



Historic District Commission

Meeting Minutes Draft – Subject to Approval

March 5, 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, Dean, Lampen, Root, Paterson, & Straker

Members Absent: None

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

Others Present: None

3. Agenda Changes/Additions/Deletions

None

4. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Paterson, supported by Baldwin, to approve the January 9, 2026, minutes as presented. Via voice vote, motion carried unanimously.

5. Public Comment

None

6. Unfinished Business

A. 640 Water – New Construction

The commission reviewed a revised proposal for 640 Water Street, a new mixed-use waterfront building to replace the existing one-story structure. The architect explained that the design is inspired by historic local fishing tugs, using metal and wood siding, porthole windows, and a transparent ground floor, and that a PUD allowed reduced setbacks in exchange for a new public waterfront. Most commissioners felt the redesign is a major improvement over the earlier submission and now fits the surrounding context in scale, roofline, and character, though Commissioner Paterson

remained concerned that the massing and balconies read as too contemporary and residential for the commercial waterfront.

Motion by Baldwin, supported by Root, to approve the applicant's request for the demolition of the existing building at 640 Water Street. A new building is presented in the application with the stipulation that the Historic District Commission will review the following:

- 1. Final exterior building materials, including siding type & texture, roof material and color, and exterior color selections.*
- 2. Final window and door specs including materials, proportions and glazing.*
- 3. Final details for the dumpster enclosure including materials, height, and screen design.*

Upon voice vote, motion carried unanimously.

7. New Business

A. 890 Simonson – Pergola Installation Application

The commission heard a proposal for a 29' x 17'6" pergola in the rear yard at 890 Simonson, presented by Brian Abraham on behalf of the homeowner's architect. Abraham explained that the structure is an operable louvered aluminum pergola (similar to ones installed at local sites like Marro's and another nearby property), designed to provide shade over a very hot courtyard/grill/seating area while matching the house's modern, rectilinear architecture. He noted the high-quality materials and finishes, including optional wood-grain coatings, and emphasized that the pergola is largely screened from public view and blends well with the existing home. Commissioners asked brief clarifying questions about height and scale relative to the house and, seeing no compatibility issues, were satisfied that the pergola would remain subordinate to the main structure.

Motion by Baldwin, supported by Dean, to approve the applicant's request for the installation of a 29' x 17'6" pergola in the rear yard. Upon voice vote, motion carried unanimously.

B. 2025 Activity Log

The commission briefly reviewed the 2025 Activity Log that that been presented to City Council, with Chair Straker noting that roughly half of the applications were for contributing structures and half for non-contributing, and that nearly all applications in recent years have ultimately been approved – making the 640 Water Street case the first non-approval in some time. He reported there were about 58-59 applications heard last year. Commissioner Dean relayed that Council was very appreciative of the

commission's work and Straker's leadership. The group then discussed that there is no formal inspection program to verify built work against approvals; instead, compliance issues are typically caught informally by staff or commissioners as they move around town. They also touched on when items are handled as staff approvals versus being brought to the commission (with pergolas and significant exterior features tending to come to the board).

8. Administrative Approvals & Updates

- A. 888 Holland – Gravel Parking Area
- B. 248 Hoffman – Little Free Library

9. Communication

None.

10. Public Comments

None.

11. Commission Comments

Lampen: She questioned what the status was for the new Historic District signs. Chair Straker explained that the historic district sign project's design Concept A's specifications are currently out for fabrication bids (with staff exploring in-state vendors and costs per sign) before proceeding.

Straker: The Chair explained how he and Zoning Administrator Moore decide what can be handled as staff approval versus what should come before the commission. Using the 890 Simonson pergola as an example, he noted that while a rear-yard pergola could arguably be staff-approved, they brought it to the commission because such structures can feel architectural and the HDC has historically been scrutinized over similar elements like awnings. He emphasized that when in doubt especially for prominent or architecturally important features (such as the Women's Club front doors) – they lean toward bringing items to a public meeting, while still trying not to waster applicants' or commissioners' time on minor issues.

12. Adjournment

Motion by Root, supported by Cannarsa, to adjourn at 6:39 p.m. Via voice vote, motion carried unanimously.

Submitted by:
Sara Williams
Deputy Clerk
City of Saugatuck