



City Manager Report

January 27, 2025

Lifejacket Loaner Station

- Exciting news for Oval Beach visitors! Thanks to the incredible efforts of Eagle Scout Anthony Carlotto, we now have a Life Jacket Loaner Station to help keep everyone safe while enjoying the water.
- A huge THANK YOU to Anthony for his hard work and dedication to this important project—job well done!
- We posted about Anthony's project on our Facebook page and the post reached 35,695 users, and was viewed 59,151 times. Great to see positive news travelling far.



Notice of Available Short-Term Rental Licenses

- In August, City Council approved a lottery policy for the issuance of available short-term rental licenses.
- Currently, there are 2 licenses available in Peninsula South (R-1) Zoning District and 2 Licenses available in Peninsula North Riverside (R-1) Zoning District.
- Notice was provided in the Commercial Record on January 23. A copy of the notice was also sent in an earlier eNews e-mail.

Deer Feeding

- A final reminder that the wildlife survey is open until January 31. To participate:
 - Click this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KD5HJ9K>
 - Printed copies are available at City Hall.
- Our neighbors in Douglas recently shared some great information related to feeding deer.
 - Please Don't Feed the Deer: Did you know that feeding deer is strictly prohibited under Michigan state law?
 - Feeding deer, whether intentionally or unintentionally, can result in fines issued by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) if reported.
 - However, beyond the legal implications, feeding deer poses serious risks to both the animals and our community. While it might seem harmless or even compassionate to feed deer, doing so disrupts their natural feeding habits and encourages them to depend on human-provided food. This dependence can lead to an overpopulation of deer in residential areas, which brings them closer to homes, gardens, and yards, resulting in damaged landscaping and increased nuisance complaints.
 - Additionally, feeding deer increases the likelihood of vehicle collisions, as deer are drawn to areas with higher human activity.
 - More importantly, it can contribute to the spread of diseases like Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), a fatal condition that impacts deer populations.
 - Concentrating deer around feeding areas facilitates the transmission of such diseases, endangering wildlife and potentially impacting the larger ecosystem.
 - As a community, it's essential to respect wildlife and maintain a safe balance between nature and residential life. Please refrain from feeding deer and report any violations to the MDNR. Together, we can protect our environment, wildlife, and neighborhoods.

Ethics Policy Review

- The Council has received proposed redline changes to the ethics policy from City Attorney Mills.
- Further discussion and review is planned for the February 5 workshop meeting.

Goals, Priorities, and Strategy

- Last Friday, the City Council held their Strategic Planning at the Saugatuck Yacht Club.
- The agenda and community survey results can be viewed in the meeting packet here: https://www.saugatuckcity.com/uploads/1/3/3/9/133977444/p_1-24-25_strategic_planning.pdf
- The facilitator is preparing a report of the proposed priorities for fiscal year 2025-2026. It is anticipated that Council will review the report at a February workshop, and formally vote on the priorities.

Maple Street Project

- The improvements currently under evaluation include:
 - Road resurfacing or reconstruction
 - Water main replacement (including replacement of services, some to inside the home/building)
 - Drainage and stormwater management improvements
 - Non-motorized improvements (widened shoulders, sidewalk, or similar)
- A review of the options and costs occurred at the Council's January 22 workshop. The details are available in the meeting packet:
https://www.saugatuckcity.com/uploads/1/3/3/9/133977444/p_1-22-25_redacted.pdf
- Based on the Council's feedback on the options, staff will prepare a proposed plan to pay for the project and discuss further at a future workshop.

Airport Property Project

- The Outdoor Discovery Center is still targeting early spring to work on the parking lot, trails, and signage. If the weather cooperates, the overlook may be able to be constructed this winter.
- Based on the consensus feedback from Council, the Parks and Public Works Committee will gather community feedback and recommend a new name for the property. City Council will make the final decision on any name change.

Mt. Baldhead Bathroom Replacement

- The project is now out for bid.
- We are still aiming to start construct this spring, but will be dependent on bid amounts.
- Bids will be reviewed with Council at the February 19 workshop meeting.

Blue Star Trail

- I previously reported that Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) received concerns from a Tribal Nation and MDOT started coordination. The coordination and additional assessment process will be lengthy and construction in calendar year 2025 is now unlikely. As more details are known, MDOT will move the allocated TAP grant funding to future years and evaluate additional funding.
- I recently met with MDOT, Township, and the tribe and provided an update to Council via e-mail.
- Staff is still awaiting further information from the engineers regarding the design budget.

AT&T Cellular

- No new updates for this report. The State Historic Preservation Office review of AT&Ts September 24 submittal remains pending.

- AT&T's decision on the City's agreement request remains pending resolution of SHPO approval.

Upcoming Meetings

Full meeting packets are posted on the City website and Facebook prior to each meeting. When available, they can be viewed by selecting the board/commission:

<https://www.saugatuckcity.com/>

- January 27 at 6:30p – City Council Regular Meeting
- February 5 at 4p – City Council Workshop Meeting
- February 6 at 6:30p – Historic District Commission Meeting

Blast from the Past

- Below is an article that was in the paper on January 22, 1970.
- Joint land use planning with Douglas and the Township goes back many years. We are due for a review and updates, and look forward to Planning Commission and Council direction on how they would like to approach it this year.

Council Okays Planning Work

The Saugatuck Village Council Friday gave approval to the first phase of a planning study contracted by the Regional Planning Commission.

President Lynn McCray said the action means that Saugatuck will forward its \$1,500 for this budget year to the Planning Commission. Douglas and Saugatuck Township earlier had agreed to give \$1,500 each for planning work.

The council, in modifying an objection first made on Sept. 10 to the planning commission's choice of a consultant, limited its approval to work under way.

Clyde Williams and Associates of Indianapolis, Ind., is currently working on a base map and land use study of Saugatuck, Douglas and the township. The work is to cost \$3,200. The planning commission also asked the Williams firm to prepare a contract for a comprehensive plan at a cost of \$24,000 but this has not been executed. The base map and land use study is the first part of the whole study.

The council accepted the first study and its cost but said that before another phase is started other consultants should be considered and be given the approval of the council.

The choice of the Williams firm had been opposed by Councilman Richard Hoffman who was also a member of the planning commission. He maintained, and the council agreed earlier, that the commission should have chosen another firm, Scott Bagby and Associa-

tes of Grand Rapids, whose bid for the comprehensive plan was \$11,500, less than half of the Williams bid. Those who voted for Williams said they were impressed by its presentation.

Efforts to work out the impasse included a dinner conference attended by members of the three local governments and the planning commission and later, a talk by extension agents to the same people. The extension agents said the Williams price was reasonable for the work and urged better communication between the planning commission and the governments.

Councilman Roscoe Funk said Friday that he had not been against the idea of a planning commission but took issue with the procedure in selection of a consultant, "a matter of a few thousand dollars."

He said he has not changed his mind but he wants to see progress, and does not know how to get it unless Saugatuck participates in the planning. But he said, he wants the planning commission to "give a little," too.

McCray, in nominating Councilman Julius Van Oss to a three-year term on the planning commission, said Hoffman had suggested that perhaps he not be reappointed. The council approved the appointment of Van Oss.

Douglas and Saugatuck Township also will have appointments to make to the planning commission as initial one-year terms end.