



**PARKS AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
March 26, 2024**

The Parks and Public Works Committee met for a 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, Johnson & Roche.

Absent: Committee member Kimble.

Others Present: Interim City Manager Cummings, DPW Superintendent Herbert, Clerk Wolters, City Engineer Moxey.

Approval of Agenda:

Motion by Charak, second by Roche, to approve the agenda for March 26, 2024. Via voice vote, motion carried 3-0.

Approval of Minutes: None.

Public Comments (agenda items only): None.

Review/Discussion:

A. Pallet Sign Design and Traffic Signal at Lake Street/Blue Star Highway for Blue Star Multimodal Path:

Jared Secor from C2AE was present to provide an updated landscape plan with a detailed sheet showing the signs proximity, addressing DPW's concerns about radial distance. He explained that the sign would be moved back 25-30 feet, with exact measurement to be confirmed. Committee member Johnson asked for clarification on the measurement from the dash line, with Secor confirming it is the diameter of the storm sewer. The Committee discussed the need to move the sign back 25 feet due to semi's turning, with Baldwin expressing concern about the cost and feasibility of the move. DPW Superintendent Herbert questioned the intersection design, specifically the island in the middle, which can be difficult to maintain during snowy weather. Herbert requested a more realistic rendering of the

completed package so he can get a grasp on what it will look like completed. Secor clarified that the renderings are meant to provide a general idea of the project's appearance, rather than a detailed, accurate representation of the completed design. Baldwin suggested that MDOT may be able to provide guidance on island placement for traffic calming measures. Cummins explains that the island in the middle of the intersection is not a requirement, but rather a suggestion from transportation engineers to improve safety. Roche asks if there are any regulations regarding the size of trucks entering the city, and Herbert replies that he is not aware of any demonstrated problems with the current curve. Cummins added that if they wanted the turn radius option, the Pallet sign would need to be set back much further than it is right now. If they don't do the turn radius option than the Pallet sign would not need to be moved back as far and it would be less costly. Herbert said that adding more signage that says, "no trucks this way", rather than reconfiguring the iconic Pallet sign may be a more practical solution to address truck issues at that intersection. Chair Baldwin asks how much further out they could take the turn to eliminate the need for a pedestrian refuge island. Secor explains that removing the island wouldn't necessarily make the turn shorter, as the island wasn't suggested as a direct result of the turning radius being there. City Engineer Moxey suggested designing a rolled curb instead of a full curb on the island to reduce plowing issues, while still providing visual and tactile cues for drivers. He also suggested a smaller curb height (from 6" to 3") to accommodate trucks and wheelchair accessibility.

The Committee discussed potential changes for a pedestrian crossing, with a focus on reducing movement of the Pallet sign. Baldwin suggests eliminating the island at the intersection to simplify the design and reduce confusion. The Committee discussed the potential for signaling to include pedestrian signals, and the need for signage to direct walkers across the street. They also discussed electrical infrastructure for traffic signals at the intersection and design for the trail, with concerns about maintenance vehicles and timeline. Herbert discussed the maintenance plan for the trail, including the potential of needing a new piece of equipment to maintain the bike path. Cummins said that he would talk with Secor after the meeting to discuss the timeline and when they need some final recommendations, get the Historic District to look at the Pallet sign piece, and then to City Council to make some decisions on the Pallet sign and whether or not the Council is willing to fund the traffic signal portion. He will ask Secor when certain decisions are needed by to continue with the design. He advised the Committee that they may have a situation where they are asked to come in for a special meeting to get the project moving forward.

B. Mount Baldhead Bathroom Replacement:

DPW Superintendent Herbert presented a rendering of the proposed bathroom replacement for Mount Baldhead, with two unisex units and an exterior door for maintenance materials. He explains that the project will build a new structure in the same footprint of the existing building without any federal regulations, as it's a local project funded by the City. The Commission discussed the potential design elements, including a messaging board or wayfinding sign under the roofline, and a bulletin board-like feature for the blank wall.

Motion by Roche, second by Charak to send this to City Council to look at rebuilding the bathrooms at Mount Baldhead. Upon voice vote, motion carried 3-0.

C. Study Group Updates:

1. Invasive Species:

Committee Member Charak discussed six invasive species that they are dealing with in the City of Saugatuck. Charak will gather information to share in an upcoming meeting with the Committee. He will give a synopsis of each one for the local homeowners to read and provide contacts and resources from the area to help them take care of the issue.

2. Airport Property:

Interim City Manager Cummins provides updates on the council's discussions with the donor regarding the trails at the airport property. Staff will gather information on what the conservation easement options are, and they will bring information back to Council for an ultimate decision. Committee member Charak emphasizes the importance of preserving the 170-acre woodland area, citing its potential loss of an ecosystem that hasn't been disturbed in 70-90 years.

3. Blue Star Multimodal Path (Lake Street):

None. Already covered earlier in meeting.

4. Village Square:

Committee member Roche and Chair Baldwin organized a community build event for April 15-17 for the new Village Square Playground. They are seeking 30-40 volunteers to help with some of the physical labor moving things around, but they will also have some table settings where people can sit and put the nuts, bolts, and widgets together. Everyone is welcome to be a part of it.

5. Park Street & Mount Baldhead Improvements & AT&T Status:

Committee member Johnson suggested hiring a firm with a landscape architect to create a master plan for Park Street after a year and a half of work and a couple of engineering studies. The master plan for Park Street will prioritize safety and preserving the area's natural beauty and will include improvements to roads, walkways, utilities, and signage. They emphasize the importance of considering the impact of any changes on the surrounding area and the people that use it. Herbert recommended addressing massive infrastructure projects one at a time due to high costs.

Committee members and city staff discussed design options for a new walkway in parallel with other projects, prioritizing safety and minimizing encroachments in the right of way. Johnson suggested a collaborative approach to designing Park Street involving the Committee and City Engineers to solve problems one at a time. Roche raised concerns about ADA compliance and the potential for legal challenges, given Park Street's uniqueness. Chair

Baldwin insists on taking back city property before moving forward with any plans. Johnson stressed that the street is getting busier and says that there needs to be more development and they need to improve pedestrian safety.

DPW Superintendent Herbert discussed the need to repair and upgrade restrooms and the upper platform, with a cost estimate for the platform at \$200,000 to \$300,000. Herbert also discussed the condition of retaining walls on the east side of the radar dome area, which may require rebuilding at a cost of \$50,000 to \$100,000. City Engineer Moxey said that the plans would need to be revised with modern materials to get a true cost estimate and a new rendering would be needed for further discussion. He said that there is a limit to how much they can change up there because they are dealing with critical dunes. Herbert said that permitting could take a while, but they are hoping they can build the restrooms this fall.

Motion by Roche, second by Charak to send this to City Council to discuss the observation deck and replacement of the retaining walls at Mount Baldhead. Upon voice vote, motion passed 3-0.

Cummins provided an update on the status of burying electric lines on Park Street. Roche questioned since the Committee would like to create a master plan for Park Street, would that have any bearing on what they're doing with burying the lines. Moxey explained that he would for sure want to coordinate with them and maybe guide them to a specific location or things like that. He said that when they are going underground, they would be less in their way than if they've got poles above ground that they would have to work around.

Review Next Steps: None.

Public Comments (Limit 3 mins):

- **Nancy Kimble (550 Spear):** Kimble advocated for completing the bike trail construction by 2025 to retain grant dollars. She thinks the traffic signal should be installed as it is very important for the safety aspect of the trail, and if anything else is needed they can put it in at a later date. She is excited about the restrooms at Mount Baldhead but thinks the design is really basic and hopes they can make it look more attractive or appealing. Lastly, she echoed Charak's comments on the airport property and reiterated the importance of retaining that as a natural area since they have so few natural areas left.
- **Lisa Mize (CVB, 95 Blue Star Hwy, Douglas):** Mize praised the committee for their progress on various projects, including the intersection at Blue Star and Lake and the Multimodal Path, the bathrooms at Mount Baldhead, the Village Square playground, and the future of Park Street. She said initially when they spoke about the message board at Mount Baldhead, there was a possibility of letting the CVB handle the messaging board. If that is still an option, they would love to help. Mize also offered to help Roche get the word out to the public for the playground community build, for whatever days are needed.

Member Closing Comments:

- Committee Member Johnson – Johnson said that she came into the meeting a little on edge about stuff but is leaving feeling a whole lot better. She thinks this is a great group and agrees with Mize, they are doing great, very important work.
- Committee Member Charak – Charak thanked Glenna & Kelly for doing the amazing work they have done on the airport property and the park. He said that it is incredible what they have accomplished and the amount of time that they have put in. He also shared an interesting fact about black foxes on the airport property highlighting their rarity.
- Committee Member Roche – Roche said that the members of the Five-Year Parks Plan steering committee, the West Michigan Trails Director, the CVB, and the Creative Director from the ODC met recently to discuss wayfinding signage. Roche also emphasized the importance of the airport property as a park asset for the community.
- Chair Baldwin – Baldwin closed by thanking all of the volunteers as they are working hundreds of hours unpaid and in many times thankless. She also emphasized the importance of green spaces for the economy and community, while addressing negativity towards the airport property.

Adjournment:

Motion by Roche, second by Kimble, to approve adjournment of the meeting. Via voice vote, motion carried 3-0. Chair Baldwin adjourned at 11:22 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sara Williams, City Deputy Clerk & DPW Administrative Assistant