CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
July 8, 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, Muncey, Peterson (*joined meeting at 4:07 p.m.*) and Stanton.
Absent: Dean.
Motion by Clark, second by Stanton to excuse councilmember Dean. Via voice vote, motion carried 5-0.
Others Present: City Manager Cummins, Attorney Witte, Zoning Director Moore, DPW Director Ondersma, DPW Project Coordinator Gibson and Clerk Wolters.

Agenda Changes: None.

Public Comment on Agenda Items Only: None.

Approval of Minutes:
Regular City Council Meeting Minutes – June 22, 2026:
Motion by Clark, second by Stanton to approve the regular city council meeting minutes from June 22, 2026. Via roll call vote, motion carried 5-0.

Councilmember Peterson joined meeting at 4:07 p.m.

Guest Speaker: None.

Discussion Items:
Special Event – Art Coast Food and Wine Festival:
Clerk Wolters presented the special event application for a new event. The Art Coast Food and Wine Festival is planned for November 5–7 at the Singapore Yacht Club. The requests from the city include closing the Mason Street street end, no-parking on Water Street side of the event area for back-of-house operations, providing potable and non-potable water via a hydrant (metered and billed to the organizer); and a noise ordinance exception to allow activity until 11:30 p.m. on one night. Organizers have already coordinated with police, fire, DPW, the health department, and liquor licensing. Council members were broadly supportive, praising the organizers' professionalism. Questions centered on restroom logistics (staff vs. public use), expected attendance (~1,000 people) and parking impacts, and possible transportation solutions/sponsorships to reduce drinking and driving. Mayor Pro-Tem Clark suggested exploring potable water from Singapore Yacht Club's dock system,

which the event production partner appreciated. The item will appear on the next Monday agenda for formal action.

Elizabeth Street Improvements – Planning Report and Option Estimates:
Fleis & Vandenbrink Engineers Jon Moxey and Peter Tierney outlined a comprehensive plan covering water, sanitary sewer, storm drainage, roadway reconstruction, and pedestrian (sidewalk) facilities from Allegan to Francis. On water, a key proposal is to replace an undersized, unknown-age 4-inch main between Hoffman and Main with a modern 8-inch main and to address approximately 17 services under the state's lead and copper rule, potentially replacing lines all the way into homes where warranted. On sanitary sewer, most work is targeted spot repairs and a full replacement of a problematic segment between the alley and Mason that cannot be televised, plus correcting a short sagging section near the school. Storm infrastructure and existing curb and gutter are generally in good condition, with only localized spot work recommended. The roadway has a poor PASER rating (2–4), so staff recommends milling and repaving with 4 inches of asphalt, rebuilding base only where utilities are replaced. Lane configuration and width would largely remain, with parallel parking both sides; diagonal parking and one-way options were explored but found impractical. Three conceptual sidewalk options were presented: (1) simply replacing all existing ADA-noncompliant ramps; (2) creating one continuous sidewalk route from Allegan to Francis by filling the key gap on the west side in front of the Bayview condos (requiring a retaining wall and possible tree and utility impacts); and (3) building sidewalks on both sides of the street, which runs into serious conflicts (steep grades, mature trees, utility poles, and very tight setbacks near some homes). Bayview Condominium association president Richard Crawford expressed willingness to consider an easement so sidewalk and wall work could move closer to their building and preserve the trees, possibly with landscape buffering. Council discussed finishing the missing sidewalk segment on the west side in front of Bayview, improving crosswalks and crossings to the school (with potential four-way stop and flashing beacons), and extending sidewalk in front of the school to Francis. They also discussed doing sanitary sewer replacements while the street is open, to avoid disruption. Staff and Engineers will now prepare a design-engineering proposal and return at a future workshop.

Proposal to Provide Architectural & Engineering Design, Bidding & Construction Administration Services for Wicks Park & Village Square Restroom Renovations:
For Wicks Park and Village Square restrooms, DPW Director Mark Ondersma presented a concept for significant renovations. At Wicks Park, the existing block building is iconic because of its large exterior mural but is aging, has flooded in the past, and is non-ADA-compliant inside. The current plan being explored includes major interior upgrades; bringing fixtures and layout up to ADA standards; relocating electrical and utilities to a central service room; and addressing lead service issues—all while ideally preserving or restoring the mural. Council members emphasized the mural's cultural value and history, advocating for a professional restoration/replication. The engineers suggested that, if not for the mural, they would recommend starting over and estimated a new Wicks restroom comparable to Mt. Baldhead's could cost in the mid-$300,000 range versus roughly $100,000–$250,000 for a deep renovation. Council showed growing openness to the tear-down and rebuild with mural replication concept, while asking staff to consult the Historic District Commission, refine costs, and talk directly with the original artist. At Village Square, the restrooms also need upgrades, new fixtures, improved ADA compliance, siding replacement, and concrete repairs. The council briefly discussed the front metal gate, which used to be locked at night but is no longer used and may not be necessary. Staff will regroup and return to a future workshop with a more concrete proposal and costs for design, bidding, and construction services.

Right of Way Permit Application - 997 Elizabeth Street:
The right of way permit for 997 Elizabeth Street concerned a lot where the owner has planted a substantial landscaping within the public right of way. The existing upright wire mesh fence currently in place is not permitted in the ROW as a fence, so the applicant proposed modifying it by bending the wire mesh over into an arched, greenhouse-like protective cover anchored on both sides of the flower bed, to deter deer and other wildlife without acting as a vertical fence. Council questions focused on how the arch would function, visibility

impacts, whether it would encourage similar requests from others, and if it would interfere with any future need to expand or reconfigure the roadway. Staff noted the installation would be temporary, must be removed seasonally, and could be removed by the city if necessary for public use or future projects. The request moves to Monday's agenda for action.

Mr. Tringali and Mr. Madhava re 534 St. Joseph:
The discussion of 534 St. Joseph Street centered on the loss of that property's short-term rental license after a late renewal and whether the council should provide relief. City Manager Ryan Cummins recapped that the license expired in July 2025; the owner's local agent submitted the renewal after the license had already expired, so the application was ineligible under the ordinance. Earlier in 2026, council had adopted changes to address confusion between the renewal deadline and the license expiration date, but those changes only applied to renewals filed after the renewal deadline but before expiration. Two properties—including 534 St. Joseph—had applied after expiration, so they were not covered. The owner, Rakesh Madabha, and Tringali argued this outcome is disproportionate for what they described as a clerical error in an internal spreadsheet date (January instead of June), emphasized that the home has had no violations and is well managed, and said they reasonably believed council's earlier "amnesty for all affected properties" discussion applied to them. They also stressed the emotional and financial impact, questioned why they first received a mailed notice 30 days after expiration (rather than a warning beforehand), and asserted that the city's own record errors and communication gaps contributed to the problem. City Attorney reiterated that, as written, there is no mechanism to reissue a license that has expired, and the "extraordinary circumstances" provision applies only to the enforcing officer, not to council, so the ordinance would need to be amended. Several council members framed the situation as a genuine one-time clerical mistake and felt the current penalty—permanent loss of the license—was too harsh. Others discussed about precedent, "amnesty creep," repeated ordinance rewrites, staff/legal workload, and fairness to other STR owners who complied or already lost licenses. Staff noted that even after recent education, there have still been a few new late renewals, and that many agents manage to track deadlines perfectly. After lengthy back-and-forth, the direction was to have staff and legal draft an ordinance amendment creating roughly a 30-day grace period after license expiration during which late renewals could still be accepted, subject to substantial penalty fees and without creating an open-ended appeals process to council. The council emphasized that nothing is final until they see and vote on detailed language.

Councilmember Gardner left the meeting at 5:32 p.m.
Councilmember Muncy left the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Kickoff and Review Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Priorities:
City Manager Ryan Cummins walked council through the new fiscal year's adopted priority list and provided a snapshot of progress. Several items are already underway, including planning/design work for Elizabeth Street, interior restroom planning at Wicks Park and Village Square, coordination with the Heart Safe group, which has secured funding for 10 AEDs and is working with Public Works on placement, and continued work on local branding and wayfinding signage tied to the city's new logo and identity. Cummins flagged a few priorities that may be challenging to fully complete within the year: beginning the next phase of Mt. Baldhead steps work (given the upper platform project and other spring construction); advancing a potential deer cull (regulatory approvals, public process, and funding will take significant staff time); and launching a comprehensive zoning code update before the updated master plan is fully adopted. Council members expressed strong appreciation for staff's workload and execution.

Public Comments: Kevin Tringali provided comment.

Council Comments:
Councilmember Peterson thanked staff for their extensive work and specifically appreciating the depth and difficulty of the short-term rental discussion. She believes the council is moving toward handling STR issues in a fair and even way, and that people affected by the regulations will at least feel they have a voice that is heard somewhere in the process.

Mayor Pro Tem Clark echoed that it was a good, if tough, meeting with hard but necessary discussions and noting that is what council is for. He expressed appreciation for his colleagues' willingness to wrestle complex issues together and for staff's execution on priorities. He also commented on the Wicks Park restroom discussion, saying he was encouraged by the idea of a tear-down and rebuild, and suggested that a new structure should visually relate to the successful Mt. Baldhead restroom—particularly the rooflines—so that future wayfinding and facilities have a coordinated look and feel across town.

Councilmember Stanton reported that the logo/branding working group had met again and that a new identity package is progressing. She anticipates a range of public reactions once the new logo and branding are unveiled but emphasized the practical payoff: updated, coherent signage throughout town. She highlighted the need for wayfinding in parks, for directing people to additional parking, and for clearly marking business districts. Even if everyone doesn't love the new logo, she said, consistent signage will significantly improve visitors' ability to navigate Saugatuck.

Mayor Anderson closed by reinforcing that, although council members don't always agree, they generally reach good outcomes and maintain mutual respect for each other's viewpoints, which she values. She thanked staff for their hard work, especially in the busy post–Fourth of July period and noted that it had been a good meeting with substantive progress on multiple fronts. She wished everyone a "happy new fiscal year," pointing out they were only eight days into it, and mentioned the upcoming tour of Maple Street improvements after the meeting.

Following the Workshop Meeting, councilmembers and staff toured the Maple Street construction project.

Adjournment:
Motion by Clark, second by Peterson to adjourn the meeting. Upon voice vote, motion unanimously. Mayor Anderson adjourned the meeting at 6:24 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

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Jamie Wolters, City Clerk