



PARKS AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - AMENDED
June 27, 2023

The Parks and Public Works Committee met for Regular Committee Meeting at 10:00 a.m.
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 Johnson, Kimble & Roche.

Absent: Committee members Charak & DeJong.

Others Present: City Manager Heise, Superintendent Herbert, Deputy Clerk & DPW Asst. Williams

Approval of Agenda:

Motion by Johnson, second by Kimble, to approve the agenda. Via voice vote, motion carried 3-0.

Approval of Minutes from 4/25/23:

Motion by Kimble, second by Johnson, to approve the minutes from the April 25, 2023, meeting. Via voice vote, motion carried 3-0.

Public Comments (agenda items only): None.

Review/Discussion:

A. Department of Public Works and Administrative Updates:

DPW Superintendent Herbert said that he had brought up in a previous meeting that DPW lost employee Mike Wendt to pursue his career in fencing. He explained that it left a vacancy, and they are having a difficult time filling the position. Sara, Ryan, and Scott spoke regarding the vacancy and realized that at some point the City will need to reevaluate the pay scale for the Public Works Department. It is such a competitive world out there, especially in the trade industries. City Manager Heise noted that City Council just approved a ten percent raise for all full-time employees and that should help out with the situation. Herbert said that it is just a challenge that the committee should be aware of.

He said that DPW is well underway in construction season for the Capital Improvements Plan. They have had some really impressive mill and overlay work that City Council approved for us doing some pretty large sections, including Park Street. It is a huge improvement from their perspective and a step in the right direction. They have had some miscellaneous spillways installed, and that work was completed successfully. Herbert is thrilled with the paintings around town this year. It is vibrant and

looks like it is more durable paint than what had been used in the past. DPW contracted that job out solely this year. It has freed up some of the Department of Public Works time, if only they weren't short staffed. They are thrilled with Brian, the owner of Parking Lot Striping, who has been phenomenal to work with and really cares about the details. Herbert said that he couldn't be happier with the work, so they want to continue contracting the work out on some sort of five-year contract if possible. Brian could submit a proposal where he protects himself against material costs. Hopefully something they can just sign and get approved so that they can get all of the work done before Memorial Day ideally because they were a little behind the curve this year in terms of timelines. They are not done yet; they still have some more crosswalks to do. Most of the parking is done, but they are still working on curbs, stop bars, and crosswalks.

Herbert then flipped over to Oval Beach and said that they have had some really great public safety meetings at Oval Beach, working collaboratively with the fire department and the sheriff's department about beach safety and what we can do when or if an emergency arises, they want to make sure that they are absolutely on their game, which is a huge challenge for DPW. Most of the staff at Oval Beach are temporary and a lot of times it is their first job. It is a great summer job but there is also a serious component of that too, which is a very tiny part, but a very important job out there. It is a challenge to keep it well-staffed and to get staff trained in what to do when something goes wrong. It is really important that we continue to have those conversations, trainings, and mock drill scenarios.

B. Study Group Updates:

a. Airport Property:

City Manager Heise said that F&B, our engineers, completed an analysis of the Airport property. The results came back and there is lead in the soil, which was a concern that some people had. What they are recommending is to do some more soil analysis, mostly where the lead was found. He thinks that the Fire Department and maybe some other folks used to use this area as a gun range. That was an initial concern and before we invite people onto the property, we would like to make sure it is safe for humans. He said not to get overly concerned about this, because there is a lead threshold where it would be safe enough to build residential properties. If it is commercial use, they have their metrics. Basically, it is a concern, and they would like to do some more soil analysis.

Chair Baldwin added that the lead is not in the area where they have established trails. They just started seeking to legitimize them recently. The trail areas were tested and those are fine. The only area of significance was used as a gun range so it shouldn't stop any kind of forward momentum on them legitimizing the trails, but it is obviously a big concern. She said that the landfill area came back, and they didn't find anything there. Heise said that the next step for the landfill would be to check to see if it has a clay cap, but that the property could be used for recreational purposes. Baldwin said that ODC were supposed to start in June and that they were on target for that. Then they were supposed to get a preliminary report by July 1 and the eco evaluation report by August 15. She trusts that they are still on schedule and hasn't heard anything to the contrary.

b. Blue Star Multimodal Path:

Committee member Kimble said that the fundraiser last night was a great event, and it was a success. As far as actually making progress on the trail, she is a little frustrated that they are not further along. The last meeting was in April, and at that point she told them what they needed to get the sign-off from all the local governing bodies that they were good to go with the C2E contract and how the payments would be made. Saugatuck City Council and

Saugatuck Township approved by May 12. They also needed Douglas to approve, and they did approve that on June 5. Kimble said that she emailed Brian and he said that they were good to go. They signed a contract with C2E, and they are being paid to do this work. She expected that they would drive it from there. She said that they are not even on the bicycle. After a couple of weeks, she sent an email and said that she thought the next step was to do a kickoff meeting for the project. She finally got a response from the project manager whose name is Eric Krunk, and he seemed to be little clueless at that point. He told her the people that he thought were on the project team, but that he hadn't done any research and she hadn't heard anything back from him in close to 2 weeks. She is very frustrated.

City Manager Heise said that he is frustrated as well. He thought that they would be much further along between the three municipalities than they are. There is still some confusion with the township and making sure that the same interlocal agreement has been signed off on. They feel like they have a different version than what was submitted. He said that there is still some administrative stuff that needs to be worked out. One of the important things to keep in mind is that construction is still planned for 2025 and they have plenty of time to work through this. He said that the Township is working hard to go after their Natural Resources Trust Fund grant. He believes that the Friends of the Blue Star Trail have now pivoted towards doing their new project, which would be a connection going south of Douglas to South Haven.

c. Park Street:

Committee member Johnson said that the Park Street group has a wish list which is an accumulation of all of their data from their study group over the past year. They came up with a mission to create a safe passage for all users while respecting and maintaining the natural cultural and historical character of Park Street. It is the biggest and most important thing to them because it is an amazing gateway. They want to keep it that way but want to bring safety to it as much as they can. First of all, the Chain Ferry update. The John Woollam Trail sign was removed, and they added a pedestrian crossing sign. They limbed up the existing trees and removed the two shrubs that were there, and it gives great vision. She thanked Superintendent Herbert for helping as it has really made a difference. They still need to remove some stones and steel markers because they are tripping hazards. Johnson said that she takes the tripping hazards seriously as she doesn't want that to fall on the City. She said that if they have a crosswalk sign there, they should probably paint a crosswalk. You can't put a crosswalk there unless you have a place for the people to go. They would like to install a small walkway there. Whether it is a natural walkway, stone walkway, asphalt or whatever from the Chain Ferry up to Bliss Street where the John Woollam Trail starts. That is where they would like to put the fixed trail sign at the end of the street. She said to put the sign there with the right direction on it.

d. Mt Baldhead Improvements:

City Manager Heise said that they had planned on these restrooms and the equipment that AT&T was going to construct. As part of their due diligence, they did an Archeological Survey. Turns out that where they planned on putting the equipment room in the restrooms, they did a dig and they found a bunch of Native American artifacts, pretty cool stuff, very cool stuff, but they determined that it would be an adverse impact in that area. He said that he agrees and that the concern would be if you start putting your footings in you dig up, you start digging more and more, you may find Native American bones or something else and then you're done. Then it would be years before anyone could ever do anything at that site. The plan is to pivot and just have AT&T put their equipment that they need for the cellular service

inside the tower at the top of a sand dune. They are not too thrilled about it, but they do plan to continue with the project. Logistically, it's very difficult to just get the equipment up there and do the consumption.

The committee asked Heise if they could use the existing pavilion that is there. Heise explained that they would still have to put new footings in and stuff for that and then they would be in the same position. He is pretty sure that they're going to find more Native American artifacts on that site as well. The idea is just to restore that existing restroom. They will figure out what the engineer and then what AT&T is going to move up and they have some planning and zoning stuff to work through with that. The other thing that they know is still needed, sooner rather than later, is some restoration of the upper deck and focus on the stairs.

d. Invasive Species: None.

e. Village Square:

Committee Member Roche said that from the previous meeting, they had ODC out to do an inspection of the playground. They were pleasantly surprised that it was not as bad as they thought but it is still past its useful life. They need to move forward with this fairly quickly. They also did the renderings for potentially looking at a holistic view of what we want to do with the four squares of Village Square. There's been some feedback on that. What they've moved forward with in their discussions is because we know that the playground is something that's really the high priority, moving forward doing something on that same site. What they were finding is that as they're looking at grants and opportunities to move this forward, we're sort of putting the cart before the horse. What they need to do is move forward with putting some renderings that they're comfortable with that we think is appropriate for their community, and then going out for bid and then looking for grants, so that there's less frustration and they can push this forward. One of the things that they feel really strongly about if we keep the playground in the location that it's in is that we do want flashers for crossing the street between the bathroom facilities, and the playground. They would love them to be solar. They met with Jeremy Bosman, who's from Sinclair's who the Douglas Park project if you're familiar with what's going on with both Barry field and Schultz Park, that was who after they went out for bid who they ended up working with, they're a Holland company. The owners and the rap are in downtown Saugatuck a lot and so they're very excited about working with them. They met them on the 19th, and it was just kind of walk through the space and see what the potential is. Roche said that her and Glenna came up with this, they'd love it to be sort of a destination Park, like, if you look at what's happened in Grand Haven, and a lot of these other kind of tourist communities is there's a theme to the park and kids relate to that. That is where their minds are right now, as they start to do the initial renderings. Sinclair does a match program for their equipment in the fall. What they are working towards right now is working on renderings and moving towards that date. Because what's happened in that, playground equipment world is with post COVID, everything from supply and demand got really pushed out. He is saying, as far as timeline, and again, they'll have to talk to other companies is that if they were able to make decisions by the fall, this could potentially be done by early spring. Jeremy is working towards getting them some renderings, and they've given some feedback. They will just go from there. They're asking for budget. So that's one thing that our group needs to work on. She said that she is aware that there are some funds set aside for parks and public works. It's hard to do a budget without really understanding where they're at, because it's kind of a moving target with pricing. What they've done is sort of made some

initial selections, he's on vacation right now and he's going to get back to them. Hopefully, by the next meeting, what they'd like to do is have a larger discussion about what we think would be appropriate for that.

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

Chair Baldwin gave update on Tri-Community Parks & Recreation Master Plan. The next meeting is scheduled for the following Thursday, June 29th, with the Tri-communities.

Review Next Steps: None.

Public Comments: Nick Masters from Holiday Hill Resort, City of Saugatuck.

Member Closing Comments:

Committee Member Kimble: Committee member Kimble wanted to compliment Ruth on the job that she did with her committee because she thinks it is a great format. At the last meeting she asked if they could do a study group on the Peterson Preserve. She did not have anything for that yet but would like to use the same format as the Park St study group.

Committee Member DeJong: None.

Committee Member Johnson: None.

Committee Member Roche: Committee member Roche said that she just went to the Southwest Michigan Sustainable Materials Management Forum. It was basically all the DPW departments from Allegan, Kent, & Ottawa counties. There is a new regulation that will be going through within the next three years that all solid waste management plants have to move from what they are now to a sustainable plan. The groups got together to talk about how they can make that happen. The key takeaways that she thinks the group should be aware of is that she met with the recycling and sustainability folks for Ottawa, Allegan, and Kent counties and they know there are a lot of smaller communities around that don't have the dollars behind the bandwidth of staff to do some of the things that they can do and are willing to work with us. She would like to keep that option open as we continue to move their projects forward. She has talked to Scott Herbert about recycling downtown and that they would love to have that in the downtown business district too. There is a program out of Kent County called SORTS (Separate out recyclables and trash) and it is a program that is meant to be put out to the community. That is something that is free, the signage is done, we can use that in our municipal buildings and then expand that out to outdoor areas. They don't have any grants because that says looking for dollars to purchase those things for the waste containers and things but that is something that Roche says that she would be happy to look into if this is something that they want to move forward in as a group. She also said that Kent County is opening and running a Sustainable Business Park. She says that whole area is for Kent County but that it actually exists on property that is in Allegan County, and there is an opportunity for our haulers to use that, there are about 200,000 extra tons per year and essentially, they want 90% of the trash to be diverted from the landfill. It is a state-of-the-art park that is going in. She said that for PPW the group talks a lot about the park side but aren't talking much about the public works side. She would love that as they continue to work on these projects and sort of

start to fulfill them to move towards potentially creating a sustainability aspect for the public works.

Chair Baldwin: Chair Baldwin thanked the committee and said that she appreciates all of them volunteering their time and effort that they could be doing something a little more selfish, but instead doing something for the better of their community. She said that Venetian is moving along really well and all of the money that is going to be raised will be put toward the local waterways by the Rotary Club. She wants to make sure that people fully understand that it is something they are working on.

Adjournment:

Motion by Johnson, second by Roche, to approve adjournment of the meeting. Via voice vote, motion carried 3-0. Chairwoman Baldwin adjourned at 11:08 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sara Williams, City Deputy Clerk & DPW Administrative Assistant