



PARKS AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
January 24, 2023

The Parks and Public Works Committee met for Regular Committee Meeting at 10:00 a.m.
City Hall
102 Butler St., Saugatuck, MI 49453.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Baldwin at 10:00 a.m.

Attendance:

Present: Chair Baldwin, Committee members Charak, DeJong, Johnson, Kimble, & Roche.

Absent: None.

Others Present: City Manager Heise, Superintendent Herbert, DPW Asst. Supervisor Hardy, Director of Planning, Zoning, & Project Mgmt. Cummins, Deputy Clerk & DPW Asst. Williams.

Approval of Agenda:

Motion by DeJong, second by Roche, to approve the agenda. Via voice vote, motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes from 11/22/22:

Motion by Kimble, second by Charak, to approve the minutes from the November 22nd, 2022, meeting. Via voice vote, motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments (agenda items only):

A. Jon Vanderbeek (Saugatuck Township resident): Jon introduced himself as the founder of the Riverwood Council which is a group of local concerned citizens that have pushed for trails, trail connectivity, and more conservation in the area. He is happy that the Committee has talked about bringing him into the Airport Property Study Group. He knows a lot about the history of the Airport Property as well as the terrain. He says that he could be a valuable resource to the committee as he has worked with the Township Commissioners to open the dog park five-acre park that's near the airport into a 40-acre park that they approved last year. He also worked with them to connect to the airport property and properties to the south like the dump site. He has talked to people like Kenneth Butler who are happy to come in. Ruth Thornton, of Land Conservancy of West Michigan, is interested in coming in and looking at the conservation aspects of that property. He also has a good relationship with David Nyitray of ODC Network. He thanked the Committee for forming the group and is excited to see this happen.

Review/Discussion:

A. Department of Public Works and Administrative Updates

DPW Superintendent Scott Herbert updated the Committee on what projects his staff has been working on during the winter season. Brush & Leaf pickup was extended this year due to the favorable weather conditions. They washed, detailed, and relubricated their equipment after the last snow event to prepare for the next. Staff have maintained the Oval Beach parking lot and removed sand from the parking lot because of high winds. The last hired staff member completed his CDL training and has been training with senior staff on the dump trucks. DPW employees have removed the Christmas décor from City Streets and Properties. The trees that are wrapped with Christmas lights on Culver & Butler Streets are contracted through Chips Ground Cover and will be removed mid-April. DPW Superintendent hosted a tour of the garage during the new Council Member Training & Orientation Session to give them an inside look of what they do and the equipment that they use. Staff have also been working on decommissioning their 2009 International dump truck, which they will be selling at auction in the spring. The old truck has been replaced; the new truck just needs to be outfitted with new equipment.

B. Study Group Updates:

- a. Airport Property – Committee Member Roche announced a tour of the Airport Property with Jon Vanderbeek for the study group on 1/31/23 starting at 11:45 am. Everyone will meet at City Hall and then caravan to the Airport Property. The Public is encouraged to attend. She also spoke to Rick Bauer and he has done a lot of research of other types of courses. He has a lot of numbers to reserve the finances behind it, what it costs to do, and also the amount of revenue that actually bring in and drive the economy in tourist areas. He is really excited to do this and be a part of that going forward. Committee Member Roche also spoke to Dan DeFranco (Saugatuck Township Manager) who was also invited to the committee. He likes to hear about all the progress that we have going on in the township parks & trails. They have their own version of this type of group in the township. Per Committee Member DeJong they were also thinking of Ken Butler and Scott Kierzek to join the committee.
- b. Blue Star Multimodal Path – Per Committee Member Kimble, MDOT did give TAP Grant & DNR Trust Fund Grant in the amount of \$300,000. However, the Saugatuck Township's Grant was denied, and the project is now short \$300,000. They will be meeting soon to decide the next steps.
- c. Park Street – Committee Member Johnson said that the Park Street group met on Friday, January 20th to brainstorm ideas. They came up with four tasks to focus on.
 1. Speed – It is dangerous to walk, and the speed limit is too high.
 2. No Walking Paths – Need to work with the character of Park St.
 3. Signage – They don't feel like the street is represented well with current signage.
 4. Chain Ferry – Dangerous.She also praised Scott Herbert and his staff from DPW for their efforts maintaining the West side of Saugatuck.
- d. Mt Baldhead Improvements – Committee Member Johnson would like to get others involved and get their input. Chair Baldwin said there is also opportunity with the Public Private Partnership.

- e. Invasive Species – City Manager Heise said that the Allegan County Conservation has conducted a survey on the hemlock woolly adelgid bug and said that you may see a lot of hemlock trees that are tagged. He said that they have been working with them to allow private property owners to use their service as well. He mentioned that they have a notice in that area if anyone is interested. He and Scott Herbert made a map last year so they can start to tackle treating. Committee Member Johnson inquired on Milfoil treatment in the area. City Manager Heise said that he is recommending to Council that it's going to be a shared assessment but is hoping the City takes care of it on their own without assessing the excise and the shoreline property. They are working on methodology.
- f. Village Square - Playground – Committee Member Roche said that she reached out to Birdie Holley and Anna ? . Anna is the one who has completed some projects and put in playgrounds at parks in the area. She has already been through this process with the community and has a lot of good feedback that she has read in 3 or 4 different playground groups. The builders obviously have to be a big part of the cycle in terms of what is allowable. She thought it would be a great way to start with Anna and Scott and then kick off from there. Committee Member DeJong said that they consulted with Michigan Recreation and Parks Association and they have a vendors list that they work with, a lot of them in Michigan that do playgrounds and designs. So they can use that list as a resource. In terms of a budget, it's good to know what they might have to work with and what they are expected to raise. They will have a wide range of prices and can start with what they think they need and then fill in the gaps.

Review Next Steps: Chair Baldwin said to get a good cohesive plan with study groups together and should have updates the next time they meet as far as who is fully in on these groups and where they are with planning.

Public Comments: None.

Member Closing Comments:

Committee Member DeJong: She is excited to get Study Groups going.

Committee Member Charak – He looks forward to working with the Invasive Species and Airport groups.

Committee Member Roche – She said that there is a lot of interesting and beautiful signage around Saugatuck but they don't necessarily all connect to one another. As the signage conversation continues with the group, she would love to have a collective nature going in there. She would love to look at this from a sustainable aspect similar to when you go to the ODC and all of their signage is made from sustainable materials, which also gives off a values perspective that it is valued in the community. She wants people to come here and be conscious that they come here to the natural beauty and hopefully they will do the right things while they are here.

Committee Member Johnson – She says that signage in the city needs to focus continuity. She would also like the City to do more with Recycling. She says that there is nothing being done on the West side of the river and would love to work with DPW to do more.

Committee Member Kimble – She was unclear about what the Study Groups were supposed to be doing at this time. She is unsure if she is doing what she is supposed to do.

Chair Baldwin – She is excited to be a part of the committee. She has heard that there is a lot of conversation regarding signage, and she thinks it is perfect. Wanted to let the Committee know that for Venetian, fundraising will be going to an environmental cause.

Adjournment: *Motion by Johnson, second by Roche, to approve adjournment of the meeting. Via voice vote, motion carried unanimously. Chairwoman Baldwin adjourned at 10:41 a.m.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Sara Williams, City Deputy Clerk & DPW Administrative Assistant