



Historic District Commission
Meeting Minutes Draft – APPROVED

April 2, 2026, at 6:00 P.M.

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

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Straker.

2. Roll Call

Members Present: Baldwin, Cannarsa, Root, Paterson, & Straker

Members Absent: Lampen & Dean

Staff Present: Planning & Zoning Director Moore, Deputy Clerk Williams

Others Present: None

3. Agenda Changes/Additions/Deletions

None

4. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Baldwin, supported by Cannarsa, to approve the March 5, 2026, minutes as presented. Via voice vote, motion carried 5-0.

5. Public Comment

None

6. Unfinished Business

None

7. New Business

A. 322 Culver – Expanded Outdoor Dining

The commission reviewed an application for an expanded outdoor dining area at 322 Culver Street. Planning & Zoning Director Moore explained that the wooden dining structure had been put in place prior to City approval and was scheduled to be removed. He noted that upon permitted installation the temporary structure must be shifted so it does not extend beyond the building frontage, and that it will still need Planning Commission approval

and a City Council revocable license. Commissioners discussed their role regarding temporary seasonal structures in the historic district, emphasizing that these should read as temporary, visually lighter, and not compete with the historic building, and they expressed some concern about the mass and relatively enclosed feel created by the low solid walls and floor. The applicant Jim Wohl described a three-foot solid wall with integrated planters, a mahogany stain, and carriage and landscape lighting with reflectors, emphasizing an intent to enhance the corner and preserve river views; the Commission clarified that they do not approve colors but noted that darker tones tend to visually recede. Although staff had initially recommended tabling due to incomplete submittals, the Commission instead approved the request with the contingency that City staff review and approve the final design, materials, and massing to ensure compliance with zoning and historic guidelines before the outdoor dining area operates.

Motion by Baldwin, supported by Cannarsa, to approve the applicants request, with the contingency that he receive staff approval on the final materiality and mass. Upon voice vote, motion carried 5-0.

8. Administrative Approvals & Updates

- A. 118 Hoffman - Signage
- B. 435 Water - Signage

9. Communication

None.

10. Public Comments

None.

11. Commission Comments

In closing comments, the commission revisited the “slippery slope” concern around temporary outdoor structures, noting that some recent installations in town feel quite substantial and can visually compete with contributing historic buildings, even if they are technically temporary. They discussed the need to think ahead about precedent – how approving more solid or elaborate seasonal structures now could make it harder to push back on future proposals – and Commissioner Cannarsa suggested that developing clearer, consistent guidelines for outdoor dining structures might help. Commissioners also emphasized that application packets should be complete before items are placed on agendas so that the public has a fair chance to review what is being proposed, and so late materials do not appear for the first time at the meeting.

12. Adjournment

Motion by Root, supported by Cannarsa, to adjourn at 6:26 p.m. Via voice vote, motion carried 5-0.

Submitted by:

Sara Williams

Deputy Clerk

City of Saugatuck