



Parks and Public Works Committee

Meeting Minutes – Approved 6.23.26

June 2, 2026, at 10:00 A.M.

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

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call

Members Present: Charak, Hoffman, Kimble, Roche, Stanton (online), Thiel.

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: DPW Superintendent Ondersma, DPW Project Manager Gibson, Deputy Clerk Williams

Others Present: None

3. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Hoffman, supported by Roche, to approve the agenda for the June 2, 2026, meeting. Via voice vote, motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Charak, supported by Roche, to approve the amended minutes for the March 24, 2026, regular minutes as presented. The minutes incorrectly spelled “Saugataco”. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Public Comment on Agenda Items

None.

6. Discussion

A. DPW Administrative Update:

Department of Public Works Superintendent Ondersma reported that the Chain Ferry is operating, with only minor remaining work. They still have some touch-up painting on the dock on both sides, and they need to paint some fairing strips yellow to address tripping concerns. He noted that Maple Street construction is progressing well, with service tie-ins starting and

pressure testing and surface tie-ins expected around the end of the week or early next week, though no firm dates are set yet. Ondersma also explained that invasive species control work has begun at Mount Baldhead, the Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area, and citywide. Regarding Oval Beach, he said that opening weekend went well overall. There was an initial “cash only” issue at the ticket booth which was resolved by having Frontier check the phone lines and then rerouting the credit card machine through the beach Wi-Fi, after which it has run smoothly without further complaints. Finally, he noted that the Garden Club selected and placed flowers throughout town with assistance from the DPW team.

B. CVB Artsy Bike Rack Project:

Ashley Siebelink from the CVB, gave a brief presentation on the CVB Artsy Bike Rack Project, which began under former CVB director Lisa Mize to create a more visually appealing “artsy” bike rack reflecting the area’s Art Coast identity. High school students in Vince Heiser’s architecture and design class submitted designs, with Tessa Knapp’s design selected and then fabricated by industrial arts students Nolan Lalande and Nick Moore. The CVB had the racks powder coated, and one is now waiting at DPW for installation. Siebelink provided a handout showing existing bike rack locations and asks where the new rack should go, emphasizing that it should be a visible focal point as people enter town. Members discuss options such as the information kiosk area, Village Square, Cook Park, and especially Coghlin Park, noting previous field visits and a desire to have welcoming piece at the city entrance. Ashley noted she is also working on a plaque and dedication with the students and city representatives.

Motion by Roche, supported by Hoffman, to recommend approval to City Council to have the CVB donated bike rack installed at Coghlin Park. Via roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

C. Way Finding Signage:

Committee members Roche and Thiel explained that they reviewed the new signage system in Douglas as a model. They spoke with Douglas staff member Jenny Pearson, who managed that project and is willing to share details and lessons learned. They describe how Douglas first drove around to identify intuitive locations where people need directional help, then created a cohesive system in which all park signs, parking signs, municipal building signs, and landmark signs share consistent design and color-coding, giving the city a unified look. They show photos of examples, including the nautical rope-and-wood fencing used at park entrances to visually tie spaces together, which they feel could work well in Saugatuck (for example, at Village Square). They then did a similar pass on the Saugatuck side, identifying key intersections and destinations where signs would help both residents and visitors better navigate downtown and trail areas. Kimble suggests adding Peterson Preserve to the list because it is hard to find without signage. The group’s intent is for this baseline document – locations and concepts, not

final designs- to be handed off to staff and city council and used by the branding/logo and wayfinding efforts once a new city logo is finalized.

D. Parks – Benches and Table Needs:

Committee members Charak and Hoffman walked through needs, park by park, based on their site visits. They recommend additional benches near the busy Village Square playground, possible small game tables (e.g., chess/checker tables) in the quieter southwest corner, and more picnic tables and benches in underutilized areas of Wicks Park and Peterson Preserve. They also propose adding benches at Willow Park, an extra bench at the Rose Garden, and one bench plus one picnic table at Coghlin Park. The group discusses avoiding cluttering open green spaces, being mindful of DPW's mowing/maintenance needs, and favoring durable composite picnic tables going forward. They explore funding and logistics, including using a standardized bench style, relying on donor "memorial" benches or plaques, checking an existing waitlist of willing donors, and potentially updating the city's donation policy. The next step agreed upon is for Charak and Hoffman to work with DPW Project Manager Gibson to identify bench/table vendors, confirm what has been utilized in the past, gather pricing, and bring back prioritized recommendations that can eventually go to City Council.

7. Public Comments

Lauren Stanton (Parks & Public Works Committee Member- online): She thanked the committee members for their work on wayfinding signage and benches/tables and explains how their efforts will plug into upcoming city processes. She noted that the branding and logo committee meets on June 9, and Roche and Thiels's wayfinding work will help determine where to place new signage once a logo is selected. She is enthusiastic about using SCA bathrooms as public restrooms and sees that as a good candidate for future signage. Regarding benches and picnic tables, she says she and staff (particularly City Manager Cummins and Mayor Anderson) can work with Mark to review and update the donation/memorial policy, including standardized plaques and options for benches, picnic tables, and possibly Adirondack chairs. She suggests that once pricing and preferred products are identified, they will ensure the policy is current and bring it to council as an agenda item so community donations can help fund these amenities.

8. Correspondence

None.

9. Member Closing Comments

Roche: She welcomed Mark and emphasized that the committee is a resource for DPW, then highlights several recent accomplishments: the one-year anniversary of the Wilds and the two-year anniversary of the Village Square Playground, both of which she describes as major community assets. She reports on the first "Krazy for the Kazoo" river stewardship day, where about 40 volunteers spread

across multiple parks removed roughly 250 pounds of trash and 80 pounds of invasive bittersweet. Roche then raised several practical park issues and ideas: promoting the John Woolham Trail as a safer partial walking route to Oval Beach, addressing loose utility lines at the trail crossing near Perryman, clearing downed trees on rustic trails (possibly with volunteer help), and considering whether the boardwalk should be formally named and treated as a destination like other cities' waterfront boardwalks. She closed by thanking the committee for its work and noting how critical the city's parks and green spaces are to local quality of life.

Charak: He said that he feels the committee has done "great work" over the last two months, particularly with the updates and recommendations on parks, benches, and tables. He expressed pride in the one-year anniversary of the Wilds and Village Square Playground and looks forward to the remaining sections of Village Square being completed. He added that he wishes they had "another project" lined up, but notes that summer is here, visitors are arriving, and it is exciting to see how much has been accomplished.

Hoffman: He is very pleased with the committee's work, describing the meeting as "really cool stuff." He specifically praised the signage efforts and the benches/tables planning as great and really important and concludes by saying he is really happy about it all and that it was a good meeting.

Thiel: She echoed the positive tone of the meeting, saying it was a great meeting and that she is happy to see everyone again after a bit of a time apart. She also extends another welcome to Mark and briefly added that she likes the idea of designating the boardwalk as a named designation, signaling her support for that concept.

Kimble: She thanked everyone for their work, noting how well the committee followed through on the projects they had delegated, especially benches/tables and way finding. She explains that a separate planned project to evaluate restroom improvements was effectively paused once she learned there is a 2027 project to fully refurbish both public restrooms, so staff will just handle maintenance for now. She then updated the group on her Pocket Prairies initiative and related native-plant efforts, including planned plantings at Peterson Preserve with Connie Dean using donations from Jeff Scott, and suggests working with DPW Project Manager Gibson to identify additional planning locations and potential enhancements at the Rose Garden, which she feels needs attention and more suitable plantings. She also supports exploring the boardwalk as a designated destination and reviewing the city's donation policy for benches and similar amenities. Kimble closed by welcoming Mark and thanking Gibson for her work.

10. Adjournment

Motion by Charak supported by Roche, to adjourn. Via voice vote, motion carried unanimously. Chair Kimble adjourned meeting at 10:52 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
Sara Williams, Deputy Clerk
City of Saugatuck