



**PARKS AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
October 24, 2023**

The Parks and Public Works Committee met for Regular Committee Meeting at 10:00 a.m.
Saugatuck City Hall
102 Butler St., Saugatuck, MI 49453.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Baldwin at 10:00 a.m.

Attendance:

Present: Chair Baldwin, Committee members Charak, DeJong, Johnson, & Roche.

Absent: Committee member Kimble.

Others Present: City Manager Heise, DPW Superintendent Herbert.

Approval of Agenda:

Motion by Roche, second by Charak, to approve the agenda for October 24, 2023. Via voice vote, motion carried 4-0.

Motion by Roche, second by Chark to approve the addition of guest speaker, David Nyitray from the ODC to the agenda. Motion carried 4-0.

Approval of Minutes from 9/26/23:

Motion by DeJong, second by Johnson, to approve the minutes from the September 26, 2023, meeting. Via voice vote, motion carried 4-0.

Guest Speaker:

Dave Nyitray from the ODC Network was in-person to speak to the committee about the recent Airport SOAR analysis from the public input session that was held on Friday, October 20th, or answer any questions that the Committee may have.

Public Comments (agenda items only): None.

Review/Discussion:

A. Department of Public Works and Administrative Updates:

DPW Superintendent Herbert said that the team has continued improvements to the Mount Baldhead Pavilion. TNT Roofing installed a new roof on the restroom and the pavilion. The DPW staff then pressure washed all of the concrete and wooden posts. Now they are in the process of repainting all of the all the wooden posts and support beams. They have begun the seasonal work of winterizing town by blowing out irrigation, shutting water off, and winterizing the restrooms.

Herbert said that they recently sold two pieces of equipment. They were old police deputy cars. They are also in the process of selling their oldest dump truck, a 2009 International. They have already replaced that vehicle with a brand-new chassis, snow salt spreader, and plow. It was recently used at a snowplow rodeo hosted by the American Public Works Association. West Michigan International used it as a showpiece to kind of show what they do. He said that it is really nice having a City of Saugatuck truck in that.

They are now hot and heavy in the brush & leaf collection. They added an additional pick-up date for both sides of the river for the end of November as long as the weather cooperates. Vork Brothers is currently refurbishing and painting the Rose Garden fence, and the bridge lights on the Bluestar Highway bridge, and there is an iron gate on the main restroom that they will be touching up as well.

Road construction projects are going really well. There are a couple of hang-ups, but they are still on track and hoping to pave in mid-November as long as the temps allow the asphalt to be within spec. There is a pretty sizable challenge at north Maple Street. There is a small section near North Street that is getting crushed and shaped. They opened up the dam gates at the Peterson Nature Preserve to help dry up that intersection. It didn't work as well as they had hoped and think the beavers have obstructed some of the water flow. He said he may have to invest in a drone purchase so that Superintendent Herbert doesn't have to wade through the muck. He thinks that if they can narrow down where they think the possible obstruction might be and help drain that intersection a little bit better, it is going to be a lot better for the project.

B. Study Group Updates:

a. Invasive Species:

City Manager Heise said that the hemlock woolly adelgid treatment was a huge project that was recently completed.

b. Airport Property:

Chair Baldwin said that they had their SOAR analysis and that it went extremely well, and it was wonderful to partner with the ODC. She got a lot of good public input at the session. She thinks that the general consensus is to legitimize the existing trails and that they need to do things in a thoughtful and productive way by looking into insurance and parking concerns.

Motion by DeJong, second by Johnson, to recommend that City Council staff begin to do due diligence for improving existing trails at the airport property and ensure public access and safety. Via voice vote, the motion carried 4-0.

c. Blue Star Multimodal Path:

City Manager Heise said that the next project status update with their engineer C2AE will be held on October 31, 2023. City staff are requesting a project schedule update or a Gantt chart from the Friends of the Blue Star Trail. He tells the committee that they will be reviewing the palette sign issue, and things such as where the trail goes, the bridge crossing aesthetics, and some tree replacement concerns in which you will be making recommendations to City Council.

d. Village Square:

Committee members DeJong thanked the Committee for recommending the playground project to City Council and thanked City Council for approving it. They are able to move ahead, and she spoke to DPW about the teardown of the old playground equipment, and she thinks that it is a good plan during the winter. They had Jeremy on site again yesterday and the new playground equipment has been ordered. The installation of the new equipment dependent on weather could be scheduled for the third or fourth week of April.

Committee member Roche said that they will reconvene with Sinclair after the holidays. They are hoping that they have exactly what they need to do as far as the community build and make sure that people are aware of the timing so that they can make sure that they have enough bodies out there and have a really good experience with it. They are going to take the lead on all of that. Then they will get back to PPW and City Council to share the information. Committee Member DeJong added that they will need about 30 volunteers, which she doesn't think will be an issue.

d. Park Street & Mount Baldhead:

Committee Member Johnson said that she reached out to Nick Masters because he always attends the meetings and she wanted to make sure that he knew that he was being heard. The project that he has is beyond the committee's scope. He has already spoken with Jon Moxey and Scott Herbert about the project. Nick wanted to be clear that he wants to work with the committee and the City to work with him. He also mentioned installing three-way stops at the corners of Perriman and Park and the other on Campbell and Park. She reiterated that the goal on Park Street is to slow people down.

Motion by Johnson, second by Roche, to ask City Council to review two three-way stops on Park Street, one on Campbell and Park Street, and one on Perriman and Park Street. Via voice vote, the motion carried 4-0.

C. Tri-Community Parks & Recreation Master Plan Update:

Committee Members that were present discussed what they would like to see prioritized in the next five years in the Tri-Community Parks & Recreation Master Plan.

Committee Member Johnson:

- Waterways
- Safety issues
- Signage

Committee Member Charak:

- Water bottle refill stations (Mount Baldhead, downtown, the southside, and the airport property)
- Recycling programs at marinas

Chair Baldwin:

- Mount Baldhead repairs (gravel parking lot, etc.)
- Village Square (bathrooms, sports courts)
- Airport Property (legitimize trails, parking)
- Rose Garden (maintenance signage)
- Signage & Trail markers
- Invasive Species maintenance
- Recycling
- Fish cleaning stations at Wicks or Coghlin Park
- Bathrooms at Coghlin Park
- Oval Beach upgrades
- Peterson Preserve
- Blue Star Trail Construction
- Community Center

Committee Member Roche:

- Conservation
- Mount Baldhead (stairs & decking, recycling)
- Oval Beach
- Conducting the trail systems
- Ball fields & rec areas for the kids
- Foundation for green spaces
- Airport property
- Community Center

Committee Member DeJong:

- Spend as much time on stewardship as they do the recreation part of this.
- Strong designations for the lands already owned
- Invasive species

- Airport property
- Trails
- Develop programs and facilities where sports can take place

Review Next Steps:

Chair Baldwin said that they have a Steering Committee meeting coming up and that is the next step for the Tri-Community. She is gratified to see that they have a motion for the airport property and for the three way stops.

Public Comments (Limit 3 mins):

- Garnet Lewis (987 Lake St, City Council Member): She is extremely proud of the PPW Committee, they are already showing their value to the community regardless of whether they live on the East or West side of the City. She said that she can't thank them enough as a member of council, but also as a resident of the city. She hopes they keep her in mind for the community build for the new playground at Village Square. She said that Isabel's will provide doughnuts and coffee. Lewis and Committee member Roche have been involved with recycling, so they are excited to see recycling bins coming, and the playground approval that is so visual. The Airport property has a lot of potential and provides opportunities not just for the City of Saugatuck, but the greater community. This continues their overall commitment as a council to bringing everyone together rather than existing in these kinds of silos. She told the committee to never forget how valuable they are and how valuable their time is and not to let anyone tell them differently.
- Lisa Mize (Executive Director of the CVB): She echoes Lewis's comments and is very excited to hear everything that the committee is working on. The CVB board of directors has embarked on a destination development project. They have hired Ed Freer, a landscape architect out of Wisconsin. He was involved in the Extreme LA project in 2015, where a group of students came in from California and completed a study for Saugatuck and Douglas and gave a presentation as far as what they saw opportunities to be for destination development. Unfortunately, in 2015, it fell by the wayside, and nothing was ever done. They are hoping to breathe new life into this by bringing Ed back and talking to stakeholders with the board of directors. They are inviting all of the City Managers from Saugatuck, Saugatuck Township, Douglas, and Fennville as well as some other stakeholders who are interested in destination development. She said that her ears perked up when they mentioned a Community Center and Oval Beach upgrades because these things could tie in really well.
- Russ Gardner (245 Spear St, City Council Member): He has spoke to Chair Baldwin in and after City Council meetings about his interest in working with this group to continue to move the needle on Mount Baldhead Park for the reasons that were mentioned today. There is some attention that is needed. Work has been done with the replacement of the roof and painting the Pavilion and the bathrooms have also been completed. It's a major improvement over where they were before but there is still a lot of work to do. He really would like to work with this group and those that are interested in continuing to do that project because there is a lot

of to-dos over there. He is engaged and it is one of his personal priorities. It is a City Council and a PPW priority and he is here to help.

Member Closing Comments:

Committee Member DeJong – said that she wanted to add a little more meat to the airport property discussion. She assumes the due diligence is really about opening the trails right now. She suggests low impact signage to keep people out of areas where they shouldn't be because the true value is the natural beauty, and she doesn't think that should be disturbed. She is for opening the trails but really would like to see low impact.

Committee Member Roche – She wanted to reiterate what Garnet said and thanked the committee for everything they are doing. She enjoys being a part of this group and seeing all the things that are happening. She is hoping that the group saw that their Township counterparts recently held their first track meet this week at the Tails and Trails Dog Parks. The middle school team hosted their first track meet in 20 years. They have a state award winning track team and have not had a space to host home track meets. She thinks that is super exciting. With all of the potential with the airport and landfill properties, she wonders how they will integrate those spaces for their highest value?

Committee Member Charak – He is excited for some future projects for the ball fields that were mentioned before. There is quite a bit of land that they can look into and facilitate in Douglas especially. He hopes that Douglas is willing to work with the committee going forward to utilize the space because they have some nice vacant property that could be beautiful soccer fields. He said that he would dive further into Invasive Species this winter. They will become more prevalent after the winter season ends and they start coming to life again.

Committee Member Johnson – She thanked the committee and said that they are all amazing people to work with and she is glad to be a part of it and to be caring for it because when it's gone it is gone. She is seeing that all over on the west side. They share this land; they don't own it.

Chair Baldwin – She is closing session echoing a lot of that sentiment as she sees the committee as guardians of their public space and thinks they need to be respectful and mindful. She has gratitude for everyone here and they are getting a lot done. It's not without a lot of hours, a lot of thought, a lot of effort, and a lot of other missed opportunities. Saugatuck is worth it, and she is humbled and happy to be surrounded by people who agree with that. She also acknowledged that they had correspondence from Mr. and Mrs. Cook from Saugatuck Township.

Adjournment:

Motion by Charak, second by DeJong, to approve adjournment of the meeting. Via voice vote, motion carried 4-0. Chairwoman Baldwin adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sara Williams, City Deputy Clerk & DPW Administrative Assistant