



**CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
October 9, 2024**

The City Council met for a Workshop Meeting at 4:00 p.m.
City Hall
102 Butler St., Saugatuck, MI 49453.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Stanton at 4:00 p.m.

Attendance:

Present: Mayor Stanton, Mayor Pro-Tem Baldwin and Councilmembers Anderson, Dean, Gardner (entered meeting at 4:06 p.m.) and Muncey.

Absent: None.

Others Present: City Manager Cummins, Attorney Chris Patterson, Attorney James Lamb and Clerk Wolters.

Agenda Changes:

Motion by Baldwin, second by Anderson to move discussion item C after A. Via voice vote, motion carried unanimously.

Guest Speakers: None.

Public Comment on Agenda Items Only:

Ken Butler, Vice Chair/Treasurer of Saugatuck Township Parks Commission: commented on Item #C regarding the landfill property.

Discussion Items:

A. Water and Sewer Rate Studies

In June 2023, the City Council approved Baker Tilly to conduct a \$10,500 water rate study as part of a Michigan EGLE-mandated water asset management plan. Rate consultant Andy Campbell recommended a capital improvement charge to fund future water infrastructure upgrades. Campbell has since joined Bendzinski & Co. but continues to assist with water and sewer negotiations. A new study is needed due to outdated water rates and 1996-era connection fees. Campbell proposed conducting the new water and sewer rate study for the same cost, offering a discount for prior work, with additional costs anticipated for the sewer study. Bendzinski & Co. expressed appreciation for the opportunity and confirmed their commitment to the project through an engagement letter.

B. Development Due Diligence Agreement for Old Landfill Property

The Saugatuck Township Parks and Recreation Commission is considering the City's former landfill site for cross-country running trails. Mr. Ken Butler, representing the Commission, expressed interest in leasing the property to develop and maintain these trails. The Township Parks Commission and Township Board now propose a due diligence agreement. Given the landfill's limited uses and potential community benefits of recreational development, it is recommended that the City Council approve the presented redline agreement. The approval would allow the Township to proceed with assessments while preserving the City's final decision-making authority regarding the parcels.

C. Proposed Conservation Easement for Eastern Portion of the Old Airport Property

Last year, the Parks and Public Works Committee and City Council prioritized evaluating the City-owned "Airport Property" in Saugatuck Township.

Following this assessment, the Outdoor Discovery Center (ODC) submitted a proposal to:

- Develop trails and signage
- Create a trailhead and parking area
- Address invasive species and restore habitat
- Potentially establish a conservation easement over part of the property

ODC's legal team prepared a proposed conservation easement for the eastern portion of the property, covering areas with steep grades, wetlands, and floodplain sections. The City Attorney and staff reviewed the draft easement and suggested redline revisions. Staff is seeking Council feedback on these changes and will discuss them with ODC before presenting an updated draft at the October 23 workshop.

Public Comments:

Chris Peterson, Pleasant St. – expressed appreciation for the discussion on the conservation easement and emphasized the need for further clarification on costs.

Correspondence:

Council Comments:

- Mayor Pro-Tem Baldwin: A lot of gratitude for ODC for the help with the airport property.
- Councilmember Anderson: Great meeting discussion and thanked her sister Paula for joining as an observer at the meeting as she has inspired councilmember Anderson
- Councilmember Dean: None.
- Councilmember Gardner: Asked about the status of the Saugatuck sign that was removed at the intersection at Blue Star Highway and Holland Street.
- Councilmember Muncey: The Saugatuck Village Players will hold open auditions for their 2024 production of *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. Initial auditions will take place at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, October 15, and Thursday, October 17, with callbacks the following week. The production, directed again by Steve Williford, seeks both children and adults to bring Dickens'

beloved characters to life. Interested individuals can email saugatuckchristmascarol@gmail.com or simply reach out to any local on Butler Street to get involved.

Adjournment:

Motion by Anderson, second by Dean to adjourn the meeting. Upon voice vote, motion carried unanimously. Mayor Stanton adjourned the meeting at 4:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Jamie Wolters, City Clerk