



**CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES  
February 4, 2026**

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 and Peterson.

Absent: Stanton

*Motion by Peterson, second by Muncey to excuse Lauren Stanton from the meeting. Via voice vote, motion carried 6-0.*

Others Present: City Manager Cummins, Attorney Witte, Planning and Zoning Director Moore, Treasurer Bredeweg, DPW Superintendent Herbert and Clerk Wolters.

**Agenda Changes:**

*Motion by Muncey, second by Dean to add the idea from the Engel family for the fish station to the review of goals and priorities for fiscal year 2026/2027. Via voice vote, motion carried 6-0.*

**Public Comment on Agenda Items Only:** None.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Regular City Council Meeting Minutes – January 26, 2026:

*Motion by Dean, second by Clark to approve the regular city council meeting minutes from January 26, 2026. Via roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.*

**Discussion Items:**

Proposals for Logo and Branding Refresh Project:

City Manager Ryan Cummins and Historic District Commission Chair presented the status of the city's logo and branding refresh, reminding council that they had previously approved forming a Branding Advisory Committee and issuing an RFP. The city received 26 proposals ranging from \$7,000 to nearly \$100,000, from across West Michigan, the broader state, Midwest, and even internationally. The committee—comprising members including Chair and branding professional Tim Straker, Councilmember Chris Peterson, Lauren Stanton, and City Manager Ryan Cummins—evaluated firms based on meeting the RFP's core requirements, design readiness, understanding of Saugatuck's "sense of place," relevant municipal/regional experience, and cost/value. The committee unanimously recommended Concept A Creative Studio, citing their strong portfolio in both municipal and corporate branding, including the Saugatuck Township and Village of Spring Lake logos, and significant work with the local Convention and

Visitors Bureau, which gives them deep familiarity with the area and should shorten discovery and onboarding. Concept A's fee of \$24,500 was viewed as realistic and offering good value—neither at the very low nor very high extremes of the response range. Straker emphasized that Concept A understands how to brand with a sense of place and will approach this as a broader, digital-first branding exercise, not just a logo tweak, building a system that can be used across online communications, vehicles, signs, and notices. In response to questions from council, Cummins clarified that this work fits within the existing \$125,000 City Council contractual services line item. Council discussion included whether this would be a complete logo overhaul or a refresh of the existing river-based concept. Straker replied that the process will start with discovery and may lead to evolution or more significant change, but it is fundamentally a branding, not just logo, project. Mayor Anderson noted that the process is intentionally open-ended. The next step is to place the Concept A contract recommendation on the upcoming Monday council agenda for formal action.

#### Designs for New Historic District Signage:

The council reviewed and discussed the proposed new Historic District signage developed by Concept A. Zoning Director Grayson explained that the Historic District Commission had seen a second round of concepts at its January meeting and unanimously recommended “Round 2, Direction 1” as the preferred design. Historic District Chair Tim Straker described how the commission had asked Concept A to refine the first round to better reference historic architectural elements and improve legibility; the resulting design anchors its decorative “dentil” detail in the historic hardware store building, one of the oldest in town, so the sign has a clear historical “why” behind its look. The recommended package includes two replacement gateway signs at the north and south entrances and a third new sign at the bottom of Allegan Street, recognizing that many people enter the district there. Council members asked detailed questions about materials, size, color, cost, and durability. Concept A and staff reported that the signs would be cast metal mounted on poles, with an estimated cost of about \$2,500 per sign, two-sided, using a dark navy background with gold lettering. Production lead time is roughly eight weeks, with installation targeted for spring or early summer, weather permitting. The size is approximately 24" x 36". There were also questions about expected lifespan, finish warranties, and ensuring the signs meet Historic District material standards. Council sentiment was positive.

#### Review of Bids for Maple Street and other Street and Utility Improvements and Proposal for Construction Engineering Services:

During the Maple Street segment, DPW Superintendent Scott Herbert and engineer Jon Moxey presented the bid results and scope for the 2026 Street Improvements project (centered on Maple). Three bids were received: Milbocker & Sons – \$5,365,953.50, Redline Excavating – \$4,775,623, and Skippers Excavating – \$4,334,036.50. Skippers, from West Olive and already MDOT-prequalified, is the recommended low bidder, and F&V reported good prior experience and comfort with their capacity and qualifications. Moxey said the bids were close to the engineer's estimate plus contingency. Maple Street water main replacement and new/extended services (including lead/galvanized replacements into homes), sanitary sewer spot repairs/lining, stormwater detention near Mason & Maple, culvert end treatments and protection, a 5-ft sidewalk on the west side, resurfacing Mary Street and the DPW driveway, new gate valves along Water Street to better isolate leaks, and long-pending seawall and concrete repair at Coghlin Park, Wicks Park, Spear Street boat launch, and Francis Street end (about \$160,000 total). They also noted a requirement that downtown work (Mary Street and related seawall items) be completed before Memorial Day to avoid peak-season disruption, with the rest of Maple running through the main construction season.

City Manager Ryan Cummins then outlined the funding plan, comparing pre-design assumptions to post-bid numbers. Roughly \$916k will come from the Water Fund, \$96k from the Sewer Fund (likely high, as ~\$45k for a potential private sewer extension at 700 N Maple may drop off), about \$1.37M from Local Streets, and a little over \$1M from the General Fund, including sidewalk and seawall work. The city's MDOT Category B grant is already awarded; a portion is shared with Saugatuck Township under an existing cost-sharing agreement, slightly reducing grant dollars for the city but also lowering the township's contribution. Cummins emphasized that, even with these costs, all major funds remain in acceptable

health. Council questions focused on: cost allocation (city vs township vs private), warranty and responsibility for any failures or property damage (1-year builder's warranty; contractor insurance; pre-construction video documentation). Council reaction was supportive; several members praised the planning, tight estimate-to-bid alignment, and the funding breakdown.

#### Village Square Park - Proposal to Provide Design and Construction Engineering Services and Donor Agreement:

The Village Square Park discussion centered on the project which is funded by a \$100,000 private donation and a newly awarded \$150,000 DNR Recreation Passport grant, creating a roughly \$260,000 project (with a \$10,000 city match) for design, construction, and engineering. The concept showed would: expand the existing basketball court to a regulation-size full court; fully reconstruct the fenced hard court area; convert the current tennis/pickleball configuration into a new layout; add accessible paths, benches, and a drinking fountain outside the restrooms; add rain-garden style landscaping to manage stormwater; and remove the small "half" basketball court to restore some green space. A major focus of council's discussion was how to balance tennis and pickleball: some favored two dedicated pickleball courts, others argued strongly for preserving at least some tennis capacity, possibly via multi-use striping and/or adjustable nets. especially given uncertainty about the school district's long-term plans for its own courts. Council also raised issues about potential encroachment on an uphill neighbor's property, the slope and loss of art-fair vendor space, resurfacing and striping of the adjacent parking lot and its failing manhole cover, and the idea of reintroducing shuffleboard courts where the old half court is being removed, as a low-impact, historically rooted amenity. There was strong support for recognizing former Mayor Mark Becken in any new design, likely via a plaque near the court. Because of unresolved design questions council asked Fleis & VandenBrink to prepare alternative concepts to bring back to council

#### Park Street Planning & Conceptual Design - Proposal for Engineering & Landscape Architecture Services:

The Park Street planning discussion focused on restarting a long-standing effort to make Park Street safer and more pedestrian-friendly from Campbell to Mt. Baldhead. City Manager Ryan Cummins explained that Fleis & VandenBrink previously prepared a non-motorized study (updated in 2020) that examined options such as separate sidewalks, widened shoulders, and hybrid solutions, but that more detailed planning is now needed. Jon Moxey described the new work as updating and extending the topographic survey (including from Perryman through Mt. Baldhead), systematically identifying encroachments and physical constraints (especially at Holiday Hill), developing and costing out multiple design options (sidewalk vs shoulder vs hybrid), and conducting robust engagement with stakeholders. Engineer Jon Moxey noted that, unlike Maple, Park Street likely will not require major sewer/water reconstruction, so eventual construction costs, while still significant, should not be "Maple-scale," and that the goal of this planning phase is to give council clear, costed options with documented trade-offs so they can make informed decisions about scope, phasing, and funding.

#### Ordinance No. 260204-A - Short Term Rental Licensing Ordinance Amendment:

The ordinance discussion was about addressing how short-term rental renewals are handled and creating a one-time amnesty for a small group of owners. Going forward, there will be a single, clear renewal date and a defined application window, so people know exactly when they must apply. Staff and the attorney also added a very narrow "extraordinary circumstances" exception—for things truly beyond an owner's control, not simple forgetfulness—that can be used for late items (like renewals or inspection follow-ups). The one-time amnesty is limited to specific properties recognizing they made a good-faith effort while still keeping the ordinance firm for others. Council was generally supportive, and the redlined ordinance with these changes is going to the next meeting for formal adoption.

#### Review of Goals and Priorities for Fiscal Year 2026/2027:

In the goals and priorities review, City Manager Ryan Cummins presented a one-page graphic translating the strategic planning session into draft FY priorities, showing which items council had marked "essential" and which were regulatory. He emphasized that staff capacity is already fully committed by large,

in-progress projects (e.g., Maple Street/2026 street improvements, Park Street planning, branding/wayfinding, Village Square, Mt. Baldhead steps), and asked council to treat the list as a fixed envelope—if something new is added, something of comparable weight should come off. Dave and Holly Engle then presented two ideas to keep commercial/charter fishing in Saugatuck after their current lease ends in 2027: (1) a privately funded reconfiguration at Wicks Park, with a donor paying to install two larger docks (accommodating four charter boats) if the city extends water, sewer, and power; and (2) a more ambitious facility at Coghlin Park combining a public fish-cleaning station and new bathrooms, likely funded through state and fisheries grants. Council members expressed strong support for retaining charter fishing but significant concern about staff capacity, fairness to other charter operators, and piecemeal decisions at Wicks that would displace existing slip lottery users. Several emphasized the need to think holistically about the waterfront—transient slips, charter operations, dredging, and economic impact—rather than reacting to a single business’ deadline, and suggested folding the issue into the harbor authority’s planned economic impact study and the ongoing land-use master plan.

Councilmember Muncey left the meeting 6:37 p.m.

**Public Comments:**

Nick Agnew

John Janowski

**Council Comments:**

**Councilmember Chris Peterson**

Peterson thanked everyone for the discussion, reiterated her appreciation for the depth and quality of the conversations, and said she is looking forward to spring.

**Councilmember Russ Gardner**

Gardner thanked everyone and indicated he would see them at the next regular meeting on Monday.

**Councilmember Joe Clark**

Clark also chose to reserve his comments for the Monday meeting.

**Councilmember Scott Dean**

Dean suggested they wrap up rather than extend discussion further, reinforcing the desire to respect staff time.

**Adjournment:**

*Motion by Gardner, second by Peterson to adjourn the meeting. Upon voice vote, motion carried 6-0. Mayor Anderson adjourned the meeting at 6:54 p.m.*

Respectfully Submitted

---

Jamie Wolters, City Clerk