



CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES December 18, 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 Anderson at 4:00 p.m.

Attendance:

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

Absent: Dean.

Motion by Peterson, second by Clark to excuse councilmember Dean's absence. Via Roll call vote, motion carried 5-2.

Gardner entered meeting at 4:02 p.m.

Others Present: City Manager Cummins, Zoning Director Thompson, Attorney Jake Witte and Clerk Wolters.

Agenda Changes: None.

Guest Speakers: None.

Public Comment on Agenda Items Only: None.

Discussion Items:

Ordinance No. 241223-A - To amend Title XV, Chapter 154, of the Code of the City of Saugatuck to amend section 154.038 C-2 Downtown Waterfront Preservation District to eliminate first floor apartments as permitted and special land uses and to amend section 154.113 (E) to: clarify and revise Planned Unit Development (PUD) modifications for the C-2 Downtown Waterfront Preservation District concerning qualifying public access and allowable departures; include a restriction on PUD height increase requests, and to require a mechanism or legal instrument that memorializes public access preserved as part of a PUD approval. Strategic planning Meeting for fiscal Year 2025/2026:

During a planning commission meeting, concerns were raised regarding first-floor apartments in the downtown waterfront preservation district and their potential impact on public access to the boardwalk. While upper-floor apartments remain permitted, recent allowances for first-floor

waterfront-facing apartments prompted the Commission to recommend amendments to remove them as permitted or special uses.

The review also reorganized sections on PUD (Planned Unit Development) departures for clarity and consistency without introducing new allowances. Specific measures include restricting height modification requests and ensuring public access through legally binding mechanisms.

The recommendation has four primary goals:

1. Remove first-floor apartments as permitted or special uses in the downtown waterfront preservation district.
2. Include restrictions on PUD height requests.
3. Rewrite and reorganize the authorized PUD departures for clarity, maintaining existing intent and requirements.
4. Require legal mechanisms to memorialize public access provided through the PUD process.

Resolution No. 241223-A - Approving Contract Number 24-5489 between the Michigan Department of Transportation and City of Saugatuck for Funding on the Maple Street Improvements Project from the Transportation Economic Development Fund Category B Program:

The City Council was informed of a \$250,000 grant awarded by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) for the Maple Street Project. This project encompasses road and water main replacements, potential sidewalk additions, and stormwater improvements. Planning and evaluation of options are ongoing, with updates scheduled for January 22. Discussions with the township regarding cost-sharing have also been initiated, as the overall project cost is expected to be significant despite the grant's notable contribution. The resolution under consideration seeks approval to enter into a contract with MDOT to formally accept the grant funding.

The Council will review the project's options, including detailed cost estimates and funding strategies. A key component under consideration is the construction of a pathway along the project area, which is estimated to exceed \$1 million, regardless of whether it is built using concrete or asphalt. The presentation will provide an analysis of various project elements, the status of allocations from the street and water funds, and the availability of general fund resources. Additionally, the township's preliminary commitments toward the cost of the water-main replacement and the associated road segment will be discussed.

To ensure transparency and community engagement, updates will be shared with attendees of the project's open house to inform them of the upcoming agenda. The objective is to provide a thorough overview before planning commences in the spring.

Resolution No.241223-B - Approving Submission of a Water Resources Division Grant Application for Planning of Access Improvements and Coastal Stabilization in the Park Street Corridor:

The City Council has identified the evaluation of non-motorized options for Park Street as a key priority for the current fiscal year. This year's budget allocates funds for planning and conceptual design efforts. The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) offers a Coastal Management Program with grant funding available for feasibility studies, engineering, and design. Earlier this fall, a project interest form was submitted, followed by a meeting with EGLE staff to review the engineering proposal that was provided in the council packet. EGLE staff encouraged the submission of a grant application. Resolution No. 241223-B is in support of applying for a grant to cover half the cost of planning and conceptual design. Success in securing this grant could open opportunities for additional funding once feasibility studies and cost estimates are further developed.

Review of Survey Questions for Strategic Planning Meeting:

City Manager Cummins provided the council with survey questions from previous strategic survey results. The council decided on the questions and format for the 2024 Strategic Planning survey.

Staff Wage Scale Inflation Adjustments:

Earlier this year, staff engaged a wage consultant to recommend updated wage scales for City employees. In July, the City Council approved the updated step and wage scales and authorized inflationary adjustments to be applied each January. These adjustments apply to all full-time positions except for the City Manager, who operates under a separate employment agreement. Staff members meeting performance expectations receive a step increase equivalent to a 3% raise each July. For exceptional performance, the City Manager has discretion to approve additional step increases. In January of each year, the entire wage scale is adjusted for inflation, and this adjustment is reflected in staff salaries. This structure ensures wages keep pace with inflation while rewarding employees for merit-based achievements, including education, experience, and tenure with the City. It is recommended to implement a 2.5% inflationary adjustment to the pay scales, accompanied by a one-time lump sum equivalent to 0.5%. The 2.5% increase will result in a cost of \$9,917.31 for the remainder of the current fiscal year or \$19,834.62 for a full year. The one-time lump sum will incur an additional cost of \$3,374.75. This approach balances maintaining competitive wages with fiscal responsibility.

Council Review and Approval of City Manager Performance Evaluation Criteria:

The council discussed the annual performance review process for City Manager Cummins.

Public Comments:

Steve Manns, Weirich Dr stressed the importance of moving forward with the waterfront preservation proposal.

Correspondence: None.

Council Comments:

- Mayor Anderson read the Washington post, and they had an article about the top travel destinations for 2024 and Saugatuck was in it, pretty cool.
- Councilmember Clark enjoyed the great discussion.
- Councilmember Gardner noted it was good conversation during the meeting and appreciate the feedback and collaboration.
- Councilmember Muncey mentioned that he needed to prepare for the upcoming dress rehearsal of *A Christmas Carol* and reminded everyone that the production's final weekend is approaching. The Saturday afternoon matinee is sold out, but tickets are still available for Friday night, Saturday night, and Sunday at 7 p.m. Tickets can be purchased through the *Saugatuck Christmas Carol* website. Muncey shared that despite a slight increase in ticket prices this year, sales have been quicker than ever, leading to an expected donation of up to \$20,000 to Christian Neighbors, a local organization that provides essential services such as food and clothing to those in need. This is the largest donation the production has made, typically contributing around \$10,000 annually.

- Councilmember Peterson was very pleased with the waterfront preservation changes and Merry Christmas to all.
- Mayor Pro-Tem Stanton did not have comment.

Adjournment:

Motion by Muncey, second by Stanton to adjourn the meeting. Upon voice vote, motion carried unanimously. Mayor Anderson adjourned the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Jamie Wolters, City Clerk