



CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES

August 6, 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 Pro-Tem Stanton at 4:00 p.m.

Attendance:

Present: Mayor Pro-Tem Stanton and Councilmembers Clark, Dean, Gardner, Muncey and Peterson.

Absent: Mayor Anderson.

Motion by Clark, second by Dean to excuse Mayor Anderson due to her vacation. Via voice vote, motion carried 6-0.

Others Present: City Manager Cummins, Attorney Witte, DPW Superintendent Herbert, Treasurer Bredeweg, DPW Administrative Assistant/Project Coordinator Gibson and Clerk Wolters.

Agenda Changes: None.

Public Comment on Agenda Items Only: None.

Approval of Minutes:

Regular City council Meeting Minutes – July 28, 2025.

Motion by Peterson, second by Gardner to approve the regular city council meeting minutes as submitted for July 28, 2025. Via voice vote, motion carried 6-0.

Discussion Items:

Holiday Lighting:

DPW Superintendent Scott Herbert presented an update on the city's holiday lighting, focusing on the renewal of the contract with Chips Ground Cover. The proposed contract renewal would cost \$23,400 annually for installation, takedown, and storage of commercial-grade lights, with an additional \$2,950 per year for lighting at Wicks Park. Herbert discussed the complexities of expanding holiday lighting to additional city streets, noting that new electrical outlets would be needed. He presented various cost estimates from electrical contractors, with significant differences between quotes. Expanding lighting to all proposed areas could require a \$68,000 investment in the first year, with ongoing annual costs nearly doubling the current budget. Herbert and council members discussed the pros and cons of having Consumers Energy own and maintaining the outlets versus city ownership, with a preference for city control to allow quicker maintenance. The city has budgeted for capital upgrades, which could cover the proposed expansion.

Ordinance No. 250811-A Amendment to City Code - *An ordinance to amend the City of Saugatuck's Code of Ordinances, Chapter 135, to revise and update the City's regulations of weapons to align with applicable law and to provide an exception for the discharge of firearms within City limits as part of a City-sanctioned deer cull, to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.*

The City Council discussed proposed changes to the city ordinance regarding deer hunting, prompted by recommendations from the Tri-Community Wildlife Committee. The main focus was on whether to allow archery hunting within city limits and under what conditions. Council members discussed professional culling as the primary method for deer population control, citing safety and liability concerns with allowing general public archery hunting, especially on small or densely populated parcels

Special Event – Haines Wedding Fireworks Display:

The council discussed a request for a special fireworks display over the Kalamazoo River after a private wedding being held at the Saugatuck Center for the Arts. City Manager Ryan Cummins explained that the application was submitted late, which already posed challenges, but the city's ordinance allows for late applications if good cause is shown. City of Saugatuck staff and safety officials have reviewed the plan and conducted a safety meeting. The City of Douglas, which was involved because the fireworks would be stored there, denied the application due to the missed deadline.

Review of Master Plan Survey Questions:

The council reviewed the draft of the community survey intended to inform the city's upcoming master plan update. Planning Commission Chair Steve Manns explained that the survey was developed over several meetings, drawing on previous surveys and best practices from other communities. The survey includes demographic questions and is organized into sections that align with anticipated chapters of the master plan, such as downtown/economics and community issues. The survey is longer than average, with about 51 questions and an estimated completion time of 30 minutes. The Planning Commission debated the length but decided completeness was important, and they plan to set expectations for participants about the time commitment. The plan is to launch the survey by late August and keep it open through mid-October, with public engagement events scheduled during that period to encourage participation.

Public Comments:

Steve Manns commented on agenda item #6b.

Kevin Tringali commented on recent short-term rental applications he submitted to the city.

Council Comments:

Joe Clark expressed appreciation for the Wildlife Committee's efforts in tackling the complex issue of deer management and thanked the legal team for drafting a sensible ordinance. He highlighted the council's collaborative approach, emphasizing the importance of taking incremental steps, maintaining council responsibility and oversight, and allowing flexibility for future actions regarding deer management.

Gregory Muncey commented that hearing from Steve Manns about larger properties made him more open to the idea of allowing hunting on parcels over three acres, though he reiterated that he does not generally support hunting within the city of Saugatuck. He then shifted to a lighter note, encouraging everyone to "hunt for bargains" at the upcoming sidewalk sale on August 21 and reminded business owners to sign up for the event.

Scott Dean addressed a situation involving his neighbor, Rakesh "Rocky" at 534 St. Joseph, who was mentioned in a letter regarding short-term rental renewal violations. Dean clarified that while he was aware of Rocky's change in personal circumstances last year, he was not aware of the specific issue with certificate delivery. He wanted the council to know about his neighborly relationship and to vouch for Rocky's description of his personal circumstances.

Council Member Russ Gardner praised the Department of Public Works for their work on the Saugatuck sign at the Blue Star Hwy./Holland St. intersection, suggesting it become the permanent sign with upcoming lighting improvements. He highlighted the recent New York Times recognition of Oval Beach and emphasized the importance of making the Oval Beach strategy a yearly priority to maintain its status as a top destination. Gardner also thanked Kevin Tringali for coming to speak about short-term rental renewal issues and expressed hope that the council could find a way to help in that unique situation.

Council Member Chris Peterson echoed the appreciation expressed by others for the council's work on various issues. She remarked on the wide range of topics the council handles—from hunting and weddings to fireworks—and expressed gratitude for the council's ability to work smoothly through complex agendas. Peterson also mentioned her enjoyment in working with Chip's Groundcover again praising their work.

Adjournment:

Motion by Gardner, second by Dean to adjourn the meeting. Upon voice vote, motion carried 6-0. Mayor Pro-Tem Stanton adjourned the meeting at 5:54 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Jamie Wolters, City Clerk