



Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes - APPROVED

August 6, 2026, at 6:00 P.M.

Saugatuck City Hall, 102 Butler St, Saugatuck, MI 49453

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Vice-Chair Paterson.

2. Roll Call

Members Present: Baldwin, Dean, Lampen, Root, Paterson

Members Absent: Cannarsa, Straker

Staff Present: Director of Planning & Zoning Moore, Deputy Clerk Williams

Others Present: None

3. Agenda Changes/Additions/Deletions

None

4. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Baldwin, supported by Lampen, to approve the June 9, 2026, Special minutes as presented. Via voice vote, motion carried 5-0.

5. Public Comment

None

6. Unfinished Business

None

7. New Business

A. Coghlin Park – Bike Rack

The Commission reviewed a proposal for an artsy bike rack at Coghlin Park that had been designed and fabricated by Saugatuck High School students which has been reviewed and approved by the Parks & Public Works Committee and City Council. Members were broadly enthusiastic, praising the student involvement, the collaboration with the school's industrial arts program, and how the paint-palette motif fits Saugatuck's "art coast" identity and the surrounding historic context. They confirmed that the rack's scale,

materials (powder-coated metal), and placement would not obstruct views or adversely affect the pedestrian environment or historic character of the park. Commissioners discussed details such as which way the palette should face and whether the “paint splotches” could eventually be visible on both sides, suggesting that might be a good future class project, but agreed those were not conditions of approval. They noted that the idea of additional detailing be shared with the applicant and school collaborators.

Motion by Root, supported by Dean, to approve the applicant’s request for a Historic District Permit for the installation of the powder coated metal CVB Artsy Bike Rack at Coghlin Park, as proposed, based on the application meeting the applicable Historic District Guidelines set forth in §152.07. Upon voice vote, motion carried 5-0.

B. 326 Water - Renovations

The contractor, Bruce Brown, presented a proposal to replace all siding and windows, limewash the stone façade, alter the front gable to a flat roof, install vinyl siding, Marvin Ultimate windows in ebony, Boral trim/soffits, black half-round gutters, and repaint the deck railings. Commissioners initial review focused on compliance with Historic District guidelines: vinyl siding is not permitted, siding should generally be repaired or replaced “like for like”, and smooth, historically appropriate materials are preferred. Several members expressed concern that the proposed changes – specifically the new flat-roofed entry and other front-façade modifications would significantly compromise the house’s architectural integrity. This led to a broader discussion about whether the structure, currently listed as non-contributing, should be reclassified as contributing. The Commission expressed uncertainty regarding the details of the reclassification process and moved to table the application to allow staff to prepare the necessary materials for formal consideration and a vote on the proposed reclassification at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Motion by Dean, supported by Baldwin, to table the application until the next meeting to allow staff time to determine whether the Commission must formally designate the structure as contributing or non-contributing. Upon voice vote, motion carried 5-0.

C. 630 Holland - Fence

The applicant, Jim Beckley, requested retroactive approval for a front-yard fence that had been installed, replacing a previous wood fence with a new vinyl fence of similar location and height. Staff noted that zoning limits front-yard fences to three feet, and that while the old fence at roughly three and a half feet was an existing nonconformity, removing it requires compliance

with current zoning standards. Commissioners agreed that the new fence did not comply with Historic District guidelines because it used vinyl rather than wood and exceeded the allowed front-yard height. They emphasized the need for consistency and expressed concern about setting a precedent following consideration of a similar fence at a previous meeting. They advised the applicant that the fence must come down and that any replacement should be wood, at compliant height, and properly reviewed through both Historic District and zoning process.

Motion by Baldwin, supported by Lampen, to deny the applicant's request for a Historic District permit for the retroactive replacement of the front yard fence at 630 Holland Street, based on the applicable historic district guidelines set forth in Code Section §152.07, including consideration of the fence's design materials and compatibility with the character of the Historic District. Upon voice vote, motion carried 5-0.

D. 249 Mason – Fence

The Commission reviewed the applicant, Terry Walker's, application for retroactive approval of a wood fence enclosing an elevated patio area at 249 Mason Street. The fence had been installed prior to Historic District and zoning approval. Commissioners acknowledged the unique conditions of the former bank drive-through (elevated deck over asphalt, adjacent commercial parking and brewery impacts) and the applicant's goals for safety, noise and privacy. However, they concluded that the fence – at roughly 67 inches high and solid in appearance – did not comply with Historic District guidelines because of its height in relation to the streetscape and its visual incompatibility with the architecture and character of the district, despite the wood material itself being acceptable. Following further discussion staff agreed to follow up with the applicant and provide guidance on zoning regulations.

Motion by Lampen, supported by Baldwin, to deny the applicant's request for a retroactive Historic District permit for the installation of a fence with a maximum height of 67 inches associated with the outdoor amenity area at 249 Mason Street as presented based on the application not meeting the applicable Historic District guidelines set forth in §152.07. Upon voice vote, motion carried 5-0.

8. Administrative Approvals & Updates

- A. 329 Water - Deck
- B. 560 Mill - Fence

C. 888 Holland - Fence

9. Communication

None.

10. Public Comments

None.

11. Commission Comments

In closing comments, Commissioners briefly discussed the new Historic District signage that had been approved by City Council. Councilmember Dean noted that the signs are high quality and suggested DPW use theft-proof fasteners, so they are not easily removed. Commissioners confirmed that three signs would be installed (at Holland, Water, and Old Allegan) and expressed interest in making their installation with a small on-site gathering or “field trip,” while acknowledging they would need to avoid Open Meetings Act issued by treating it as a noticed event if a quorum attended. Planning & Zoning Director Moore added that Concept A had contacted the fabricator and would soon provide an updated fabrication and installation timeline.

12. Adjournment

Motion by Lampen, supported by Dean, to adjourn the meeting at 7:12 p.m. Via voice vote, motion carried 5-0.

Submitted by:
Sara Williams
Deputy Clerk
City of Saugatuck