



PARKS AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
April 25, 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 Charak, DeJong, Johnson, & Kimble.

Absent: Roche.

Others Present: City Manager Heise, Superintendent Herbert, DPW Asst. Supervisor Hardy, Director of Planning, Zoning, & Project Mgmt. Cummins, Deputy Clerk & DPW Asst. Williams, DPW Staff members Wentz, Bouwman, & Mack, Fleis & VandenBrink Engineer Moxey.

Approval of Agenda:

Motion by Kimble, second by DeJong, to approve the agenda. Via voice vote, motion carried 5-0.

Approval of Minutes from 3/28/23:

Motion by Charak, second by DeJong, to approve the minutes from the March 28, 2023, meeting. Via voice vote, motion carried 5-0.

Public Comments (agenda items only): None.

Review/Discussion:

A. Department of Public Works and Administrative Updates:

DPW Superintendent Herbert gave an update on tasks that DPW staff has been working on since the last meeting. They are getting the City ready for Summer season. He brought DPW staff members Wentz, Bouwman, and Mack to the meeting to introduce them to the committee. Mike Wentz has been with the City of Saugatuck for 6 years and has run a fence company on the side. He has decided to part ways with the City and continue to grow his business. This is a huge loss for the City given the level of service that he has been able to provide for us. Superintendent Herbert wanted to publicly thank Mike for his years of service.

Next, he introduced Ellis Mack, who is an equipment operator/maintenance worker/Oval Beach Manager. With a small staff, they have to peg as many titles on to people as they possibly can. He will soon be transitioning to Oval Beach for the summer. One of the main tasks that they are focusing on at Oval Beach is to get the water turned on now that the temperature has been consistently above

freezing. They have been having electrical issues with the well on the property, one of the only wells on City property. Everything else is City municipal water. They are going to have to have Coop's Well Drilling go out to the beach and maybe install a new pump for the well before they are able to get the whole operation at Oval Beach up and running. In the meantime, they do have porta potties installed out there for people to use while they are at the beach. Ellis will be taking care of a huge operation on the City's behalf. The point that he would like to make is that it also takes away a person from the team at the garage who are responsible for responding to resident requests and service orders.

Lastly, he introduced Chad Bouwman who is an Equipment Operator, but Herbert says that he treats him as the Parks Director because he has a great eye for detail in our parks with landscaping, mowing, and irrigation. You name it, he is the parks guy for sure. Superintendent Herbert said that he wanted to get some faces in front of you, so you are aware who is helping to maintain the City.

Superintendent Herbert gave an update on Oval Beach. He said that the beach is open from 8 am through 10 pm and that morning shift employees come to work an hour ahead of their shift to get the restrooms cleaned and get the beach cleaned up. They have 24-25 employees to staff the ticket booth, concession stand, and beach patrol. This year, all staff are CPR/AED trained and certified and they have also completed some training with the Saugatuck Township Fire District. They participated in mock drills including what to do if there is a missing child, a near drowning incident, and other scenarios so they would be prepared in the case of an emergency.

He also gave an update on what else DPW has been up to since the last meeting. They worked with Kal-Lake Sewer & Water Authority to get all of the water meters installed and the water turned on around the City. Now they will be able to turn on irrigation and start adjusting the sprinkler systems. That also allowed them to get the Wicks Park and Mt Baldhead restrooms back up for the season. City staff removed the erosion control fencing at Oval Beach, which allowed the beach staff to clean off the parking lot and deposit sand back onto the main part of the beach. They would then bring in a bulldozer and have them level the sand on the beach. While they do have the bulldozer available, they usually try to have them bring the track dozer up the backside of Mt Baldhead to cover up the exposed electrical conduit that's on the top of the dune. He said that it is an annual thing, but between the erosion on the East side of the dune and foot traffic it is just the nature of being a living dune. It is a never-ending battle. Superintendent Herbert said that it is going to be nice when the City starts working with AT&T and getting the construction underway for the new restroom project at Mt Baldhead. It will be really nice to get that conduit deeper and underground.

The Department of Public Works has a pretty ambitious plan for mill & overlay work. Herbert and the City engineer Jon Moxie went around and marked all of the limits that are going to be recommended to City Council for mill and overlay work, which entails milling down the rough surface of the road, and then overlaying it with nice rollout of compacted new asphalt. He said that they will have to see how far their dollars can get them with that and what gets approved. They want to put a lot in front of City Council, because there are some roads that really need it. Herbert stated that they recently did a demo with a Falcon 4-ton asphalt hotbox. The demo went really well, and they were able to keep it and use it for 12 tons of asphalt which is three different loads. He said that there is a huge fundamental difference between using a piece of equipment like that and they hope to make a formal recommendation to City Council once they get some comps to that product. They will be pushing pretty hard to obtain a piece of equipment like this one. The closest asphalt plant is in Plainwell. They typically would drive an open-bed dump truck to Plainwell. The asphalt company dumps the material onto the back of the dump truck. They have to fly back to Saugatuck and use the material as fast as possible before it cools down too quickly for them to use. To obtain good adhesion to the road surface, they need to maintain a 240-to-280-degree Fahrenheit temperature. This will create more semi-permanent and permanent asphalt patching, so they are not just seeing it fall right

back out of the hole. Superintendent Herbert explained the difference between hot and cold patch and explained that cold patch is very temporary, and they only use it in emergency situations such as when the asphalt companies are closed. He said that they apply the cold patch to the surface and the next time it snows it gets scraped away. Herbert also explained that the hotbox also eliminates employee fatigue and helps avoid injury as the dump trucks are tall and the employees have to scrape material out of the back of the truck with shovels. It is more strain on the employees' backs and whatnot. With the Falcon hotbox, it is at waist level and the little chute that that it comes out of it also heated and stays that temperature until the asphalt is added to the pothole. The quote that the City received after a few minor customizations was approximately \$33,000. Herbert thinks that this purchase would be a no brainer and at a fairly minimal cost compared to how big of an impact it can make for the residents and employees. He explained that they can start off with the purchase of the hotbox, and if everything goes well, they can start doing things like getting a mill planer attachment for their skid steer (roughly \$12,500), which allows them to mill like a 14" wide strip of asphalt. The next purchase would be a mini asphalt roller (roughly \$30,000-40,000). Once the City owns the hotbox, planer, and the roller then they could maybe cross departmentalize a little bit and work together a little more with Kal Lake if they have a water main break and they have to tear into the road, they can backfill the hole with gravel and then DPW can come in and put the final seal on the road with asphalt. Right now, the City of Saugatuck is contracting out the cleaning of all of the City's catch basins. Kale Lake has a vacuum truck, and they are hoping that they are able to exchange services so that they don't have to contract this out and provide mutual benefit and support to each other. Superintendent Herbert said that a 10X8 foot asphalt patch costs the City roughly \$1200, and as far as the economics of it, it would pay for itself fairly quickly.

The staff at DPW have installed the speed radar signs. They put two on Park Street and one on Lake Street, Holland Street, and Allegan Street. The catch basins are currently getting cleaned out and they are expecting a delivery of mulch this week. Chad and the crew have got all of the flower beds detailed out. They will start mulching everything this week. He also complimented Chad on his pressure washing work on the Willow Park Deck, and said it looks amazing.

Lastly, Herbert announced that Arbor Day was coming up Friday, April 21 and as a Tree City USA recognized City, we hold an annual planting ceremony. He wanted to make sure that the committee was invited. They will meet at 10 am at 201 Butler Street where they will hold a little ceremony and take a picture.

B. Study Group Updates:

a. Blue Star Multimodal Path:

Chair Baldwin gave a quick update that they were successful at getting Phase 2 passed at the City Council meeting for construction slated for the Blue Star Trail. Committee member Kimble said that the next step would be to get the contract with the engineering firm C2AE, which is the same firm that did the initial work on the project that enables them to get grants. She explained that in order to move forward, they needed to do detailed design work. That has to be signed by not only their City Council, but also the Township. Last night the Council approved the contract, which was the first step. They also approved the intergovernmental agreement. The Friends of the Blue Star Trail are picking up 77% of the local match. The City & Township are picking up the rest. That is a formal agreement that was also approved. The next step is for Saugatuck Township to approve, and their meeting is scheduled for May 12. They have every indication and hope that they will approve that so they can actually get the work started.

City Manager Heise said that City Council members Garnet Lewis and Holly Leo will remain as the council liaisons. From here we get into the detailed design which allows us to create the bid specifications. After that is completed, they go out to bid and then will lead a contract. There is also a construction management phase which was also passed and is included in the C2AE contract as well. He said that he will still have to return to council to get additional approval to move on to the next step. He estimated that the work should be completed by the year 2025.

Committee member Kimble mentioned that the goal of the Friends is to build the trail all the way to South Haven. They realize they have made a lot of progress on this section, but they still have a long way to go to get all the way to South Haven. One of the members of the Friends Committee is really starting to lead the charge on that project. This will not affect the city or be a part of this group.

b. Park Street:

Committee member Johnson said that they held their last meeting on April 21st. She said that it is a pretty dynamic group that she is working with that have a lot of love for the area across the river. They have some good long-term and short-term goals. They want to get some things done over there to make it safer for people that utilize the Chain Ferry and Park Street, particularly the pedestrians and bikers. She said that the group would like the Parks and Public Works Committee to approve a couple of things for the Chain Ferry and then have City Council take a look at it. There are no signs directing people off of the Chain Ferry. They walk aimlessly while the cars are travelling much faster than the speed limit. There is no way to direct these people, so the Park Street group wants to start doing things this season that keep people safe.

1. There is a Cedar Tree that they would like to be trimmed so that there is a line of sight when you look through. There are also two little shrubs below that also need to be trimmed lower because when you walk off the Chain Ferry travelling east or west, there is no sight line there either. They need this line of sight to show where the cars are coming from because they are still coming pretty fast over the hills.
2. There is a little John Woollam Trail sign that is blocking sight lines as well. The sign is directionally wrong, it shows North facing in the wrong direction. They would like to get it fixed or replaced and then find a better location for it.
3. On the North side of the Chain ferry, there is a utility pole. This is not located on City property, but it is in the right-of-way. There are some boulders around the utility pole that push people out walking onto the road. What they would like to do is have the boulders removed and level the ground there so that people can walk across it without tripping.
4. The last item may not be as simple as the first three. They would like to ask the City if they could ask the people who are running the Chain Ferry if they could have their staff in the morning, place a pedestrian stop sign in the center of the road and at the end of the shift take it off. It would slow the vehicle traffic and help people safely access the trails. People are also moving very fast at the corner of Perryman and Park Streets which lead to Oval Beach. They would like some visible signs in these areas.

c. Mt Baldhead Improvements:

City Manager Heise said that City Council approved the restroom design and the approximate location for the new structure. He explained the updated renderings and said that they are trying to match the façade of the pump house to the extent possible to color

match the bricks. He received positive comments from City Council. There are some really good ideas about using the kind of bare brick façade to put in some signage or directions, and there are some really cool ideas thrown out there.

The public meeting that was going to start the process for the design of the park was cancelled, which he thought was a good idea. They want to get some advertisements in the newspaper because not everyone gets the City's digital email blasts. They have a sign that advertises public meetings just in case people from the area or outside of the area that don't get the Commercial Record could see when our public meetings are going to be. He said that they will get that meeting scheduled. Fleis & VandenBrink had plenty of time to get their renderings ready for the meeting so stay tuned for further details.

AT&T is still working hot and heavy. There is a meeting with the Historical group that has been working on the building and the dome to talk about getting some of the infrastructure removed. There is an antenna that exists inside the dome. They will be talking about a possible way to remove that so that AT&T can get their equipment in there. Mayor Scott Dean is the ambassador on behalf of the City, so they are meeting at 5:30pm. Brent Birkholz met with AT&T to go up into the tower and talk about two things. They had a painting vendor there to talk about painting the dome which may not be involved in this project. The paint is deteriorating, and you can start to see light through it. It will be extremely challenging to paint that. They will have to figure out a way to get a big crane up there. Historians are concerned because it is an important piece of history. Heise said that discussion tonight would be to try to find a reasonable solution to get the antenna that people will never be able to see, rebuild it and get it to a place where it can be a piece for education, and everyone can see it like at the bottom of the dune.

d. Invasive Species:

Committee member Charak spoke with Emily Brown at the Allegan County Conservation District, and she said that they don't really have a program for invasive species. She told him to call CIGMA (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area) which covers Allegan County and therefore Saugatuck. They have four graduate students, which they hire out for \$100 per hour, and can be sent out to assist. They are willing to do surveys for the City properties or invasive species. He mentioned the standard stuff to them regarding oriental bittersweet, Japanese knotweed, milfoil, and garlic mustard. They currently have a phragmite program but not in Allegan County. They have workshops that they can put together for communities, DPW, and private and non-private individuals. They also at their \$100/hr rate, hire out private citizens at their own cost and at a private citizen rate, not the City's cost. There is an availability for someone to survey their own property and get treatment for their own property. Phragmites are a different thing. They will deal with it on land or on property border on the land, but not in the river. He said that there are three local contractors in Allegan County who deal with phragmites, and they have aquatic programs to treat the invasive species. But if local individuals wanted to treat the Phragmites on their property or in the river next to their property, they are more than welcome to contact one of the three organizations. Committee member Kimble requested that purple loosestrife be added to the list.

e. Village Square:

Committee Member DeJong said that in February they were showing brainstorming ideas, not plans, they were just ideas. They decided at that time that they needed a survey to see what they lay of the land was there. She thinks they ran into some problems and needed to

do something additional. Now that that is done, they are going to see where the stakes are. They met with Evan from the ODC for a playground inspection. Turns out, it is in better shape than they originally thought. The ODC does some natural playground things, which there may be some interest in. They have a lot less lifespan than if you get some manufactured materials and they are a little concerned about that. The ODC also has a pretty full plate right now so they couldn't begin a project there and they wanted them to work on it until 2025. She says she hopes that they are all still alive in 2025 because there will be a lot of things coming into fruition. They will have to work on more than one thing at a time. They are continuing to look at some ideas there. She would like to counter any of the misinformation out there as she doesn't know how much a splash pad costs nor does she know how much a NASA Launch Pad costs either and the group has no plans for either one at this time.

f. Airport Property:

Chairwoman Baldwin said that she called everyone individually because she was delighted that they were able to get proposals for the environmental site assessments passed at the April 10th meeting for City Council. They can now get ODC & Fleis & VandenBrink out there to do their work. It is necessary to do it regardless of what they do with the property. They need to know what is out there environmentally, they need to understand what is going on with the site and wetlands, invasive species. This is something very basic that needs to happen. They have a schedule and ODC will be out there in June, she wasn't sure when Fleis & VandenBrink would get out there but said that she thinks everything wraps up as far as the site assessments by the end of summer.

City Manager Heise wanted to note that there was one environmental assessment at the Airport property and then they have the ODC which they call an ecological and sustainability study. So, there are two different things going on at the Airport Property. Fleis & VandenBrink will be doing the environmental assessment and ODL is doing the site survey. They also have an environmental assessment going on at the landfill site. He said that they are all in for around \$13K to understand these properties better. They will be doing a phase one Environmental Assessment, which is a historical review of the uses of the property, any documentation they can find on the property. They also included a soil sample and some soil studies because they are aware that the property used to be used as a gun range in certain portions, so they want to make sure there is no lead on site. The environmental assessment is more of a historical review of the uses of the property. The ODL is doing a survey of the plant life and will determine what is good, and what is not so good. They have also included in their proposals that they clearly identify the existing walking paths that exist.

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

Chair Baldwin gave update on Tri-Community Parks & Recreation Master Plan. They had their meetings with the other municipalities and the school. The RFP process is starting now. City Manager Heise said that the host, Lanae was supposed to do a draft RFP, but he has not received that as of yet. Chair Baldwin confirmed that it would be public so they can make sure that people are voicing their concerns. She is excited that they are going to participate this year. She wasn't sure why Saugatuck City hasn't participated with the Community updates but said that they are all sister cities and can't see any reason that they wouldn't be a part of the RFP process. By the end of April, they have to figure out who is going to be a part of the RFP process. She said that City Manager Heise would be a part of the process for sure.

Review Next Steps: None.

Public Comments: None.

Member Closing Comments:

Committee Member Kimble: Committee member Kimble had nothing to add but wanted to add to what Committee Member Charak was saying regarding the “no mow”. She is thinking that if they are going to do the Peterson Reserve project that they could maybe as Keith is finding more things out, and they think about the little lawn area there, that would be a good area to kind of experiment with what are the alternatives. She said that she just got back from vacationing in Texas, and she was able to see their wildflowers and they are fabulous. They have a program where they encourage all the roadsides to grow wildflowers instead of grass that they have to mow. It was very inspirational. She would like the committee to maybe try to use some of those ideas.

Committee Member DeJong: Committee member DeJong said that there was nothing new except for the playground equipment inspection. A few things need to be replaced but other than that it is okay.

DPW Superintendent Scott Herbert added that he met with Evan, a certified playground inspector from the ODC. Evan gave the whole structure less than a 1% chance of failure. As a risk assessment, that is fantastic. That is not to say that it doesn't have issues, it does. They are currently in the process of trying to find a general contractor that can assist us with replacing the posts. So structurally it is not as bad as it appears because there are also concrete anchor points within the structure. There is a twirling slide that is anchored by concrete and posts. There is more holding it together than the rickety stuff that appears before you at your initial inspection. They are getting that taken care of.

Committee Member Charak: Committee member Charak said that he will get some more contact info from Michigan State and start compiling a list for the public to deal with their invasive species if they want to keep working on his anti-lawn project. During his research, he has discovered that for people who use lawn fertilizers, there is phosphorus, chloride, nitrates, and many more chemicals that actually don't make it into the groundwater in certain areas. It gets filtered throughout the systems because on the hills there is a high clay base and is just like concrete on the hill. Then it goes into storm basins, if there are any, or they go run off and go somewhere, but not far until they hit the storm drains and they go into the ravine systems, and then into the catch basins, then the rivers. He has been researching that process.

Committee Member Johnson: Committee member Johnson said that it is fun working on these projects. She hopes again that things happen that they have talked about.

Chair Baldwin: Chair Baldwin thanked the committee and said they are making good progress. She acknowledged that they are all volunteers, and they are working hard to get things done. They are an ambitious group and as much as they want to keep an eye on the prize, it seems daunting when you have all of these other things that you want to do. They are getting a lot done and they are getting things passed for council. She stressed that they need to keep that forward momentum going. Any good change in government is always incremental.

Adjournment:

Motion by Charak, second by Kimble, to approve adjournment of the meeting. Via voice vote, motion carried 5-0. Chairwoman Baldwin adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sara Williams, City Deputy Clerk & DPW Administrative Assistant