



**CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES  
May 8, 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 Muncey, White(entered meeting at 4:04 p.m.).

Absent: None.

Others Present: Interim City Manager/ Director of Planning, Zoning & Project Management Cummins, DPW Superintendent Herbert, Attorney Jake Witte and Clerk Wolters.

**Agenda Changes:**

*Motion by Dean, second by Baldwin to move agenda item #6A to agenda item #6B and move agenda item #6B to agenda item #6A. Via voice vote, motion carried unanimously.*

**Guest Speakers:** None.

**Public Comment:**

Nancy Kimble, resident: in support of agenda item #6A- Intersection Improvements at Lake/Blue Star for Multi-Modal Trail.

**Discussion Items:**

Intersection Improvements at Lake/Blue Star for Multi-Modal Trail:

The proposed intersection improvements include:

- Shifting the pallet sign 4.8 feet to make room for the new trail.
- New landscaping around the pallet that incorporates native materials including:
  - o Dune Grass
  - o Mixed perennials
  - o Cedar trees
  - o Crabapple tree
  - o Drystack stone planter

- A new traffic signal consistent with a previous rendering by Fleis and Vandenbrink.
  - o Two previous engineering studies reviewed a traffic signal for this intersection, Fleis and Vandenbrink and Hubbel, Roth & Clark.
    - C2AE has advised that, with the exception of the proposed traffic signal, the improvements are eligible to be covered under the existing grants. Currently, the traffic signal is estimated to cost \$200,000. Staff has included these funds in next year's proposed budget. A new MDOT Shared Streets and Spaces grant opportunity has surfaced that staff and C2AE believe is a good opportunity to fund the new signal.

Airport Property Proposal from Outdoor Discovery Center:

Last year, the Parks and Public Works Committee and City Council prioritized evaluating the "Airport Property" that it owns in Saugatuck Township. This property is approximately 170 acres and is located in the area of 63rd St and 134th Ave. Work last year included:

- A phase 1 environmental assessment.
- An ecological evaluation
- A sustainability evaluation.
- A trail map overview.
- Planning sessions including strengths, opportunities, aspirations and results.
- Evaluating liability and ADA requirements for rustic trails.
- An initial zoning inquiry.

The Outdoor Discovery Center has since provided a proposal to:

- Develop trails and signage.
- Create a trailhead.
- Create a parking area.
- Combat invasives and restore habitat.
- Potentially place a conservation easement over a portion of the property.

The estimated costs for this proposal are \$130,000. It does not include permitting/environmental/utilities. A donor has approached the City with interest in fully funding the proposal.

Councilmember Muncey left the meeting at 4:49 p.m.

Proposal to Provide Architectural & Engineering Design, Bidding & Construction Administration Services for the Mt. Baldhead Restroom Building Replacement:

The City Engineer submitted a proposal to replace the Mt. Baldhead bathrooms with an estimated cost to replace of \$160,000.

The anticipated schedule would have construction from October 2024 to April 2025.

Proposal to Provide Engineering Design and Bidding Services for Mt. Baldhead Observation Platform Replacement:

The City Engineer submitted a proposal to replace the observation platform and retaining walls at Mt. Baldhead Park. The estimated cost came in at \$330,000.

The anticipated schedule would have construction from Spring 2025 with substantial completion prior to Memorial Day weekend.

### Hardscaping in Right of Way Request – 860 Simonson:

In April 2023, the City received a complaint that a stone wall was constructed in the right of way along Simonson. The City's new hardscaping policy prohibits stone walls from being constructed in the right of way. However, the new ordinance states City Council "may issue a permit for a use prohibited under the Policy that has been installed or constructed prior to the implementation of this Section."

The City Engineer reviewed the request and noted the following:

- Allowing the wall to remain would be contrary to recent concerns raised about the amount of right of way encroachments along Park Street.
- No objection as long it is clear that a time may come that the City will remove the stone wall (or direct them to remove it) because it is in conflict with improvement of Simonson Drive (i.e. addition of a sidewalk, utility replacement or something of that nature).
  - In the case of Simonson, improvements are not immediate, but prior generations likely thought the same about Park or Maple Street.

### Desired Traits in a City Manager:

The Council discussed traits they would like to see when interviewing for the next City Manager. Traits that were discussed:

#### Gardner:

- Demonstrated experience in the City Manager position in a town similar in size and scope of Saugatuck.
- Effective public communicator.
- Written/Verbal communication.
- The ability to go out and meet people and represent the City in a positive manner.
- Very good and skilled at developing people.
- Experienced candidate.

#### Anderson:

- Good government experience and a broader range of experience.
- Good people manager.
- Good relationship within the City and with staff.

#### Dean:

- Mr. Cummins has earned the right to be part of the discussion and feels the same about Mr. Herbert.
- When he worked with Mr. Walsh, Mr. Cummins didn't fit all the criteria for a planning director and he has proved them all wrong.

#### Baldwin:

- Fair-minded, treating everybody equally.
- Be able to say "no".
- Municipal experience with a Planning and Zoning background.
- Good technical background.

#### White:

- Organizational leadership on a scale that is somewhat significant or on a similar scale.
- Tasks and leadership are two different skill sets.

**Public Comment:**

Bobbie Gaunt, resident: As the chair of the Saugatuck Dunes Coastal Alliance, they and herself are in support of the airport property plan. The Village Square Park looks amazing and thanked everyone for their tenacity and leadership. The Tri-Community Plan should be the north star in terms of issues like the airport.

*Motion by Anderson, second by Baldwin to move into closed session to consider the contents of applicants who have requested confidentiality s permitted under the Michigan Open Meetings Act MCL 15.268 Section 8 (f) for the position of Saugatuck City Manager. Via roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.*

The council entered closed session at 5:39 p.m.

The council entered back into open session at 7:07 p.m.

*Motion by Anderson, second by Gardner to conduct public interviews to candidates numbered 12, 37, 40 and 41 for Saugatuck City Manager to be held on May 22<sup>nd</sup> beginning at 3:00 p.m. Via roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.*

**Correspondence:**

- A. Jessica Ruthsatz
- B. Lavinia Oancea

**Council Comments:**

- Mayor Pro-Tem Baldwin: Echoed councilmember Anderson's comments. The park build went so well, people were excited and joyful, and everyone did a beautiful job and they finished ahead of schedule.
- Councilmember Anderson: Good meeting, she was part of the community build and it is cool to see the park take life. Hats off to PPW and all the volunteers.
- Councilmember Dean: Congratulations on the Village Square Park build.
- Councilmember Gardner: None.
- Councilmember Muncey: Congratulations to Erica June bakery next to Wick's Park Bar & Grille. There is another bakery opening, retro bakery on Blue Star Highway. Don't forget to visit Back to the Fuchsia flower shop for Mother's Day!
- Councilmember White: Congratulations to the Lakeshore Health Partners on Blue Star Highway, their open house is today. Questioned why the bathrooms in City Hall are gendered bathrooms, would like to see that changed.

**Adjournment:**

*Motion by Muncey, second by Dean to adjourn the meeting. Upon voice vote, motion carried unanimously. Mayor Pro-Tem Baldwin adjourned at 6:28 p.m.*

Respectfully Submitted

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Jamie Wolters, City Clerk