

Newberry Township Parks and Recreation Board May 14, 2026

Meeting Minutes

ATTENDANCE:

Codie Culley, Chairman
Kolten Gouse, Vice Chairman
Karen Hubbard, Secretary
Norm Seitz, Board Member
Aaron Schwartz, Township Manager
Diane Shellenhamer, Board Liaison

CALL TO ORDER AT 5:00 PM

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Board noted that following the previous meeting, a cleanup day was held at Shelley Park. Board Members and Secretary Hubbard were in attendance. Key accomplishments included refurbishing and reinforcing deteriorated picnic tables, general cleanup, and leaf removal near the basketball court. The park was reported to be in good overall condition. The Board expressed appreciation to all who participated, noting the effort was made despite cold and rainy weather.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Bruce Walter, a township resident, addressed the Board. Mr. Walter explained that his property of approximately 2.6 acres sits at the end of a private lane that passes through Newberry Township land. He stated that he has maintained the lane — including plowing, graveling, and trimming overgrowth — at his own expense over the past 50 years, as it is his sole means of access. He noted the Township's Highway Department had recently cleared overhanging hedges, which he appreciated.

Mr. Walter came before the Board with two purposes: to understand the Township's plans for the adjacent land, which he understood was intended to become some form of park, and to explore how he and the Township might coordinate in a way that is mutually beneficial. He also mentioned he is considering donating his property to the Nature Conservancy or a similar organization upon his passing, which could complement any future Township park development.

Manager Schwartz provided an overview of the Township's intentions, describing what he characterized as a Phase 1 plan for the parcel. Phase 1 would consist of redoing the access drive, stubbing utilities, installing a centrally located parking area, establishing a nature walking trail around the perimeter of the property, and converting the currently cropped fields to open grass. Manager Schwartz noted that Phase 1 is realistically a one-to-three-year timeline, contingent on Grant funding. He also described a separate, longer-term initiative to provide a safe pedestrian crossing — potentially a bridge or tunnel — over the road to connect the new park to existing trail infrastructure, noting this would require its own dedicated Grant.

Manager Schwartz indicated that a master plan for both the new park and Shelley Park is being pursued, which would also guide future phases of development. He confirmed that any improvements to the lane and access area would only benefit Mr. Walter's existing access. Both parties expressed willingness to stay in communication, and the Township provided Mr. Walter with contact information. Mr. Walter was encouraged to attend future monthly meetings and to reach out directly at any time.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Motion by Board Member Seitz to approve the minutes from April 9, 2026. Seconded by Vice Chair Gouse. Motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion of prices and process for dog waste receptacles.

Manager Schwartz presented research on dog waste receptacle kits, which include a sign, trash dispenser, and bag dispenser, at an approximate cost of \$200 each. The Board discussed placing four to five units at Shelley Park, prioritizing access points near walking trails and the pavilion and playground areas. The question of whether to place units at White Oak or Dolan Memorial Park was raised, but the Board agreed to focus on Shelley Park for now. It was noted that a sign with "no dogs allowed" at White Oak had been posted without Township authorization and that the Township had been advised it could be removed; however, placement of receptacles there was deferred pending clarity on future park plans, including the possibility of a dog park. Installation was confirmed to be a straightforward post-mount process to be handled by the Township Highway Department. The Board anticipates the receptacles will be in place within 30 to 60 days.

Schedule community clean up day at Dolan Memorial Park including mulch if needed.

Following a site visit to Dolan Memorial Park conducted after the Shelley Park cleanup, the Board determined that the park is in well-maintained condition. It was noted that work done during the prior year's community cleanup had held up well. Manager Schwartz indicated that the Highway Department would be placing wood chips at the playground. Given the minimal cleanup needs and the pending renovation plans for the park, the Board agreed that scheduling a formal community cleanup day at Dolan at this time was not warranted.

Discuss and review the process of bidding for lining both basketball courts.

The Board discussed the noticeably faded court lines at both Shelley Park and Dolan Memorial Park, with Shelley Park identified as being in worse condition. It was confirmed that the Township Highway Department has line painting equipment and would be capable of handling the work without the need for an outside bid. Manager Schwartz indicated he would coordinate with the Highway Department to have the lines repainted at Shelley Park. Repainting at Dolan was considered lower priority given the anticipated park renovations. The Board also briefly discussed the possibility of adding concrete cornhole boards near the pavilion area at Shelley Park as an additional amenity and agreed to explore pricing.

Additionally, the Board discussed the power washing of playground equipment at Shelley Park, which was noted to need cleaning, particularly on the underside. A contact with a mobile hot-water pressure washing unit had previously offered to assist. Chairman Culley indicated he would follow up with that individual within the week to determine whether the work would be donated or bid.

Discuss update on disc golf project with possible presentation.

The Board received a brief status update on the proposed disc golf course at Shelley Park. The project is progressing slowly, as the project lead is still working through layout and basket placement. An expected email with follow-up questions had not yet been received. No formal presentation was available for this meeting. The Board expressed a desire to see the course installed and operational by the end of the season and agreed to continue advancing the project toward the next meeting. Board members were encouraged to forward any input on the course layout to Chairman Culley for incorporation into the planning process.

Discuss removal of dead tree at Shelley Park near lower pavilion

The Board discussed a dead tree located near the lower pavilion at Shelley Park, which was described as a significant liability concern. Manager Schwartz confirmed that the Highway Department has been made aware

of the issue and has plans to remove the tree. The work is expected to be completed on a day when weather or scheduling allows a crew to be redirected and was estimated to take approximately two hours including full cleanup. It was noted that the tree may be pushed over given the advanced state of decay, which could also facilitate stump removal.

Additional Updates — Dolan Memorial Park Renovation

Manager Schwartz provided an update on the broader Dolan Memorial Park renovation project. He continues to work with engineer Bill Rudy, whose team is preparing playground equipment options for Board review. A significant design revision under consideration involves converting the existing, underutilized basketball court into a multi-court pickleball facility accommodating up to three courts, replacing the originally planned single pickleball court. The proposed design would feature a four-foot perimeter fence to maintain an open feel, lighting, and ADA-compliant pathways. The revision would also free up space for expanded parking, which was identified as a future need as park usage is expected to increase.

Additional elements under discussion include a storage shed to house maintenance equipment and a potential security camera system. A utility pole on the property would be used as the power source for those improvements.

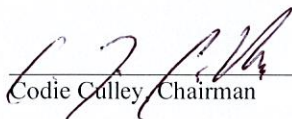
Regarding project timeline, Manager Schwartz indicated that groundbreaking is not expected until next year at the earliest. He recommended that bids be solicited in the fall or early winter, when contractors are more competitive in their pricing. The Board discussed the project budget, noting the Grant amount was approximately \$381,000, and that the Township would need to return any unused funds or supplements if costs exceed the Grant. Manager Schwartz noted that playground equipment alone could swing the budget by as much as \$50,000, and that the team would manage that line item carefully.

Manager Schwartz also noted that the Township is seeking to hire a part-time parks maintenance employee and is evaluating new mowing equipment funded through a \$30,000 parks budget allocation. He indicated that a wider batwing-style mower — potentially 144 inches — could reduce mowing time by half compared to existing 60-inch zero-turn equipment and suggested the Board may wish to accumulate funds over two budget years to purchase a more durable, higher-capacity machine. The trade-in or sale of existing zero-turn mowers was identified as a potential funding offset.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Board Member Seitz. Seconded by Chairman Culley. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,


Codie Culley, Chairman

