



Planning Commission Special Meeting Minutes - *Proposed*

The Planning Commission met for a Special Committee Meeting, August 21, 2025, at
4:00 p.m. at City Hall,
102 Butler St., Saugatuck, MI 49453.

1. Call to Order/Attendance:

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

Present: Commission members Baldwin, Clark, Gaunt, LaChey, Manns, & Marineau.

Absent: Commission member Clark.

Others Present: City Manager Ryan Cummins, Deputy Clerk Williams, David Jirousek – online (Horizon Planning), Trent Cunningham – online (Fahey Schultz Burzich, Rhodes).

2. Approval of Agenda:

Motion by Gaunt, second by LaChey, to approve the meeting agenda for August 21, 2025. Upon voice vote, motion carried 6-0.

3. Approval of Minutes:

Motion by Bagierek, second by Gaunt, to approve the minutes for the regular meeting on July 17, 2025, and the special meeting on July 30, 2025. Upon voice vote, motion carried 6-0.

4. Public Comment (Agenda Items Only): None.

5. New Business:

A. 405 Park St – Public Hearing and Site Plan Review for Major Waterfront Construction.

Public Hearing

A. Hearing was called to order by Chair Manns on 8/21/25 at 6:32pm.

B. Summary by Zoning Director:

City Manager Cummins (Interim Planning & Zoning Director) summarized the 405 Park Street application, explaining that the owner is seeking retroactive approval for commercial floating docks installed for a boat rental business. He noted that the consulting planner identified missing details needed for a final determination, including the width of the finger pier, dock capacity, and lighting information, and indicated that further information from the applicant was required.

C. Presentation by the Applicant.

The applicant Dan Cook (owner of 405 Park Street – Casa Loma Resort and Marina) explained the details of their application for retroactive approval of commercial floating docks used for a boat rental business. He clarified that all dock sections are at least five feet wide (exceeding the minimum requirements), and described the weight-bearing capacity calculations, noting that the docks meet or exceed the 100 pounds per square foot standard at various buoyancy levels. He discussed lighting, stating that solar “hockey puck” lights are installed every 10 feet along the dock, with additional solar lights at the ends, even though operations end at 9pm and there is no legal requirement for dock lighting. Cook also addressed questions about the need for further documentation and offered to provide brochures and specifications if needed.

D. Public comment regarding the application:

1. Supporting comments: None.
2. Opposing comments: None.
3. General comments: None.
4. Repeat comment opportunity (Supporting, Opposing, General): None.

E. Public comment portion closed by Chair Manns at 6:46pm.

F. Commission deliberation:

The commission deliberated on the 405 Park Street application for retroactive approval of commercial floating docks. They discussed whether the applicant’s information on dock width, weight capacity and lighting met requirements, and clarified that lighting is mainly for safety, not a strict legal requirement. Commissioners considered if approval should be contingent on the applicant providing additional documentation, such as lighting details and proof that no state or federal permits are required. Ultimately, they agreed to approve the application with conditions.

G. Commission action:

Motion by Bagierek, second by Gaunt, to approve the application with the following contingencies:

- *Lighting information is provided for Administrative Approval.*
- *Documentation that an EGLE permit is not required, provided to staff.*

Upon roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

B. 204 Grand – Public Hearing and Site Plan Review for Rented Accessory Dwelling Unit.

Public Hearing

A. Hearing was called to order by Chair Manns on 8/21/25 at 6:48pm.

B. Summary by Zoning Director:

City Manager Cummins (Interim Planning & Zoning Director) explained that the owner of 204 Grand Street is seeking retroactive special land use approval to rent an existing attached accessory dwelling unit (ADU). He provided background on the property's zoning and licensing history, noting that while the property previously had a short-term rental certificate, it was later discovered that special land use approval was required to rent the ADU independently. He clarified that this requirement is now more clearly defined in the city's zoning ordinance, and the current application is to bring the property into compliance.

C. Presentation by the Applicant.

The applicant, Jason Meyers (owner of 204 Grand Street) said that he and his wife have been renting out the attached accessory dwelling unit (ADU) at their property for three years, with prior city approval. He clarified the address situation (the main house uses a Grand Street address for convenience, while the ADU is accessed from Mason Street), described the ADU's layout, and noted that they were unaware of the need for additional special land use approval until recently. He emphasized their intent to comply with city requirements and shared that the rental has been well-received by guests, with his wife managing it as a successful and popular short-term rental.

D. Public comment regarding the application:

5. Supporting comments: None.
6. Opposing comments: None.
7. General comments: Julie Maguire (email).
8. Repeat comment opportunity (Supporting, Opposing, General): None.

E. Public comment portion closed by Chair Manns at 6:48pm.

F. Commission deliberation:

The commission deliberated on the 204 Grand Street ADU application. They agreed the request was straightforward and met requirements, with one commissioner questioning why special land use approval is still required for ADU's, given the cost and the fact that such requests have never been denied. They noted that amending the ordinance should be considered in the future, but for now, the application should move forward as presented.

G. Commission action:

Motion by LaChey, second by Marineau, to approve the special land use request to allow the rental of the attached lower-level ADU at 204 Grand Street based on compliance with the ADU rental requirements of Section 154.092 J, satisfaction of site plan approval standards of Section 151.060, and the positive findings related to the special land use standards of approval in Section 154.080 that are documented in the staff memo dated August 15, 2025. Upon roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.

C. 615 Park St – Site Plan Review.

The discussion on 615 Park Street centered on a site plan review for property improvements in the resort district. The main topics were a proposed change from a wood dock to a concrete dock (to improve flood resilience) and a modification to the foundation shape of unit 12 (from an angle to a squared-off design). The applicant and legal counsel explained the reasons for these changes emphasizing flood protection and construction practicality. Commissioners, staff, and legal counsel discussed whether the foundation change increased nonconformity and if a zoning variance would be required.

Motion by LaChey, second by Gaunt to approve the site plan amendment, including the concrete dock and a change to the shape and configuration of the foundation supporting Unit 12, with the following conditions:

- *The change to the shape and configuration of the foundation supporting Unit 12 is contingent upon the applicant obtaining a waterfront setback variance for the expansion of a nonconforming structure into the required 25' waterfront setback area and documentation of original or demonstrating zoning compliance to the satisfaction of the zoning administrator.*
- *Installation of a concrete dock is approved and allowable, independently from the conditionally approved changes related to unit 12.*
- *All changes are subject to approval by all applicable city departments and EGLE.*

Upon roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.

6. Old Business:

A. Master Plan Discussion:

The discussion on the Master Plan focused on finalizing and promoting a community survey, with the goal of distributing it before the end of August to gather input ahead of a planned open house in late September. Commissioners and staff discussed strategies for maximizing participation, including email blasts, newspaper ads, flyers, social media, and possibly a mailer with a QR code. They also considered ways to incentivize survey completion and ensure accessibility for residents without internet access. The group reviewed the need to send an "intent to plan" notice to neighboring communities and agencies as required by law. Additionally, they discussed the design and objectives of the open house, including interactive

stations to collect feedback on city priorities, land use, mobility, and community character. The aim is to inform and involve the public in shaping the new Master Plan.

B. Commercial Zoning Districts:

The discussion on Commercial Zoning Districts focused on a proposal to consolidate Water Street North and East into a new C3 Water Street Commercial District, with updated intent, dimensional standards, and a revised list of permitted and special uses. Commissioners debated the appropriateness of allowing single-family dwellings, restaurants, and indoor recreation as permitted or special uses, and considered the impact of new

7. Communications: None.

8. Reports of Officers and Committees: None.

9. Public Comments: None.

10. Commissioner Comments:

- Commissioner LaChey: Announced that he will not be at the September meeting.
- Chair Manns: He thanked the commission and staff for their preparation and flexibility in handling agenda items, especially their willingness to table issues or allow administrative approvals when appropriate. He also welcomed the new planning commissioner, Grayson, highlighting his strong background and skills, and expressed enthusiasm about working with him in the future.

11. Adjournment:

Motion by Gaunt, second by LaChey, to approve adjournment of the meeting. Upon voice vote, motion carried unanimously. Chair Manns adjourned the meeting at 8:41 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sara Williams, Deputy Clerk