



## **Planning Commission Meeting Minutes - SPECIAL**

The Planning Commission met for a Special Committee Meeting, October 19, 2023, at  
6:00 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: Chairman Manns, Commission members: Anderson, Bagierek, Broeker, Gardner, Gaunt, LaChey.

Absent: None.

Others Present: Deputy Clerk Sara Williams, City Attorney Jacob Witte.

### **2. Approval of Agenda:**

*Motion by Gaunt, second by Anderson to approve the agenda as presented for October 19, 2023.*

*Upon voice vote, motion carried unanimously.*

### **3. New Business:**

#### **A. Short-Term Rental Task Force Report Presentation**

Zoning Director Cummins gave a lengthy presentation on the work that the Short-Term Rental Task Force did this year. He then went over recommendations from the consulting firm, McKenna with the Planning Commission. They then discussed next steps and then went over the details in the report. He said that they really want to give the Commission and the public a chance to digest the report. Cummins says that he will give the same presentation to City Council on November 8<sup>th</sup> to make sure that they're aware and give the public another opportunity to hear about the taskforce and the recommendations. Next month they will pick up the discussion and hear from the Planning Commissioners on what recommendations that they would like to take up, or if there are other things that they think they need to dive further into.

### **4. Public Comments:**

- Mark Klungle (747 Water) – Thanked the STRTF for doing a great job reaching out to the public, which resulted in a lot of involvement from the public. Thanked Lauren Stanton for making it clear that all property owners were able to participate and Steve Manns for making sure that all of their opinions counted because there was an effort to discount the residents and non-residents. He thinks that there was quite a bit of info that was left off of the report and that the reports tilted heavily to caps when the survey voted against caps, and 80% of the taskforce were

against caps. They were talking about caps when everybody pushed them aside and said let's look at that some other time. The other issue with the report is that the Fire Department came in at the very last minute with their input and it wasn't discussed with the taskforce. The stakeholders had no input or a chance to really discuss it. While the report has a lot of great things, it has got a lot of things that are just going to add a lot of costs and really give us no improvement in safety or other issues. Makenna, the consultant group had put a lot of effort in, but they didn't have the ability to generate accurate data. They tried to correct the data in this report at the meetings, but the report had very tilted data in it when it comes to the income for the vacation rental properties, and or the income basically on the rental properties from non-vacation rentals to long-term rentals. That information is 100% off in both directions. That really tilts information, do you pay for vacation rental based off of a 100-day season, they are saying it's a 212-day season, which he thinks is not true. He says that you can't pay for a vacation rental mortgage based on the length of season they have here, but you can make a dent in it and pay a large portion of it.

- Jane Underwood (130 Perryman) – Thanked the taskforce for doing a thankless job, and taking some questions and comments, and maybe even a little anger from some people. People on the STRTF were from a wide-ranging group, she would have preferred that everyone was a resident of the City of Saugatuck. She said that it's the full-time residents that live here that have to deal with the problems created by a number of the short-term rentals. She hopes that the STRTF, the Planning Commission, and City Council will remember the people who live here and who vote.
- Dan Fox (Fire Department) – He gave compliments to McKenna on a well-structured and well-presented report. He said he would like to add a fifth topic and that is figuring out the costs. He said that in his mind it dictates a number of things and closes off some avenues and maybe adds some. He said that the Fire Department is losing money, they are transferring the expense of maintaining safety in STR's to the entire tax base and it's a big number. The costs will continue to increase because we need more people to do that if this goes to once a year. Those people can't just be hired off of the street, there are certifications required. He said they go through this all of the time with the district meetings. Cost is a big deal. The recommendations will add costs and he expects that there are other recommendations that will come out of this that will also add costs. Those shouldn't be looked at as incremental costs or those should be looked at as fair allocation of worthwhile costs that need to be put against the base of their universe.
- Doug Rodewald (413 Hoffman) – He said that he echoes Dan's thoughts. He thinks that the Fire Department portion was actually the strongest of the report out. He found that a lot of the other recommendations were interesting but didn't really address the larger challenge that he thought was actually put in by the taskforce. With five or six of the taskforce members that were not City Council members having some sort of business associated with or having business associated with STR's or real estate. He doesn't think that it is too surprising there the outcome ended up. Rodewald is happy to hear that there are ongoing conversations around what the city should do to assist the full-time residents that do live with them on a daily annual basis now. He also wanted to comment on Mark Klungle's comment, there's obviously a profit in the STR's or there wouldn't be people buying houses and never using them. As a resident, they are very happy or

have part-time residents here. They love them and are friends with them, and they are great. He thinks the bigger challenges are the ones that are just being used commercially. They're being owned by people that never come here, they never participate, or add value to the city. They are paying for that; they are the ones calling the police on them. It's their fire department that is incurring the cost and he hopes that the ultimate recommendations take that into account.

**5. Adjournment:**

*Motion by Gaunt, second by Bagierek, to approve adjournment of the meeting. Upon voice vote, motion carried unanimously. Chair Manns adjourned at 6:58 pm.*

Respectfully Submitted,

---

Sara Williams, City Deputy Clerk & DPW Administrative Assistant