



**CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
November 19, 2025**

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 Anderson at 4:00 p.m.

Attendance:

Present: Mayor Anderson, Mayor Pro-Tem Clark and Councilmembers Dean, Gardner, Muncey, Peterson and Stanton.

Absent: None.

Others Present: City Manager Cummins, Attorney Witte, Treasurer Bredeweg and Clerk Wolters.

Agenda Changes: None.

Public Comment on Agenda Items Only: None.

Action Items:

Regular City Council Meeting Minutes – October 27, 2025:

Motion by Clark, second by Stanton to approve the regular city council meeting minutes from October 27. Via roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Appointments to Boards and Commissions:

-Scott Dean – Historic District Commission with term ending 11-1-27.

-Russ Gardner – Planning Commission with a term ending 11-1-27.

Motion by Stanton, second by Clark to approve the appointments to our boards and commissions for Scott Dean for Historic District Commission with the term ending 11-1-27 and Russ Gardner for Planning Commission with a term ending 11-1-27. Via roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Discussion Items:

Notice of Intent from Douglas to Sell Wastewater Treatment Plant Capacity to Saugatuck Township:

The council discussed Douglas' intention to sell 55,000 gallons of sewer treatment capacity to Saugatuck Township for about a quarter of a million dollars, about five and a half percent of the

plant's total capacity. City Manager Ryan Cummins stated that historic agreements, due to past litigation, give both Douglas and the city the right of first refusal if capacity is being sold. The city reviewed its own long-term needs and based on engineering analysis, does not foresee the need for additional capacity for 25+ years, or possibly longer. There was extended discussion about the strategic value of retaining the right of first refusal in future agreements, as Saugatuck wants to protect its long-term interests and avoid being forced to buy capacity at higher costs in the future. Councilmembers weighed the pros and cons of exercising the purchase right, possibly leasing capacity to the township, or allowing the sale to go through while pressing to keep the right of first refusal language in updated agreements.

Conservation Easement Concept – 582 Campbell Rd:

The council reviewed a proposal from Ryan Kennelly regarding property at 582 Campbell. Kennelly, who is interested in purchasing the property, sought city guidance on placing a conservation easement on a non-buildable, dune-covered portion of the parcel to ensure it remains undeveloped and preserved for nature. He asked whether the city would be willing to hold the easement or if they preferred a land conservancy or other organization to do so. Council members expressed support for the concept of preserving the land but raised concerns about the city holding the easement due to the long-term administrative burden and enforcement responsibilities. They noted the city had previously relied on outside organizations—such as the Land Conservancy of West Michigan or Outdoor Discovery Network—for similar situations. Additionally, there were questions about public versus private access to the land. Ultimately, the consensus was that working with an established land conservancy would be preferable.

Council Direction on Strategic Planning Meeting for Fiscal Year 2026/2027:

The council discussed preparations for the upcoming strategic planning process for fiscal 2026-2027. Council members debated whether to retain the same facilitator from previous years or bring in a new facilitator to provide a fresh perspective. There was discussion about conducting another community survey, noting the upcoming parking survey and possible “survey fatigue”. The Master Plan survey was extensive and had provided ample data. A substantial part of the conversation focused on the structure of the strategic plan—specifically, how to define and use strategic “pillars” or goal categories to guide and prioritize city projects. Some advocated keeping the current system for consistency and because staff is already working on all existing priorities; others suggested re-examining or refreshing the city’s framework, adding pillars like economic/community development (such as a DDA), and more clearly prioritizing existing and future projects.

Public Comments: None.

Closed Session:

Motion by Gardner, second by Stanton to move into a closed session pursuant to MCL 15.268(e) and (h) to discuss a confidential written legal opinion regarding the ongoing lawsuits filed against the City by Dune Ridge, captioned Dune Ridge v. City of Saugatuck (Case No. 22-65713-CK) and Dune Ridge v City of Saugatuck (Case No. 21-64709-CZ) regarding trial or settlement strategy, which if discussed in an open meeting would have a detrimental financial effect. Via roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Council entered closed session at 5:34 p.m.

Motion by Peterson, second by Stanton to go into open session. Via roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.

Council entered open session at 6:49 p.m.

Council Comments:

Lauren Stanton did not comment.

Councilmember Muncey wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving and promoted the sale of tickets for "The Christmas Carol" to help support Christian Neighbors.

Councilmember Dean thanked Clerk Wolters, DPW Superintendent Herbert, Corey Stoppel, the Boyce brothers, and "Back to the Fuchsia" for their contributions and also acknowledged the mayor for addressing the crowd. He remarked on how special the event was despite the cold weather.

Joe Clark did not comment.

Russ Gardner did not comment.

Councilmember Peterson congratulated fellow council members on their committee appointments and consideration for a position on the fire board if it becomes available.

Mayor Holly Anderson added her thanks to Councilmember Dean and Clerk Wolters for their crucial roles in making the Veterans Day ceremony a success, emphasizing that it was a beautiful event in both Saugatuck and Douglas.

Adjournment:

Motion by Peterson, second by Dean to adjourn the meeting. Upon voice vote, motion carried unanimously. Mayor Anderson adjourned the meeting at 6:43 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Jamie Wolters, City Clerk