



City Manager Report

January 13, 2025

City Manager Reports

- New this year! Every two to three weeks, City Manager reports will be shared via e-mail and put on the City website to help keep the community informed. If you have any questions about this report, please e-mail the City Manager at rcummins@saugatuckcity.com

Audit

- The audit was presented at the January 8 workshop meeting. In short, the auditor advised the City bookkeeping is in “very good shape” and there were only three adjusting entries which the auditor described as “very good”. The auditor also noted the City’s net position increased by \$1,519,966, the general fund balance (savings) increased by over \$400,000, and the auditor feels the use of MIClass for investment of the City’s savings is safe.
- The general fund has \$6,258,658 (\$1,000,000 of which is committed for parks).
- The major street fund has \$780,669, and local streets has \$2,249,674.
- The water/sewer fund has \$579,449.
- The motor pool fund has \$1,229,216.
- A lot of large capital projects, including Maple Street, are in the works that will use large sums of the fund balances.
- Next year, staff will work to have the audit presentation at a regular meeting instead of a workshop meeting.
- A copy of the audit can be found here: <https://treas-secure.state.mi.us/DocumentSearch>

Ethics Policy Review

- The Council has received proposed redline changes to the ethics policy from City Attorney Mills.
- Council’s proposed changes are requested by January 22.
- Further discussion and review is planned for the February 5 workshop meeting.

Village Square Playground Appeal

- We received an opinion and order from the court in the Maplewood Hotel’s appeal of the Historic District Commissions May 7, 2024 decision to approve additional features for the playground.

- The court concluded:
 1. Maplewood Hotel has standing to bring the appeal.
 2. The May 7, 2024 decision of the City of Saugatuck Historic District Commission was not contrary to law, was supported by competent, material, and substantial evidence on the whole record, was not arbitrary or capricious, was not clearly an abuse of discretion, or was otherwise affected by a substantial and material error of law;
 3. The May 7, 2024 decision of the City of Saugatuck Historic District Commission was proper and in compliance with Chapter 152 of the City's Ordinances pertaining to Historic District Regulations; and
 4. The May 7, 2024 decision of the Historic District Commission is AFFIRMED and the Maplewood's request for relief is DENIED.

Goals, Priorities, and Strategy

- The Strategic Planning meeting with a facilitator is scheduled for January 24 from 8:30a-4p at the Saugatuck Yacht Club. The planned location is the Saugatuck Yacht Club.
- The community survey is open until Monday, January 13. We have received 156 responses so far, which is in line with the average for past surveys. Paper copies are available at City Hall. Here is the link to take the survey online:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/C89W6HZ>
- The agenda and survey results will be provided in a packet in advance of the meeting.

Maple Street Project

- The improvements currently under evaluation include:
 - Road resurfacing or reconstruction
 - Water main replacement (including replacement of services, some to inside the home/building)
 - Drainage and stormwater management improvements
 - Non-motorized improvements (widened shoulders, sidewalk, or similar)
- A review of the options and costs is planned for the January 22 workshop.
- Staff have sent an invitation to the presentation to property owners along Maple and the general public.

Airport Property Project

- The Outdoor Discovery Center (ODC) received zoning permits from the Township.
- The ODC advised they are targeting early spring to work on the parking lot. If the weather cooperates, the overlook may be able to be constructed this winter as well.

Mt. Baldhead Bathroom Replacement

- The project will be going out for bid soon.
- Our engineer will go over the plans at the January 22 workshop meeting.

- We are still aiming to start construction this spring, but will be dependent on bid amounts.

Blue Star Trail

- I previously reported that MDOT received concerns from a Tribal Nation and MDOT started coordination. Staff, our engineer (C2AE), the Township, and Friends of the Blue Star Trail met with MDOT officials in December to discuss the tribal coordination process and options. The coordination and additional assessment process will be lengthy and construction in calendar year 2025 is now unlikely. As more details are known, MDOT will move the allocated funding to future years and evaluate additional funding.
- The Friends of the Blue Star Trail, Township, and City met with C2AE this week to discuss design budget and costs. Further evaluation will occur after meeting with the tribe.
- I have a meeting with MDOT, Township, and the tribe scheduled in January.

AT&T Cellular in Mt. Baldhead Radome

- State Historic Preservation Office review of AT&Ts September 24 submittal remains pending. AT&T is still working with SHPO for an updated date for completion of their review.
- AT&T's decision on the City's lease agreement request remains pending resolution of SHPO approval.

New Council Member Orientation

- A big thank you to Council Members Clark and Peterson for joining us for new council member orientation.
- I really appreciate the help of so many staff and partners as well including the Director of Planning/Zoning, Department of Public Works Superintendent, City Attorney, Sheriff, Clerk, Treasurer, Fire Department and Kalamazoo Lake Water-Sewer Authority.

Tri-Community Wildlife Survey

- In response to concerns about the deer population, the City of Douglas, City of Saugatuck, and Saugatuck Township have formed the Tri-Community Wildlife Committee.
- They are encouraging everyone to share their thoughts, experiences, and opinions by completing the Deer Survey. The survey results will be presented to the Tri-Community Wildlife Committee in February for review and discussion.
- The survey is open until January 31. To participate:
 - Click this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KD5HJ9K>
 - Printed copies are available at City Hall.

Upcoming Meetings

Full meeting packets are posted on the City website and Facebook prior to each meeting. When available, they can be viewed by selecting the board/commission:

<https://www.saugatuckcity.com/>

- January 13 at 6:30p –City Council Regular Meeting
- January 16 at 6:30p – Planning Commission Meeting
- January 21 at 8:30a – Parks and Public Works Special Meeting
- January 22 at 4p – City Council Workshop Meeting
- January 24 at 8:30a – City Council Strategic Planning Meeting

Blast from the Past

- Below is an article that was in the paper on January 5, 1967.
- Marketing the area and its brand is a hard job. We are planning on the Executive Director of the Convention and Visitors being a guest speaker at the Council's January 27 regular meeting.

TV SHOW ABOUT SAUGATUCK RAISES CONTROVERSARY McCray tried to stop airing of 'Hot Town - Summer in Saugatuck'

WOOD-TV in Grand Rapids presented a special 30-minute color film about Saugatuck last Saturday afternoon at 2 P.M. The show entitled "Hot Town - Summer in Saugatuck" examined the weekend summer activities here of the college age students. The Crow Bar at the Coral Gables was established as the center of activity and the basic format of the documentary type show featured Tom Johnson, owner of the Coral Gables explaining his reason for catering to the young people. He supported his belief that the future of this town and the area rests in the cultivation of the

younger set. Immediately following each of Johnson's remarks Lynn McCray, Saugatuck's president, responded with a rebuttal of sorts to lend support to the other view that Saugatuck should cater more to families in developing the Village resort business. Throughout the film, typical scenes of the youthful invasion were presented leaving the viewer with the feeling that Saugatuck is indeed "where the action is". Tom Johnson made several interesting observations about the village and his college age customers. Among his observations were: 1) that

(See HOT TOWN p. 3)

HOT TOWN

Saugatuck was a college hang-out long before he bought Coral Gables seven years ago. In fact, he says he heard about the place from several college friends at MSU.

2) that Saugatuck really wasn't much of a family resort. He blamed a lack of facilities here appealing to the family. 3) that most of the trouble makers that came here are really not college students at all - only teenagers and drop-outs trying to pass themselves off as college students by wearing school sweatshirts. 4) that he feels the village is well controlled now and that he sees very little trouble here.

Lynn McCray's rebuttal comments included his view that the village welcomes the younger set (and always has) but that the village expects them to act their age and respect local laws. Something, McCray added, that our youthful visitors don't always do. McCray also discussed the recent formation of the Saugatuck-Douglas Civic Association. The entire 30 minute film presentation was liberally seasoned with close-up views of scantily attired girls and the rock and roll music that's so often a part of our summer scene.

A portion of the show dealt with the opinion of a Western Michigan Professor of Sociology who characterized the typical crowd behavior of the young people that jam in here over the Memorial, July 4th and Labor Day weekend. The Professor said collective irrational behavior, an irresponsible "they can't jail

us all" attitude, and drinking and milling can lead to crowd disturbances similar to those recently in Harlem, Watts and Fort Lauderdale.

The program closed by presenting a question that no doubt will see some sort of answer in the months ahead. The narrator asked the question of whether or not Saugatuck had learned to live in the two worlds (exciting summer-dull winters) or would they adopt a closed door policy to prevent further "Hot Summers in Saugatuck". The answer, they propose, will be decided next Memorial Day.

Lynn McCray said today that when he heard the film's title in pre-show publicity, he immediately set out to do everything he could to prevent WOOD-TV from airing the program. McCray said he was led to believe, at the time the film was shot, that the program was to be cultural and would present the Village in broader terms. Further McCray understood that he would be given a preview of the film before it was aired. McCray called WOOD-TV station personnel in an attempt to prevent the airing and he engaged the Village attorney to threaten legal action, but in spite of Lynn's complaints the program was shown as scheduled.

Reaction to the show in the Village was mixed, but the general consensus was that it was too sensational and didn't present an accurate view of the Village. Other residents offered comments that included: "Well done", "a great commercial for Tom Johnson and the Crow", "Too

commercial", "Terrible", "very accurate", "Amateru-ish" "Just the kind of publicity we don't need".