



**Parks and Public Works Committee
Regular Meeting**

August 26, 2025 – 10:00 am

*This is an in-person meeting at Saugatuck City Hall, 102 Butler St, Saugatuck, MI 49453.
The meeting will also be available live, virtually on Zoom.*

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Approval of Agenda**
- 4. Approval of Minutes:**
 - A. Regular Meeting – July 22, 2025
- 5. Public Comment on Agenda Items Only (Limit 3 minutes)**
- 6. Presentations:**
 - A. Ken Butler – 63rd Street Crosswalk
 - B. John Clese – Pocket Prairies
- 7. Discussion:**
 - A. Mount Baldhead and SHNA Invasive Species/Revegetation Update
 - B. Dark Skies Initiative Update
 - C. Blue Star Trail Update
 - D. DPW Update
- 8. Public Comment (Limit 3 Minutes)**
- 9. Correspondence**
- 10. Committee Member Closing Comments**
- 11. Adjourn (Voice Vote)**

NOTICE:

Join online by visiting:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2698572603>

Join by phone by dialing:
**(312) 626-6799 -or-
(646) 518-9805**

Then enter "Meeting ID":
2698572603

Please send questions or comments
regarding meeting agenda items
prior to meeting to:
scott@saugatuckcity.com

Requests for accommodations or
interpretive services must be made
48 hours prior to this meeting.
Please contact Saugatuck City Clerk
at 269-857-2603 or
sara@saugatuckcity.com for further
information.



PARKS AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

July 22, 2025

The Parks and Public Works Committee met for a Regular Meeting at 10:00 a.m.

Saugatuck City Hall

102 Butler St., Saugatuck, MI 49453.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kimble at 10:00 a.m.

Attendance:

Present: Committee members Charak, Kimble, Hoffman, Roche, Stanton, Thiel.

Absent: None.

Others Present: DPW Superintendent Herbert, Deputy Clerk Williams.

Approval of Agenda:

Motion by Stanton, second by Thiel, to approve the agenda for the meeting July 22, 2025. Via voice vote, motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion by Stanton, second by Roche, to approve the minutes from the June 24, 2025, regular meeting. Via voice vote, motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments (agenda items only): None.

Review/Discussion:

A. Department of Public Works Updates.

During the DPW updates, Scott Herbert reported that they:

- Hired Michelle Gibson as an Administrative Project Coordinator starting August 4.
- Noted Chad Bouwman's resignation from the parks department.
- Currently have limited full-time staff (Scott, Adam, Noah, and Ellis).
- Rely heavily on seasonal staff at DPW and Oval Beach.
- Conducted annual performance evaluations for full-time staff.
- Focused on supporting special events like Fourth of July, Waterfront Invitational, Art Fair, and upcoming Venetian Festival.
- Are actively recruiting for an equipment operator/maintenance worker/Oval Beach Manager position.

The discussion also touched on potential changes to Oval Beach management, including possibly leasing out the concession stand in the future.

B. Project Charter Updates:

1. Mount Baldhead Revegetation:

The discussion on Mount Baldhead revegetation centered on addressing invasive species and replanting native vegetation. Key points included:

- Brian Talsma from Allegan County Conservation District, presented findings at the June PPW Meeting about invasives on the site.
- DPW Superintendent Herbert, preferred a comprehensive citywide approach to invasive treatment rather than focusing on just Mount Baldhead.
- Chair Kimble was concerned about treating invasives before replanting them to avoid damaging new vegetation.
- The committee discussed potentially involving the community in a volunteer revegetation effort, similar to the playground project.
- Committee member Roche suggested getting quotes from vendors who will be assessing Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area to also look at Mount Baldhead.
- The group agreed to get recommendations from vendors about invasive treatment and potential replanting strategies.
- The goal is to address the visible bare spots on the dune and establish native vegetation.
- The next steps involve getting quotes, consulting with experts, and potentially organizing a community planting day in September or October.

2. Invasive Species Assessment:

The invasive species assessment discussion revealed that DPW Superintendent Herbert prefers a comprehensive citywide approach to invasive species treatments rather than targeting individual areas. Committee member Roche is contacting companies to assess invasive species at Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area. The Committee discussed the challenges of treating invasives. They agreed to get quotes from vendors and potentially develop a broader strategy for managing invasive species across different city properties. The overall approach is to gather more information, create educational resources, and develop a long-term, comprehensive plan for invasive species management.

3. Invasive Species Website:

Committee member Charak is developing content for the invasive species section on the website, currently adding Asian Bittersweet as the second invasive species listed on the website. He plans to add 10 or more common invasive species and will create a recommended list of native plants to replace invasives with. He intends to keep the entries simple, with descriptions, remedies, and disposal methods for each species. The goal is to provide residents with clear, actionable information about identifying and managing invasive species in their yards.

4. Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area:

Committee member Roche provided an update on the Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area. She has contacted two companies to assess invasive species and trail updates and sent them the updated management plan and information from the Land Conservancy of West Michigan.

Roche is seeking a third quote following the city's typical protocol. The aim is to have companies visit in August during the growing season and plans for the treatment work to be completed in the fall. They are also considering adding non-permanent directional signage to the area. Roche hopes to get recommendations from the companies about trail management and invasive species treatment. The Committee agreed to move forward with this approach, with the goal of developing a comprehensive plan for managing the natural area's vegetation and trails.

5. Pocket Prairies:

The pocket prairies discussion centered on several key points:

- Chair Kimble reported ongoing work at the Peterson Preserve, noting challenges with deer and bunnies damaging plantings.
- She met with John Cleese, a landscape designer specializing in native plants who suggested:
 - Adding more plants to the Peterson Preserve
 - Creating a deer-resistance test garden to educate the community
 - Potential native plantings for tree bed areas
 - Developing a native planting area on the slope between upper and lower Mason Street
- Randy DeRosa and Tracy Meyers (both local residents) expressed support for the Mason Street pocket prairie location, offering to help with maintenance.
- DPW Superintendent suggested focusing on creating one complete, well-documented pocket prairie as an example for the community.
- Committee member Stanton proposed involving the Garden Club in future native planting efforts. The Committee discussed potential educational opportunities about native plantings and their benefits to wildlife and community aesthetics.

The overall approach is to strategically develop pocket prairies, starting with one comprehensive example, and engage community volunteers in the process.

6. Playground Spinner Placement:

Committee member Thiel reported scoping out potential park locations for the spinner. Coghlin Park was identified as the most likely location, specifically at the dead end. Other potential locations were ruled out, Mount Baldhead Park is too sandy with low-hanging trees, and there is insufficient space at Wicks Park. DPW Superintendent Herbert is going to meet with Jeremy from Sinclair Recreation. He will obtain an aerial view of Coghlin Park and verify safety distances for the spinner placement. The Committee is waiting for Herbert to provide the aerial rendering to make a final determination on the exact placement of the playground spinner at Coghlin Park.

7. Dark Skies Research:

The dark skies research discussion highlighted:

- Committee member Thiel is developing material for an informational web page similar to the invasive species page.
- She is gathering information from the UCC community action team.
- Due to lack of staff resources, Judy is creating the mock-up independently.
- Potential communication strategies include:

- Email blast
- City newsletter
- Social media
- Possible local newspaper articles
- Planning a potential community stargazing even in October/November.
- Committee member Roche suggested exploring collaboration with Douglas and Saugatuck Township.
- Discussed the possibility of a Boy Scout Eagle project.
- Planning to include dark skies questions in a future community interest survey.

The committee sees this as an educational initiative to raise community awareness about light pollution and dark sky preservation, with the goal of eventually developing more formal recommendations or ordinances.

8. Streetscaping:

Committee member Stanton reported that the City Council approved a parking committee, which might lead to future streetscaping suggestions. Stanton also mentioned that Zeeland's new downtown area is an excellent example of innovative streetscaping, featuring:

- Brick streets
- Outdoor seating
- Splash pad
- Outdoor fire pit
- Integrated urban design

DPW Superintendent Herbert mentioned a future deep dive into the Capital Improvements Plan, with Butler Street potentially scheduled for improvements in 2029. Infrastructure challenges include lead service replacements on Butler Street. The committee acknowledged the need to prepare streetscaping plans in advance of infrastructure work. Committee member Roche noted potential funding from parking meters might be reinvested in improvements downtown.

The overall approach is to research other communities' successful streetscaping models and prepare preliminary plans for future infrastructure projects, with a long-term view of enhancing the city's urban design.

9. Blue Star Trail:

Chair Kimble reported that the project is currently on pause due to tribal concerns. A "view shed" walkthrough is scheduled for August 21. Kimble spoke with MDOT archaeological contact who cautioned against expecting quick progress. The contact advised not to anticipate rapid developments. Kimble and Herbert indicated they are waiting to better understand the next steps, with Kimble suggesting they need to clarify the project's boundaries and potential path forward. No definitive timeline or specific actions were established during this discussion.

10. Cook Park Review:

The Cook Park review discussion was very brief and inconclusive. Chair Kimble noted the park is currently underutilized. They are uncertain about the exact boundaries of the park. There is confusion about which parts belong to the city versus the yacht club and Boatworks restaurant. An art installation is planned for the fall. Chair Kimble suggested they need to

determine the park's precise boundaries, understand potential leasing arrangements, and explore ways to make the space more functional. Herbert suggested they might want to get clarity on the park's current relationship and potential uses. No definitive actions were decided, but Kimble indicated she and Herbert would continue to investigate the park's status and potential opportunities.

Public Comments (Limit 3 mins): None.

Correspondence:

- The Committee discussed correspondence from Cathy Brockington regarding invasive species found in Village Square Park.

Member Closing Comments:

- Thiel – She mentioned that she has 2 Garden Club members on her street and offered to discuss the pocket prairie initiative with them. She mirrored Stanton's sentiment about enjoying working with the committee. She did not have any additional comments beyond supporting the ongoing discussions and initiatives.
- Hoffman – He expressed appreciation for the Meyer's landscaping project on the hill and mentioned that he often uses the stairs near their property. He loved the pocket prairie initiative and enjoyed the informative nature of the meeting. Hoffman appreciates being part of the group and he kept his remarks brief and positive.
- Charak – He viewed the pocket prairies project as the first public-private collaboration and suggested that the Garden Club could be a great volunteer source. He mentioned the invasive species website will be up and running in a couple of months. He plans to add 10 recommended native species for trees, sedges, and other plants. Charak appreciates the committee's participation during the meeting.
- Roche - She suggested involving the Garden Club in the native planting efforts and proposed that they could potentially help with volunteer work and maintenance of the pocket prairie areas. She noted the Garden Club's existing experience with annual plantings. Roche then gave a Kalamazoo River Greenway update and reported securing funding partners from Saugatuck, Douglas, Fennville, and Saugatuck Douglas Rotary Club. She explained the goal is to re-energize the Kalamazoo River Greenway plan, which has been stalled since 2018. The aim to create a board to improve collaboration between entities. Roche hopes to create efficiencies in watershed and greenway management and would like to share educational resources across different community partners. She concluded by expressing excitement about the collaborative potential and looking forward to providing more details at the next meeting.
- Kimble – In her closing comments, Kimble expressed excitement about the various initiatives discussed during the meeting. She raised a questions about potentially using the community newsletter to communicate committee updates. She noted they are not yet ready to make any announcements but emphasized her enthusiasm for the ongoing projects. Kimble thanked the committee members for being an "awesome group to work

with". She concluded by appreciating the collaborative spirit of the committee and the progress being made on various community initiatives like pocket prairies, dark skies research, and invasive species management.

Adjournment:

Motion by Stanton, second by Roche, to approve adjournment of the meeting. Via voice vote, motion carried unanimously. Chair Kimble adjourned the meeting at 11:06 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sara Williams, City Deputy Clerk & DPW Admin. Assistant