



CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES

July 22, 2026

The City Council met for a Workshop Meeting at 4:00 p.m.

City Hall

102 Butler St., Saugatuck, MI 49453.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Anderson at 4:04 p.m.

Attendance:

Present: Mayor Anderson and Councilmembers, Dean, Muncey, Peterson.

Absent: Clark, Gardner and Stanton.

Motion by Muncey, second by Dean to excuse councilmember Gardner and Councilmember Stanton. Via voice vote, motion carried 4-0.

Others Present: City Manager Cummins, Attorney Witte, Zoning Director Moore, DPW Director Ondersma and Clerk Wolters.

Agenda Changes:

Motion by Muncey, second by Peterson to move discussion Item 7d short-term rental licensing ordinance amendment and resolution updating penalty fee for late renewal applications, to be discussed at the next workshop meeting on August 5, 2026, due to not enough representation with three councilmembers absent. Via voice vote, motion carried 4-0.

Motion by Dean, second by Muncey to add a consent agreement for sanitary sewer service to 7d. Via voice vote, motion carried 4-0.

Public Comment on Agenda Items Only: None.

Approval of Minutes:

Regular City Council Meeting Minutes – July 13, 2026:

Motion by Peterson, second by Dean to approve the regular city council meeting minutes from July 13, 2026. Via roll call vote, motion carried 4-0.

Guest Speaker: None.

Discussion Items:

Presentation on Oval Beach and Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area Nourishment from Ethan J. Theuerkauf, Ph.D. Department of Geography, Environment, and Spatial Sciences - Michigan State University:

Dr. Ethan Theuerkauf from Michigan State University presented research on sand movement and erosion at Oval Beach, focusing on what happened to the 2024 dredge material and what that means for future nourishment decisions. Using daily satellite imagery, his team showed that the large “lobe” of sand placed on the beach in summer 2024 initially pushed the shoreline lakeward and briefly widened the beach, but within about a year that lobe disappeared from the placement area. The sand appears to have spread alongshore to the north and

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south and, importantly, moved offshore into a system of very dynamic nearshore sand bars. Follow-up field surveys in November 2025 and May 2026, using high-precision GPS on the beach and a sonar-equipped remote boat offshore, documented more than three feet of beach elevation loss in some locations over that period, with much of that eroded material found deposited in the shallow nearshore bars. Overall, the system is “erosion-dominated”: the beach loses sand more efficiently and more often than conditions allow sand to move back from the bars to the shoreline, and recovery (if it occurs) happens slowly over many years. Oval Beach behaves similarly to other relatively natural, unarmored Great Lakes beaches, where sand can still cycle between beach and nearshore; in contrast, armored shorelines tend to lose sand farther offshore and recover less. In response to questions about future Army Corps dredging, Dr. Theuerkauf indicated that, if the goal is to maintain or enhance usable beach width, placing dredged sand directly on or very near the beach gives it the best chance to attach to and nourish the shoreline, while placing it further offshore in 4–8 feet of water is more likely to strand the material in the bar system, reduce its benefit to the beach, and intensify already complex bar dynamics. He has not specifically modeled rip currents yet but noted that changes in bar shape and breaks can be related to rip current formation and said their mapping methods could be used to study that around future nourishment events. The core message was that Oval Beach is a naturally dynamic, erosion-prone system where dredge material placed on the beach can provide short-term and modest broader benefits, but will rapidly redistribute, and deeper-water placement is unlikely to be as effective for beach protection or recreation.

Proposal for Design Engineering Services for Elizabeth Street Improvements:

Director Mark Ondersma outlined a proposed design engineering contract to move the project into the formal design phase for Elizabeth Street. The scope includes installing a new water main, updating sidewalks and surface infrastructure, and extending the sidewalk connection from Allegan Street so it can cross and continue down in front of the school, creating a more continuous and safer pedestrian route. Council Member Scott Dean emphasized longstanding concerns about the T intersection of Elizabeth and Old Allegan, noting poor sight lines for drivers and the lack of a contiguous sidewalk, and confirmed that this route had been evaluated as part of the Safe Routes to School work. Ondersma added that he had previously walked the route with the school superintendent and the engineer to understand safety needs on the ground. In response to Chris Peterson’s question about the trees along Bayview, engineer Jon Moxey said there is no final decision yet and that the proposal includes additional survey work along Bayview so different design options—potentially including tree preservation or removal—can be evaluated and discussed with adjacent property owners during design.

Historic District Sign Proposal & Quotes.:

The Council heard from Zoning Director Grayson Moore about the historic district sign proposal, where he reported that the design remains unchanged but staff had obtained two additional price quotes as previously requested. Despite efforts to find a local fabricator, nearby sign companies would have had to outsource production to national wholesalers, so they did not result in a better option. The comparison showed a significant price difference, with the original vendor, Concept A, still providing the most cost-effective proposal. Council Member Gregory Muncey thanked staff for gathering the extra quotes and highlighted the striking cost gap, and with no objections or suggested design changes, council consensus was to move the item to Monday’s agenda for formal consideration.

Sanitary Sewer Agreement:

On the sanitary sewer service agreement, City Manager Ryan Cummins explained that a property along Blue Star Highway near the Maple/Allegan area intends to build a boutique hotel and is seeking to connect to the Maple Street sanitary sewer. Because the parcel is in the township, the connection requires a consent agreement between the township and the city, similar in structure to the recent fire department sewer agreement but with two key differences: the hotel’s flow will count against the township’s sewer capacity allocation, and no fees are being waived—all connection and construction costs will be paid by the property owner. Cummins noted that the township’s overall allocation is tight but that another project had dropped off, opening capacity, and confirmed with engineers that the existing infrastructure can handle the additional flow.

He also pointed out that coordinating this connection now is timely given that Maple Street is already dug up for work, which avoids having to reopen the roadway later. In response to Chris Peterson's questions, Cummins confirmed that the connection would indeed be at the owner's sole expense and that other nearby properties might request similar arrangements in the future, to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The draft agreement will also be placed on Monday's agenda for council action.

Public Comments: Sarah Edwards provided comment.

Closed Session:

Motion by Peterson, second by Muncey move into a closed session pursuant to MCL 15.268(h) to consider material exempt from discussion or disclosure by state or federal statute. Via roll call vote, motion carried 4-0.

The council entered closed session at 4:46 p.m.

Mayor Pro-Tem Clark joined the meeting at 4:51 p.m.

Motion by Peterson, second by Clark to enter back into open session. Via roll call vote, motion carried 5-0.

The council entered open session at 5:36 p.m.

Council Comments:

Councilmember Peterson thanked Mayor Anderson for her recent comments on the stressed beach town article by WHTC and noted it was very nicely done.

Mayor Pro Tem Clark thanked council for allowing him to be late and apologized for his tardiness.

Councilmember Dean did not have comment.

Councilmember Muncey In his council comments, Gregory Muncey invited the public to attend a community outreach session with Walker Consultants and the parking task force at Music in the Park that evening from 7–9 p.m. He explained that the task force is nearing the end of its work and is preparing parking recommendations for Council, and that information boards will be on display to share concepts and gather feedback. He noted that consultant John Dorsett from Walker will be present (along with his wife) and that musician Don Middlebrook, who helped start Music in the Park roughly 25 years ago, will be performing. Muncey added a lighthearted note that he will be there "blowing bubbles", emphasizing a welcoming, community-oriented atmosphere for the outreach event.

Mayor Anderson noted the meeting was great.

Adjournment:

Motion by Dean, second by Muncey to adjourn the meeting. Upon voice vote, motion unanimously. Mayor Anderson adjourned the meeting at 5:38 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Jamie Wolters, City Clerk