



**PARKS AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
**January 23, 2024**

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, Kimble & Roche.

Absent: None.

Others Present: City Manager Heise, DPW Superintendent Herbert, City Clerk Wolters.

**Approval of Agenda:**

*Motion by DeJong, second by Charak, to approve the agenda for January 23, 2024. Via voice vote, motion carried unanimously.*

**Approval of Minutes from 11/28/23:**

*Motion by Johnson, second by DeJong, to approve the minutes from November 28, 2023, meeting. Via voice vote, motion carried unanimously.*

**Public Comments (agenda items only):** None.

**Review/Discussion:**

**A. Department of Public Works and Administrative Updates:**

DPW Superintendent Herbert gave a tree update and said that throughout the year he will compile a list of tree concerns. He looks at older specimen trees for possible removal or due to resident or staff concerns. Last week he went around the City with Ed Dowd, a local arborist and they compiled a list of trees in the area that need attention whether it be removal or attempt to salvage it in terms of doing threaded rodding or steel support cables. They are not afraid to spend a little money on trees that can't be easily replaced. He has a cost estimate for the trees that they have assessed and will discuss it in more detail during the next meeting. Herbert said that besides the annual tree work in the City, his staff has been hard at work doing snow removal. They have

been working early hours with unpredictable weather patterns. He feels that they have done a really nice job.

Committee member Roche asked what trees were used for replacement. Superintendent Herbert said that he works with a local nursery and that they generally use native trees for replacement but in some circumstances, there may be better options.

Herbert encouraged the Committee to look at the City of Grand Haven's website where they have a really awesome list of approved street trees, which is broken down into categories. They are trying to replicate something similar to that for the City of Saugatuck which will ultimately be presented to the PPW Committee for consideration.

Committee member Johnson mentioned that there are complaints regarding potholes on Park Street in a huge pothole in which someone broke their femur. She requested that Herbert check the potholes on Park Street. Herbert explained that if they used cold patch on the potholes right now, the next time that the plow goes through it will rip the blade. He said he would go out and take a look and see what the options were.

#### **B. Updates on SHNA:**

Committee member Roche was a part of the Mt. Baldhead study group and she said that during one of the meetings they were discussing the project and they found out that Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area has an endowment. She called the Community Fund of Holland & Zeeland and met with Colleen Hill who has been working with the endowment and there is quite a bit of money. This is for a very specific area, the Saugatuck Natural Harbors. The endowment was originally \$450,000 and has grown to \$736,000 since it went into effect in 2012. Since it is an endowment, it has an annual cap of the portion which can be spent which is 4%. The endowment has a management plan but is expired and will need to be updated to use it. Roche will share the expired management plan and meet with Chair Baldwin and City Manager Heise on next steps.

#### **C. 5-Year Plan Adoption:**

Chair Baldwin said that the plan was presented to City Council and approved last night, so the plan has been adopted. This is a living document, and the plan can be revised at any time. She said it was a pleasure to work with Viridis and she hopes to have opportunity to work with them again in the future. It was a heavy lift, but thoroughly enjoyable and she is overall happy with the work that has been done. She thanked everyone for their hard work. Baldwin said that they will submit it early February and then they will be in full compliance with the state and the DNR and will be able to request grants at that point.

#### **D. Uniform Signage initiative with 3 municipalities:**

Committee member Roche said that the Steering Committee will continue to meet. The Townships Parks commission already signed a contract with the ODC to start doing some signage at River Bluff. Roche asked them to pump the brakes so that the Tri-Community could work together. They are waiting for a date to meet. The CVB has an interest in this as one of their initiatives so they will be included in the conversations as well.

City Manager Heise said that he has met with the CVB to discuss signage. They need to decide what type of uniform signage they want to use. He thinks that the trail signage should be organic and fun, and municipalities should have consistent wayfinding. Committee member Charak mentioned that the State Park has nice markers.

Lisa Mize, Executive Director of the CVB said that tourists need consistency. Fennville adopted the same signage as Douglas, only changing the. She said that wayfinding will go a long way with the tourists. She added that she thinks the trails should be organic.

Committee member Johnson said that they need to find someone who can do a whole complete package. There are a lot of ideas, and she thinks there are a lot of areas in town that need signage to designate specific areas.

Chair Baldwin said that maybe they have a contract with the folks to do that piece that they have for the wayfinding, but they should work with ODC for the trail.

#### **E. Working to confirm conservation levels with register of deeds & LC of WM:**

Chair Baldwin has it on her list to start working on with Land Conservation of West Michigan. Committee member Charak said that they need to get approval from City Council for money to do the research needed. He said that the City has 22 parcels. Some of them may have deed restrictions from dees past the current deed. Some have language in wills. He estimated that it would cost fifty cents to a dollar per page for Register of Deeds to do the research. Chair Baldwin thinks that they need to meet with the LCWM to get a cost analysis.

City Manager Heise said the first step is to do the title search. Next, they would need to have the City Engineer map out where parcels exist. You have your title search, and you have the parcel number, and then you have a map. You know exactly how to reference each parcel with the title. Once we have the information, we can provide that to Allegan County GIS, and it will stay on record forever.

#### **F. Recycling Bins Pilot Program:**

Chair Baldwin said that this is on the agenda for the Historic District Commission for February 1. She says they will be placed at the pharmacy, Mount Baldhead, and Village Square. DPW Superintendent Herbert said that it sounds like they are adding work to DPW's plate but really it is just logistics. DPW would like to have a different colored bag for the recycle bins because they are going in the back of their pickup trucks and will be mixed with the trash bags. Once they get it back to Public Works, they have two options. They could get a massive 30-yard dumpster, which doesn't really work for the pilot test. Instead, they will have about six of the little bins and then they will have to rip open the bag and loosely pour it into the bins for it to be recycled. This is how they will handle it logistically and see how it goes. He said that they used to have recycling bins at Oval Beach and what they found was that if the regular trash can next to the recycle bin is full, everything else will go in the recycle bin. This is better than having it blow all over the place, but it is not achieving the objective. He thinks that as long as they put them around the city tastefully, they can manage it.

## **G. Oval Beach Concessions RFP:**

Chair Baldwin said that this proposal is for Oval Beach Concessions to go out for professional bids to actual business owners or people who own food trucks that know how to serve food currently. She says that there are no downsides to this in her mind. It will help the already overloaded DPW in the height of the busy summer season, and maybe have an opportunity to up the offerings there. She says that they could work with the vendor to put in some specifics like they have talked about such as no Styrofoam or straws. Baldwin thinks Douglas did a really great job of soliciting RFPs for the Root Beer Barrell. They decided to go with a different vendor this year, and the vendor that they settled on that they have partnered with. She says the contract is great, it's got revenue sharing, and they are going to pay to have water installed. It's possible that we send out the RFPs and they will find out that none of them are great and they are too nervous to do it, but she thinks they will be remiss if they don't just try for this year.

DPW Superintendent Herbert says that they have done this before, back in 2007, the concession stand was leased out. They had a long-time beach manager named Linda Bultman, who worked for the City of Saugatuck. It was a very unique position where she was the beach manager in the summer and worked at DPW for the other eight months out of the year. Being a long-time employee of the City, she wanted to take on the duties of the concession stand. She resigned around three years ago, and the duties fell on Public Works after that. He said that he has seen it done both ways and he isn't sure if there were any previous issues with leasing out concessions before as he was not directly involved with that. But it seemed to work. He thinks that worst case scenario would be if it doesn't work for whatever reason. They always have the power to oversee the contract and could always reabsorb that responsibility once again at Public Works if they had to. He says that they have a new beach manager this year and this would give him the opportunity to focus their energy more on the ticket booth and beach patrol's effort focused more on safety protocols out there.

City Manager Heise says the City needs proper infrastructure first for the restrooms and electrical system. He questioned the level of expectations that would be included in the RFP such as trash service and what their time commitment would be. He thinks that the shoulder season should be included in the RFP. Chair Baldwin reiterated that the Root Beer Barrell RFP contract is very detailed and said that she would send a copy to all of them. She thinks that they just need to seek out an appropriate vendor. Heise said that they need to define what the definition of concessions are. Is it food only? Will they be renting out tents and chairs? He wonders if when they say concessions, are they just focused on food and beverage.

Committee member Charak said that he thinks chair rentals would be great. City Manager Heise mentioned that private parties ask the City all of the time to provide rentals. Chair Baldwin said that they should start with concessions only and they could do more later if desired. Superintendent Herbert agreed with Baldwin and added that whoever leases the building out will find is that additional offerings, although a nice thought, are really restricted by the amount of space that we have out there. Time will tell if there is the capacity to add that later. Committee member Johnson said that the most important thing is doing the compostable stuff and the biodegradable stuff as that should be included in the proposal. Baldwin added that the cost of City staff time is not included in the revenue. Douglas received \$10,000 up front plus a percentage of sales in their contract.

*Motion by Roche, second by Johnson to propose to City Council to seek RFPs for Oval Beach Concessions. Via voice vote, motion carried unanimously.*

#### **H. Study Group Updates:**

1. Invasive Species: Committee member Charak said that he has not done much on Invasive Species in the last few months. DPW Superintendent Herbert said that during his recent tree risk assessment tour, he noticed that there are a lot of Ailanthus trees, “Trees of Heaven”, along the guardrail on Perryman Street from Park Street going up the first hill, kind of by Jane Underwood’s place and then also when you go up the second hill. As you approach the Dunegrass entrance, there are more Ailanthus trees growing. He said that it is not the tree they are worried about, but the fact that they attract lantern flies. The DNR recommends that they get removed so that may be work looking into to get those removed. There are quite a few of them so it would make a difference. Herbert said that there are overhead utilities and so they would have to ask Consumers. He said they would more than likely use a contracted service so that they can lower pieces down piece by piece and then DPW could clean it up. Herbert and Charak will meet to see how much is out there.

2. Airport Property: Chair Baldwin said that she had the pleasure of hiking the trails with DPW Superintendent Herbert, City Manager Heise, and their legal counsel, as part of the initiative to have Council taking a look at what the next steps would be as far as opening up the trails and legitimizing those. She is happy to report that things went really well with the attorney, and they wanted to make sure that they are in compliance. Their legal counsel advised on a couple of things that they may want to complete but overall, a favorable report from their attorney. Things are still kind of moving along in the exploration of getting that opened up.

City Manager Heise thinks that the majority of City Council is in favor of moving this project forward and starting out again small, but with the rustic trails that already exist. He said that his main concern was ADA issues, but the attorneys did not see any just based on the topography and using the existing trail system as is. He said that they will talk about the scope of work as it relates to trail maintenance and kind of what the expectations are with City Council. He thinks that they will be able to open these trails pretty quickly.

3. Blue Star Multimodal Path: Committee member Kimble said that the committee has been talking about weighing in on the pallet sign designs since the committee was formed. They finally received some designs last Friday. City Manager Heise said that the City of Saugatuck is addressing the pallet sign and the street cost crossing with the potential of a signal there. They are trying to do this all in combo, but they have a separate budget set aside for this design for the City of Saugatuck. He says they are all very sensitive about the pallet sign. There is a recognition that the pallet sign has to be shifted a few feet. They are using this as an opportunity to elevate the pallet sign to enhance it or make it more beautiful. He says that they have three different designs. He would encourage this committee to look at the aesthetics

of the pallet sign. As far as engineering goes, how do you get across the street or the signals? He says to leave that up to staff and engineers, they will take care of that. He says that he found out that there is irrigation at that location. That will be useful to water trees and to have perennials and annuals that they can water and change those out. There is also electricity in this location. The pallet sign has its own lighting but keep it in mind that it is available. Heise explained that there will be 3 options types presented, a basic plan, a silver plan, and a platinum plan. It is all based on aesthetics. He said that they are very constrained by the geographic space that they can work on. The Committee discussed the different options and ideas. They agreed to discuss this further at the next meeting.

#### 4. Village Square:

Committee member Roche said that the banner is up, and the old playground has been torn down and removed from the Park. Superintendent Herbert said that it went really well, and they do have it disassembled and laying on the ground at Public Works. He said that he has someone who is willing to take the old equipment and hopefully, she can breathe new life into it. He has been in contact with Jeremy from Sinclair, and he asked now that they have the playground decommissioned, if he can work with them now. He would like to take advantage of the nice weather and keep the process going. Jeremy is going to come out and go over site prep, removing a lot of the old mulch that is deteriorating. Herbert also spoke with him on the timeline for the new playground to be delivered. It is supposed to be delivered late February or early March they will take possession of it. They already have some of the components, like the musical pieces, that are already there. He said that summer is going to be here soon, and we need this playground to be up and running. They threw out the possibility of starting the building on April 15 for the community build aspect of the project. Herbert mentioned that they will have to reschedule or add bonus time to the Brush & Leaf collection for March as they are scheduled at the same time. He said that they could also make an exception and allow people to put their material out for little bit longer that week. The community build will likely be a three day build but they want to allow for a week just to allow for anything that comes up. After that, Sinclair wants another week possibly to have their installers go through and make sure that everything is done and torqued down correctly. He said that they will not rush that process. They are thinking they may open the park the week of May 6<sup>th</sup>. They would love to have it open before Memorial Day. He said that if the Committee is good with the dates, he will work on solidifying those with Jeremy.

#### 5. Park Street & Mount Baldhead Improvements:

Committee Member Johnson said that the subcommittee met this week and the notable topic that came up in the meeting was that they want to resurrect that engineer plan to try and get a walkway down there because it is dangerous. She said that they have been talking about this for 30 years getting something there. Let's put that in motion and pull up those three plans and maybe get a fourth one that they can work with for their beloved corridor of Park Street and get a walkway down there. She thinks they need to pull that engineer in for a discussion

and get something done. She said that she isn't talking about this big beautiful grandiose sidewalk. They are talking about something that fits with that natural character of that beautiful corridor. The material is beautiful, there is no perfect planning for it or landscaping anything but a walkway that makes it safe. She said to be quite honest, they are not really slowing people down enough, and it's pretty scary. They would also like to work on traffic calming things, maybe down the road, creating that as a district where they can pull in art pieces there, whether they're natural, like driftwood or the deer. The idea is to slow people down with different beautiful ways. They would also like to adjust the signs. They would like to thank you for the two three-way stops and their little sign down at the Chain Ferry.

City Manager Heise gave an update on the AT&T project. He said that City Council approved a lease for the AT&T project, which is very positive for getting cell service in the radar tower. Through that project, City Council asked for three things:

- Restoration of the vegetation of the stairs. They will work with AT&T to provide some money for that.
- Restroom improvements. They are exploring the pumphouse where there is an existing restroom that has one potty, which the Historical Society runs and operates through a lease through the City.
- Painting on the radar tower.

He says he thinks the total asking is like \$85,000 for all of these things. That is where the project stands at this moment.

Committee member Roche said that they spoke with Eric about the museum. Eric said that the bathroom in the Historic Society is incredibly old. They do not allow visitors to use it as it is and there is no power to flush. It works for employees, but they cannot keep up with the visitor traffic. The building has a historical designation, so nothing to the exterior could be changed. He did say that they potentially could do something inside of the building. Eric mentioned that they have leased the building since the 1990's and they do put a lot of work into it and take pride in it. They are open to changes or collaboration and is up to having any of them go through to take a look as he has keys to it. Roche said that after she spoke with Eric, she spoke to Steve Hutchins who manages that on a regular basis. She shared that they have a Mount Baldhead study group, and they are working on this. Since they are part of it, they would like to make it a cohesive space and that they do want to bring them into the conversation. He is unsure of what the capabilities there are.

### **Review Next Steps:**

Chair Baldwin said that she will share the bathroom renderings with you guys. The next PPW meeting will have to be rescheduled because it is election day. The Committee agreed to reschedule the meeting for the 29<sup>th</sup> of February.

**Public Comments (Limit 3 mins):** None.



**Member Closing Comments:**

Committee Member Kimble – She is amazed at how much they have accomplished. The Friends of Blue Star Trail has lost some board members. Anyone interested or know anyone interested, they are looking for some help.

Committee Member Charak – He thanked Kelly and Glenna and told them they had done an amazing job.

Committee Member DeJong – She said it has been fun working with Kelly on the playground project. She also announced that February would be her last PPW meeting as she is moving out of the city to the township.

Committee Member Roche – She thanked everyone. She is really proud of all they have accomplished and noted how busy it has been.

Committee Member Johnson – Thanked everyone. She thinks it was a good meeting. She is ready to move forward on Park Street.

Chair Baldwin – She thanked everyone for a job well done. They have lots more work to do, it never stops. She said to think about where the committee was last year and where they are now, and things are in motion. She says she has much appreciation for the committee.

**Adjournment:**

*Motion by DeJong, second by Roche, to approve adjournment of the meeting. Via voice vote, motion carried unanimously. Chairwoman Baldwin adjourned at 10:46 a.m.*

Respectfully Submitted,

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Sara Williams, City Deputy Clerk & DPW Administrative Assistant