park and Columbus Avenue that have become overgrown with grass and vegetation to the point that pedestrians, including persons pushing strollers, may be forced into the roadway.

Members were encouraged to photograph and document unsafe conditions and report them directly to the City Manager, copying Secretary Dibble so the Board can maintain a record of outstanding issues.

Veterans Memorial Park (T. Dibble)

Secretary Dibble reported that the two memorial cenotaphs associated with veterans recognized during the Memorial Day ceremony have been received.

City Manager Timonere indicated that arrangements would be made to install them.

The Board also discussed the success of the 2026 flower plantings. City Manager Timonere reportedly expressed satisfaction with the results, and Mr. Noble has expressed interest in expanding the landscaping program in 2027.

Future plans also include placement and landscaping of the Gold Star and Blue Star memorial markers on opposite sides/sites between Veterans and Cornelius Parks.

LCpl. Kevin M. Cornelius Memorial Park: (L. Jury)

In addition to the splash-feature discussion, the Board discussed the potential addition of a bike rack to discourage bicycles from being left against the gazebo, memorials or landscaping.

W. 47th St. Unity Park: (J. Dinsmore)

- Member Jacob Dinsmore reported that the basketball court is in good condition but identified a need for additional amenities.
- Ideas discussed included:
 - Permanent benches;
 - Bleacher seating;
 - Shade trees;
 - A pavilion with picnic tables near the basketball court.
- The Board recognized that Unity Park property is not owned by the City and that permanent improvements would require authorization from the appropriate Morrison-related foundation.
- The possibility of approaching the foundation regarding funding or construction of seating, trees or a pavilion was discussed.
- The Board also discussed the status of previously planned **Morrison Corvette recognition signage**, which has not yet been installed.

W. 38th St. Park: (J. Dinsmore)

The Board discussed a need for:

- At least one permanent trash receptacle;
- Seating or a picnic table for neighborhood children and parents.

Members noted that the park primarily serves the surrounding neighborhood and that even modest amenities could significantly improve its usefulness.

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9. Future Agenda Items

The Board agreed that planning for the proposed **2027 downtown Halloween event** should begin well in advance.

Secretary Dibble indicated he would develop a preliminary planning timeline for review by the Board.

The possibility of moving the November meeting to approximately one week before Thanksgiving was discussed so that the Board could then recess through the holiday season and resume regular meetings in January.

No final action was taken on the November meeting date.

Economic Development Committee

Council Representative DiGiacomo advised that the next Economic Development Committee meeting will be held **September 2, 2026 at 5:30 P.M.**

Possible topics include downtown development activities and/or discussion concerning homelessness.

Secretary Dibble and other interested Board members indicated they planned to attend.

Secretary Dibble will prepare a Parks & Recreation Board report for the meeting.

Next Meeting Date/Time: September 28, 2026 @ 5:30 PM in Council Chambers.

Meeting Adjourned Time: 7:04 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Timothy A. Dibble

Timothy A. Dibble, Secretary

Ashtabula Parks & Recreation Board