



CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES

February 19, 2025

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 Stanton (*via zoom*) and Councilmembers Clark, Dean, Gardner, Muncey and Peterson.

Absent: None.

Others Present: City Manager Cummins, DPW Superintendent Herbert, Attorney Witte, Engineer Moxey

Guest Speakers: None.

Public Comment on Agenda Items Only:

Chris Meyer commented on item #6c.

Brandon Simons commented on item #6c.

Jane Underwood commented on item #6a.

Wendy Colsen commented on item #6c.

Bobbie Gaunt commented on item #6e.

Discussion Items:

Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area Master Plan Update:

City Manager Ryan Cummins provided an update on accessing funds for the Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area. When the city purchased the land, remaining funds were placed in an endowment managed by the Holland Zeeland Area Community Foundation, with investment earnings designated for property maintenance. To access these funds, the request must come from the city manager, and the Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area Master Plan must be updated every five years. Upon review, it was discovered that the plan had not been updated since its creation in 2010. Additionally, a required management board had existed briefly but was no longer active. After consulting past council members and a former city manager, Cummins reached out to the Land Conservancy of West Michigan to propose that the council update the plan with continued input from the conservancy.

In October, the Land Conservancy conducted an updated evaluation, identifying concerns such as invasive species, deer impact, and unauthorized trail use. Cummins incorporated their feedback into red-lined updates to the plan, which were reviewed and approved by the Land Conservancy and the Department of Public Works supervisor. He presented the updated plan to the council for review and approval, which would allow the release of funds to address maintenance needs. The Land Conservancy's Conservation Director was available via Zoom for any questions.

Review Draft Update of 5 Year Capital Improvement Plan:

Engineer Jon Moxey provided an overview of the capital improvements plan, emphasizing that it serves as an internal working document rather than a polished, public-facing plan. He noted that while some cities have visually engaging documents, the current format is more engineering-focused for organizing projects. However, if the council prefers a more comprehensive or public-friendly approach, adjustments could be made. Moxey acknowledged discussions about expanding the plan to include equipment and vehicle replacements, which would require additional input from city staff. He described the plan as a "never-ending draft," continuously updated based on completed projects, new priorities, and funding opportunities. The document helps prioritize projects while maintaining the city's healthy fund balances. He explained the strategy of programming major projects, such as Maple Street, every two to three years, balancing feasibility with financial and staffing considerations. Small, quicker projects are interspersed between larger ones to keep progress steady. Moxey welcomed feedback on project priorities and emphasized that cost estimates are preliminary and will be refined over time. He also noted that some projects, such as the Blue Star Trail, need to be added to the plan, reinforcing that it remains a flexible tool to guide decision-making.

Funding Plan for Maple Street Project:

City Manager Ryan Cummins provided an update on the Maple Street project, summarizing key decisions and funding options. Following the January 22 workshop, the Council expressed support for replacing the water main, repairing the sanitary sewer, and reconstructing the western lane while considering a "crush and shape" option for the eastern lane. There was also consensus on installing a pathway, underground stormwater detention, culvert repairs, and repaving the Department of Public Works (DPW) parking lot.

To fund the estimated \$3.04 million project, Heise outlined several sources:

- Township Cost Share: \$1.3 million for main water replacement and related roadwork.
- MDOT Category B Grant: \$250,000 secured for road rehabilitation.
- Water & Sewer Fund: Proposed use of \$900,000, leaving a \$250,000 balance for future projects.
- Local Streets Fund: Around \$1.2 million available from dedicated millage funds, Act 51 funds, and county road millage.
- General Fund: Proposed \$920,000 for sidewalks and DPW lot paving. An asphalt sidewalk alternative would cost \$90,000 more.

Additional funding possibilities include:

- State Grants & Earmarks: A request for Michigan Enhancement Grants has been submitted to state lawmakers.
- Special Assessments: Residents along Maple Street could be assessed for a portion of the costs, with payments spread over 30 years.
- Debt Service Options: Bonds or loans could be used to distribute costs over time, though they come with additional expenses.

While phasing the project is an option, Heise noted that it could lead to higher mobilization and construction costs. The project is expected to start in spring 2026.

Proposal for Professional Services for the Preparation of a MDNR Passport Grant Application for the Village Square Courts:

City Manager Ryan Cummins discussed plans for court improvements at Village Square, a priority for the current and next fiscal year. Last summer, a donor offered \$100,000 to support resurfacing and upgrades, noting the courts were in poor condition. The Department of Public Works had also identified this as a long-standing need. An evaluation found the concrete is in good shape, but other elements such as fencing, nets, and hoops need improvement. The courts are also undersized for regulation play. Engineer Jon Moxey suggested pursuing a DNR Passport Grant to maximize funding and make broader improvements. The donor agreed to cover the cost of the grant application, despite the longer timeline, with potential approval not expected until December or January. A proposal is ready for submission by the April 1 deadline, and Cummins is now seeking council approval to proceed with the grant application.

Request for Comments on Proposed Boat Ramp near Mouth of the Kalamazoo River:

The coastal alliances has submitted a request to the council that they consider making formal comments on the concrete boat ramp request from North Shore.

Public Comments:

Bobbie Gaunt complimented the DPW on tree removal process.

Mayor Anderson left the meeting at 5:50 p.m. and councilmember Dean presided over the meeting.

Closed Session:

Motion by Gardner, second by Peterson to move into a closed session pursuant to MCL 15.268 (h), to discuss a confidential written legal opinion regarding engineering agreements with C2AE. Via roll call vote, motion carried 5-0.

The council moved into closed session at 6:10 p.m.

The council reconvened in open session at 7:14 p.m.

Correspondence: None.

Council Comments:

- Councilmember Peterson noted good discussions and have a good road map to move forward.
- Councilmember Gardner was pleased with the capital improvement plan. The willow tree in Cook Park is completely down.
- Councilmember Muncey thanked Jon Moxey for the CPI and echoed Gardner. He asked about the Saugatuck sign that has been down at the entrance to town in Saugatuck Township.
- Councilmember Clark echoed comments about the CPI. It was a good meeting, and staff did a wonderful job.
- Councilmember Dean echoed all comments about the CPI and an excellent job was done.

Adjournment:

Motion by Gardner, second by Clark to adjourn the meeting. Upon voice vote, motion carried unanimously. Mayor Anderson adjourned the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Jamie Wolters, City Clerk