

Parks and Recreation Board

September 16, 2025

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order at 5:00 PM

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

Announcements

No announcements were made.

Public Comments

Secretary Harman noted that there were no public comments submitted.

Approval of the Minutes

Approval of the meeting minutes for August 12, 2025

Motion by Board Member Seitz to approve the minutes from August 12, 2025, meeting, seconded by Board Member Rittle. Motion carried.

Old Business

Update of the status of the dog park at Shelley Park

Secretary Harman reported that she had met with Manager Schwartz, Vice Chairman Shellenhamer, Engineer Bill Rudy, and several others since the last meeting to discuss the dog park project. The group had discussed possibly changing the location to make it ADA compliant. She stated that everything has been forwarded to Bill Rudy, the Engineer, and the project would be put on hold until further notice.

Manager Schwartz provided an update on the engineering costs, reading from an email he had just received. He reported that engineer fees would be around \$9,700, broken down as follows: survey at \$2,750, design layout at \$3,000, and bidding and construction administration at \$4,500. Manager Schwartz noted he didn't think it would come to that much and they could probably cut it back, estimating between \$5,000 and \$8,000 on top of actual construction costs. This would include fencing, park benches, signs, ADA access walkway, and waste disposal facilities. He confirmed that Engineer Bill Rudy would handle everything including the bidding process.

Secretary Harman acknowledged the information and noted that since they didn't have it in their budget for this year, it would need to be budgeted for next year to bring it forward to the Supervisors. She promised the board members that the dog park would happen, but they need to take their time to get to that point.

Coordinating the Liberty Tree planting

The discussion focused on who would be responsible for digging the hole and maintaining the tree until it's established. Secretary Harman wished Chairman Culley was present to confirm if he would dig the hole, expressing uncertainty about who was responsible.

Manager Schwartz helped clarify that it would be a single hole for the Liberty Tree. The board discussed that they thought they had to dig the hole and have it ready for the organization bringing the tree. Board Member Seitz suggested they could do a unity dig as a group, and Secretary Harman asked about the size of the hole needed. She noted they would need to figure out how big the tree is, mentioning it's likely about 6 feet tall, not a huge 25-foot tree.

Secretary Harman said she would get more information and reach out to Chairman Culley. During the discussion, a text message was received and read confirming Chairman Culley would dig the tree hole. Secretary Harman expressed relief and said she would coordinate with Diane Shellenhamer regarding the date.

When asked about the location, Secretary Harman and Manager Schwartz explained it would be at a small vacant piece of property at the split in the Y at Newberry Town, near where Paddletown Road meets the Old Trail. This is where the original trees were located. The location was described as a little triangle right on the corner.

Dolan Park – Cleanup finalized and complete

Secretary Harman reported that the cleanup at Dolan Park has been finalized and completed. Since the last meeting, they finished all the tables and applied water sealing coating to them. The pavilion was washed off, with Secretary Harman specifically thanking Manager Schwartz for providing his machine that expedited the process, noting it would have been much more work with just a little power washer.

She stated that everything is cleaned up for now, with the remaining work being beyond their capabilities and falling to the road crew. Secretary Harman thanked everyone who showed up to help, specifically mentioning Mr. Miller (who was absent) and his wife for their great help both this time and last time. She also thanked her husband for all the behind-the-scenes work, noting that the park looks good.

Board Member Seitz brought up that there is a lot of wood along the tree line that needs to be cleaned up. He mentioned that Public Works Director Scott Getgen had volunteered to bring a dump truck so they could fill it for the Events Committee to use for a bonfire at the fall festival on October 4th. Secretary Harman thought this was a great idea for repurposing the wood, noting there's years' worth of wood along the tree line. She confirmed this cleanup was part of what she wanted to happen there and thanked them for the plan.

New Business

Evaluation and cleanup efforts for Shelley Park

Secretary Harman asked if anyone had looked at their schedule for cleanup and requested someone to take the lead on the project. When asked what exactly needed to be done, Secretary Harman explained that when they were there looking at the dog park location, they noticed some tables at the lower pavilions needed to be tightened up and stained. She also mentioned that someone told her the playground equipment needs to be cleaned, as bad as the equipment at Dolan needed. She summarized the work needed: playground equipment needs cleaning; picnic tables need to be repaired and stained - essentially the same things they did at Dolan Park.

Secretary Harman suggested someone go down and make a list of what needs to be done, then coordinate with the group on when they can get started. She said they would need to get the list to Manager Schwartz so they can coordinate getting stain and possibly the water truck, though she noted there is water at the concession stand.

Secretary Harman stated her plate is full right now and she can't take on another big project. When asked about the timeline, she said she didn't want to push it off until next spring and thought it should be cleaned before winter comes. Board Member Seitz also said he was busy but was almost thinking about volunteering, though he couldn't do anything until November. Secretary Harman asked if he minded cleaning equipment in November, to which Board Member Seitz said he didn't have a problem with that.

Manager Schwartz suggested that for things like redoing barbecue grills, they might want to hold off until spring since winter would likely destroy them. However, he agreed that cleaning, especially playground equipment that kids use all the time, should be done sooner. Regarding picnic tables, Manager Schwartz suggested that when it comes to budget time, they should consider replacements versus repairs for this year versus next year. He also mentioned that Chairman Culley would be getting 4 more tables this Thursday for the lower pavilion, which was lacking tables, plus 2 that were in the maintenance garage.

Secretary Harman noted there were 3 or 4 tables down there that were rough and wobbly, broken and needing to be re-nailed or re-screwed together. When someone mentioned there would be about a hundred people down there on the 20th, Manager Schwartz explained they would accommodate the employee picnic (happening the same day as Music in the Park) by moving new tables down, taking 2 from on top, and whatever needed from the upper pavilion. The broken tables would be moved aside due to liability concerns.

Secretary Harman decided to put the cleanup back on next month's agenda to continue discussion. Board Member Seitz agreed to try to get volunteers and schedule cleaning just the playground equipment before winter, with the rest of the work being passed to spring for grills, tables, and staining.

Discussion regarding the budget of 2026 and the possibility of requesting funding from the Board of Supervisors for parks and recreation initiatives

Jane Harman began by noting they have a list provided that evening showing recreation revenue and budget. She explained they don't make money unless there's development, which is how funds come into their account. If there's potential development coming in, they can have funds toward it. She mentioned they have Grants out currently and hopefully will get some Grant money, though some will require matching funds from their current account.

Secretary Harman discussed with Manager Schwartz about possible needs for recreation expenditures for next year, noting they don't have much money to do anything else at this point. This is why she brought up the budget discussion for 2026 - to talk to the Supervisors about potentially putting money toward parks and recreation rather than just relying on development coming in. She stated she would go forward to the Board of Supervisors with this request, though she noted there's no guarantee they would receive anything.

Manager Schwartz provided financial context, stating that finishing this year out with all expenses should give them a starting balance in parks and recreation of about \$200,000 to start next year. Secretary Harman responded positively, saying at that point they can talk about what they want to do, like new tables and different things to enhance the park. She suggested they need to start working on this by next month and asked everyone to bring something to the table and think about what they're looking to do.

Discussion of 5K for 2026

Secretary Harman addressed Board Member Rittle, who had to leave early the previous month. She explained that after much discussion about everything required, the board decided to postpone the 5K until they could put a lot of time into it and make it a great event that people want to return to. They didn't set a date or do anything specific, just need to get the ball rolling with a name and determine if they're still doing it around the dog park theme. Secretary Harman asked for Board Member Rittle's thoughts on still spearheading the event.

Board Member Rittle confirmed he'd still love to spearhead it. He suggested targeting right before school comes back from winter vacation to get maximum participation, mentioning schools get about 2 weeks off after January 1st. Secretary Harman expressed concern about having a race in winter with possible snow. Board Member Rittle noted it's not uncommon to have winter 5Ks and said he didn't mind having something closer to spring either.

Board Member Rittle emphasized he would love to nail down a date or holiday and have it done a year in advance. He explained that the most successful events already know when the next one is and start asking for early registration immediately. He stressed that the farther out they plan, the less pressure everyone has and it's easier to spread the word.

Secretary Harman mentioned that October and November have successful races in New Cumberland - Mickey's Angels Walk/Run and the Turkey Trot. She suggested maybe hitting spring, like the end of April or May, before vacations and kids getting out of school, noting she's not aware of other big races during that time. Board Member Rittle agreed that 5Ks are popular, especially with unique attachments like a dog park. He noted you could see one every month and observed that winter hasn't really started until March in recent years. He suggested having a solid date plus an alternative rain date, with a minimum of 90 days for preparation and marketing.

Secretary Harman said that by next month, she'd really like to have the date set and have Board Member Rittle start soliciting, mentioning people have been asking for a new date. She noted they need official timers and sponsorships for shirts, emphasizing that if they're planning an annual event around the dog park, they need to do it grand from the beginning.

The discussion evolved to consider having the dog walk (possibly a 1-mile costume walk) in the park while taking the actual 5K runners out onto Cassel Road. Secretary Harman explained they'd need to work with the police department about shutting the road down and fill out a special form to PennDOT, but they didn't foresee problems. She noted most official runners would prefer road running to doing laps in a park. Board Member Rittle expressed having zero issues with this approach, agreeing both events could happen at the same time. Board Member Seitz added that he hears some runners are "pretty serious."

Secretary Harman suggested Board Member Rittle could chart a course and think about the best route if he has time before the next meeting. Board Member Rittle agreed, also mentioning that cross country courses are structured with various challenges and surfaces, citing Redland's course that goes on grass and pavement. He confirmed they would chart the property and see what a 5K would be, noting if they need to run more than one lap, it wouldn't be a problem.

Discuss running water in the bathrooms at Shelley Park and what is involved

Board Member Seitz clarified he had miswritten the agenda item, explaining he meant "discuss running water bathrooms" not "in the bathrooms," since they don't have any bathrooms there. He expressed his view that priorities are backwards, spending \$25,000 on a dog park and inviting people for a 5K next year while not having proper bathroom facilities. He mentioned he'd already received a complaint from a friend who had to use the porta potty for a ball game.

Board Member Seitz suggested they should be talking about building a bathroom, which would involve either hooking up to the sewer or putting in a septic system. He noted the water is already there with a well dug. He proposed situating bathrooms between the two pavilions, noting the lower pavilion isn't very accessible either. He acknowledged the concession stand has water going into a holding tank, but emphasized they should prioritize getting proper bathrooms, possibly through a Grant.

Board Member Seitz continued, suggesting the 18-acre park might be a better location for dogs with a walking path that wouldn't cost huge amounts, though acknowledging it would still only have porta potties as a primitive park. He also mentioned issues at Dolan Park where the porta potty by the railroad track keeps getting vandalized and destroyed. Regarding potential bathrooms, he suggested using time locks that would lock and unlock them and not using them in the winter.

Board Member Rittle strongly supported Board Member Seitz's point, stating that full-service bathrooms would absolutely maximize participation in public parks. He noted many people don't go to parks because there's nowhere to use the bathroom, especially considering ADA accessibility challenges with porta potties for people in wheelchairs. Board Member Rittle shared that his family of four has made decisions purely based on not having bathroom facilities, suggesting they would attract a more consistent local crowd with proper facilities.

Secretary Harman raised the maintenance concern, explaining that currently they rent porta potties, and the company is responsible for maintaining and cleaning them. With their own facilities, they'd need a crew to clean them daily and check them. Board Member Seitz suggested contracting a small business owner for this, insisting "this township has to get there" and criticizing spending money on things that aren't necessary. He shared his observations from visiting a nice dog park in Lancaster with artificial turf, trees, and sunshades where people gather daily for hours. He argued Shelley Park is 90% complete and the other 10% is the bathroom - questioning why not finish that before talking about a dog park.

Manager Schwartz provided context from speaking with other areas, noting that unless they have a lot of staffing, public restrooms are a burden on parks from a maintenance perspective due to frequent vandalism. However, he acknowledged they are nice to have. He suggested the park most conducive for a bathroom would be the one off York Haven Road, which has public water and sewer right on the major roadway. Manager Schwartz proposed that if they were to do a bathroom setup, it should be somewhere like that park with a community center attached, so it can be opened on special occasions but locked during other times to prevent vandalism.

Board Member Sietz then asked about trailer potties at the Shoppes at Newberry, describing them as big white trailers that are heated and much nicer than porta potties. Board Member Rittle confirmed familiarity with the concept, noting they're popular at fairs and festivals. Manager Schwartz added he'd been to weddings with them and they're nice to use. Board Member Sietz offered to talk to Angie at the Shoppes about costs, suggesting if a running water bathroom is out of budget due to sewer issues (estimating \$100,000 just for a bathroom), maybe they could budget for these nicer facilities over a 15-year period.

Board Member Rittle emphasized they should consider return on assets, seeing a big opportunity to get popular and offer opportunities to sustain their budget with real recreation revenue instead of waiting for developers. He questioned how much land they must develop over the next 20 years, suggesting it's more responsible to attract recreation revenue than developer revenue.

Secretary Harman agreed, noting that other parks like Dover have pamphlets full of recreational activities including fee-based classes for kids and art classes at the park - that's how they bring in money. The discussion expanded to the West Shore Recreation Commission, with Board Member Rittle asking about it. It was explained that it's a nonprofit renting space from the West Shore School District, offering PCA fees and non-member fees. The township no longer supports them financially (they previously asked for about \$50,000), though they voted 2-3 years ago to stop providing direct financial support.

Board Member Rittle shared his experience from Hampden Township in Mechanicsburg, describing how their pool is packed from open to close and they run programs out of their community center. He suggested evolving into something similar if they're not part of West Shore. He proposed starting with a calendar of events sent out by email (since mail is cost prohibitive), though noting he opens mail more than email now due to junk. He suggested having a full year-long calendar of events that parents and young families would appreciate, like the West Shore School District's calendar that he uses to plan around.

Board Member Rittle continued, emphasizing the importance of return on assets - if they're going to get a bathroom, they need to maximize its usage. He questioned how to attract more people to parks, suggesting if they're averaging 1,500 people annually, can they 10x that? He praised the farmer's market and food truck events, suggesting they expand and evolve these types of things year-round with concerts. He noted that getting people from other townships to invest money in Newberry events benefits them tremendously, giving an example of a thousand people from Dover coming to a concert.

Secretary Harman promoted the upcoming Music in the Park on Saturday from 4 to 9 PM at Shelley Park, featuring two country bands. She encouraged attendance, noting they'll have food and run their own concession stand managed by Tony Miller. She and her husband attended the last one and had a good evening with outstanding music.

The discussion continued with observations about Shelley Park not being a thoroughfare that people drive through daily. Once events start happening and people know that's where township events are held, awareness will increase. Secretary Harman mentioned some people she talked to didn't even know they had a park. Diane Shellenhamer had mentioned they can include information in mailers like electric or water bills about Shelley Park, which could piggyback calendar distribution to cater to both digital and paper preferences.

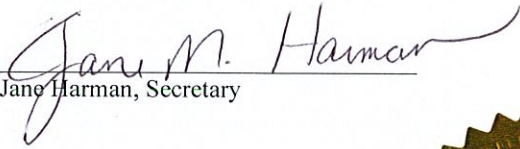
Board Member Rittle suggested looking into whether they get notified when people move to the area, questioning if they know how many people move in and out of Newberry Township. He proposed they should introduce themselves to new residents, suggesting working with the property tax collector who would have this information. He gave an example that if 800 people moved in last year, they should know about it. Secretary Harman thought this information should be available as it's public tax record.

Board Member Sietz concluded by pointing out they're currently paying \$4,222 for portable toilets with a proposed budget of \$6,000 for all facilities (3 porta potties). He reiterated issues with the handicap unit at Shelley Park being destroyed for over 2 months and not replaced as of last week, and the one at Dolan being tipped over several times. Manager Schwartz responded that they were there Friday to fix the toilet dispenser and hand sanitizer, and he now has a new contact with Walters with a cell number to send pictures instantly for quicker fixes. However, he acknowledged it's still an old, beat-up toilet. The discussion about potential relocation of the Dolan porta potty was mentioned but not resolved.

Adjournment

Motion made by Board Member Sietz to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Board Member Rittle. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,


Jane Harman, Secretary

