



Planning Commission

Meeting Minutes - Approved

January 15, 2026, at 6:30 P.M.

Saugatuck City Hall, 102 Butler St, Saugatuck, MI 49453

1. Call to Order / Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Vice-Chair Bagierek.

Members Present: Baldwin, Bagierek, Gardner, Gaunt, LaChey, Marineau

Members Absent: Manns

Staff Present: Planning & Zoning Director Moore, Deputy Clerk Williams

Others Present: Trent Cunningham (Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC)

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion by LaChey, supported by Baldwin, to approve the January 15, 2026, agenda as presented. Via voice vote, motion carried 6-0.

3. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Gaunt, supported by Baldwin, to approve the December 18, 2025, minutes as presented. Via voice vote, Motion carried 6-0.

4. Public Comment

Steve Manns

5. New Business

- A. 297 Sugar Hill Ct – STR of an ADU – Special Land Use

Public Hearing

- A. Hearing was called to order by Vice-Chair Bagierek on 1/15/26 at 6:32 p.m.

- B. Summary by Zoning Director

Moore explained the applicant is requesting a special land use permit to allow an existing attached Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) to be used as a short-term rental. Although the property is located in the Peninsula West District – which has reached its cap for short-term rentals – the ADU does not count towards this cap, making it eligible for short-term rental use under a special land use permit.

C. Presentation by the Applicant

The applicants, Michael & Marcy Sanders, explained that they were seeking a special land use permit to allow their already approved attached ADU to be rented out as a short-term rental, independent from the primary residence. They clarified that the main home is their full-time residence, the ADU is about 560 square feet with dedicated parking, and its primary use is for family. However, during the high season, they would like to rent it out for extra income, limiting reservations to two people and parking to one or two vehicles. They stated the construction and intended use complies with the city's special land use requirements for ADU's.

D. Public comment regarding the application

1. Supporting Comments: None
2. Opposing comments: Peter & Judy Kosick, John & Margaret Richardson
3. General Comments: None
4. Repeat Comment Opportunity: None

E. Public comment portion closed by the Chair at 6:41 p.m.

F. Commission Deliberation

The commission discussed the 297 Sugar Hill Court short-term rental application. Commissioners clarified the ADU's location, parking, and fire access, and the applicant addressed public concerns about noise, parties, and fire pits, promising to limit occupancy and prohibit guest use of the fire pit. Commissioners emphasized that owner-occupied ADU's address many common objections to short-term rentals and noted that ADU's are allowed as short-term rentals by ordinance.

G. Commission action

Motion by Marineau, supported by LaChey, to approve the special land use request to allow the rental of the attached ADU at 297 Sugar Hill Court based on compliance with the ADU rental requirements of Section 154.092 J, satisfaction of site plan approval standards of Section 151.060, and the positive findings related to the special land use standards of approval in Section 154.080 that are documented in the staff memo dated December 12, 2025. Via roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.

B. 202 Butler – Commercial Addition

The commission discussed a proposal for a 500-square-foot rear addition with basement storage at 202 Butler Street. The applicant explained that the expansion will improve kitchen capacity and storage, is fully within staff and code requirements, and will not exceed approved seating. Commissioners praised the investment, addressed concerns about logistics and easements, and expressed overall support.

Motion by Gaunt, supported by Gardner, to approve the site plan amendment requested by Rison BS, LLC., for a 500-square-foot kitchen area expansion and associated improvements at 202 Butler Street, in accordance with the application materials submitted by the applicant, with the following conditions:

1. *Administrative approval of trash receptacle screening.*

2. *Administrative approval of new light fixtures, if applicable.*
3. *Approval of the use of the access easement and a formal amendment of the easement.*
4. *Approval by all applicable City departments and the City Engineer.*
5. *Approval by the Fire Department.*

Via roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.

C. Sign Ordinance – Public Hearing

Public Hearing

- A. Hearing was called to order by Vice-Chair Bagierek on 1/15/26 at 6:56 p.m.
- B. Summary by Attorney Cunningham

Cunningham explained that he incorporated minor changes to the sign ordinance draft as discussed at the last meeting, mainly adjusting the definition of “portable sign.” No red-line version was included in the meeting packet because the changes were limited and straightforward. The rest of the draft remained essentially unchanged from the previous version, and Cunningham offered to answer questions or facilitate further discussion if needed.
- C. Presentation by the Applicant

None.
- D. Public comment regarding the application
 1. Supporting Comments: None
 2. Opposing comments: None
 3. General Comments: None
 4. Repeat Comment Opportunity: None
- E. Public comment portion closed by the Chair at 6:57 p.m.
- F. Commission Deliberation

The commissioners reflected on their extensive, careful review of the sign ordinance, emphasizing the deliberate, detailed process they undertook to balance community interests. They highlighted their focus on definitions (like “on-site” and “off premises”) and the importance of clarity for council review. Commissioners recommended providing a clear summary of changes and a primer on definitions to assist city council and encouraged council to carefully consider any potential unintended consequences. Overall, commissioners voiced pride in their thorough effort and expressed their willingness to help city council navigate and implement the new sign ordinance.
- G. Commission action

Motion by LaChey, supported by Gardner, to approve the Sign Ordinance and send it over to City Council. Via roll call vote, motion carried 6-0.

D. Election of Officers

Motion by Bagierek, supported by Baldwin, to elect Manns as Chair of the Planning Commission for 2026. Via voice vote, motion carried 6-0.

Motion by Gardner, supported by Marineau, to elect Bagierek as Vice-Chair of the Planning Commission for 2026. Via voice vote, motion carried 6-0.

Motion by Baldwin, supported by Marineau, to elect LaChey as Secretary of the Planning Commission for 2026. Via voice vote, motion carried 6-0.

6. Old Business

None

7. Communication

None

8. Reports of Officers and Committees

Planning & Zoning Director Moore stated that he will present a Summary of the work the Planning Commission completed in 2025 at the February meeting.

9. Public Comments

Steve Manns

10. Commissioner Comments

- Bagierek suggested the group discuss their goals for the year at the upcoming February meeting when Chair Manns returns, aiming to identify priorities for moving forward.
- Gaunt asked whether city council has started reviewing short-term rental policies and explained her interest stems from a prior discussion about updating and assessing the effectiveness of current short-term rental regulations.
- LaChey expressed appreciation for the significant and ongoing investments being made in the community – whether residential, commercial, or retail. He emphasized how impressive it is to see continual spending and improvements in their town.
- Marineau expressed gratitude for the city’s planning staff, especially Grayson Moore, praising their preparation, leadership, and positive impact during a pivotal time for the community.
- Gardner shared that city council has prioritized reviewing and potentially revising the city’s zoning districts, a topic previously discussed by the Planning Commission. He suggested that as the commission sets goals, evaluating the number and structure of zoning districts should be a key focus moving forward. He gave an example of the City of Holland only having 12 districts compared to the City of Saugatuck having 24-28 districts.

11. Adjournment

Motion by Gaunt, supported by Baldwin, to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m. Motion carried 6-0.

Submitted by:

Sara Williams

Deputy Clerk

City of Saugatuck