



CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES

May 20, 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 4:00 p.m.

Attendance:

Present: Mayor Anderson, Mayor Pro Tem Clark and Councilmembers, Gardner and Peterson.

Absent: Dean, Muncey, Stanton.

Motion by Clark, second by Peterson to excuse councilmembers Dean, Stanton and Muncey. Via roll call vote, motion carried 4-0.

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

Agenda Changes:

Motion by Clark, second by Peterson to remove item C, Mr. Tringali and Mr. Madhava regarding 534 St. Joseph Street to a future workshop session. Via roll call vote, motion carried 4-0.

Public Comment on Agenda Items Only: None.

Approval of Minutes:

Regular City Council Meeting Minutes – May 11, 2026:

Motion by Clark, second by Peterson to approve the regular city council meeting minutes from May 11, 2026. Via roll call vote, motion carried 4-0.

Guest Speaker: None.

Discussion Items:

Easement Agreement and Ordinance to Amend Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map for a Planned Unit Development Overlay and Associated Plan for 640 Water Street:

During the discussion on the 640 Water Street PUD, Zoning Director Moore explained that the project had received a conditional recommendation from the Planning Commission, largely centered on allowing some zoning flexibility—particularly setbacks—in exchange for public benefits such as maintaining a public access easement along the waterfront. Council members sought clarification on why a PUD was necessary and what standard zoning would not. Councilmember Gardner confirmed that the Planning Commission’s approval was conditional on council approval of the PUD, and Mayor Pro-Tem Clark asked procedural questions about ensuring the public access easement is legally secured

as part of council's approval. Council discussion also noted that the property owner had been responsive to Planning Commission concerns about waterfront access and building design, working to better align the project with surrounding structures while preserving views and public access to the water.

Consumers Energy Request for Easement:

The council held an extended discussion on Consumers Energy's request for an easement to bury electrical lines along Perryman and into the Oval Beach area. City Manager Cummins outlined that Consumers could already bury lines within the existing right-of-way under the franchise ordinance, but was seeking additional easement area on city-owned land north of Perryman and near the beach. He explained that the initial easement language was very broad, granting Consumers wide discretion over tree removal, prohibiting future tree planting, and heavily restricting the city's ability to build or make improvements in the easement area. Concerns were raised about long-term limitations on road widening, pedestrian safety improvements, and future fiber optic installation. Councilmembers noted that the easement appeared to benefit Consumers more than the city and could significantly tie the city's hands on future projects such as paths, boardwalks, or other improvements along the north side of Perryman—seen as the natural corridor for safe access to the beach. While some members acknowledged potential benefits such as reduced outages and lower fire risk from buried lines, they felt those advantages did not justify the scope of control Consumers is seeking. The council's consensus was not to support the easement under the current or only mildly revised terms. Cummins indicated he would relay that council members are not interested in the easement as proposed, and the group agreed that no formal vote was necessary at this time.

Public Comments: None.

Council Comments:

Councilmember Peterson noted the beautiful weather and expressed her excitement that the city is moving one step closer to summer.

Councilmember Gardner highlighted that it was a significant day in town because the ferry had been put in the water, chained in place, and appeared ready for operation. He remarked that the ferry looked freshly painted and "beautiful" as it was launched at the Spear Street boat launch that morning.

Councilmember Clark wished everyone a happy Memorial Day weekend and encouraged residents to enjoy the holiday.

Mayor Anderson reminded everyone of the Memorial Day parade on May 25th and city council meeting on May 26th.

Adjournment:

Motion by Gardner, second by Clark to adjourn the meeting. Upon voice vote, motion carried 4-0. Mayor Anderson adjourned the meeting at 4:24 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Jamie Wolters, City Clerk