



**Saugatuck Township
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 13, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.
Saugatuck Township Hall
Meeting held in person & via Zoom**

Call to Order: Supervisor Bigford called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

Roll Call:

Present: Supervisor Abby Bigford, Clerk Rebecca Israels, Treasurer Jon Helmrich, Trustee Brenda Marcy, and Trustee Stacey Aldrich.

Absent:

Also Present: Township Manager Daniel DeFranco, Recording Secretary Morgan Coulston, Dorothy Hansen, Bill Lefley, Andrew Milauckas, Brad Lubbers, Russ Borsma, Linda Salisbury, Dan Slaler, Sherle Hampshire, Ashley Little, Rea.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Agenda:

Supervisor Bigford introduced the agenda. Israels requested the removal of agenda item 1 under Policy and the addition of a presentation video by Lynn Kirkaldy and Doug Manning on lakeshore concerns.

A **Motion** was made by Bigford to approve the agenda as amended. Supported by Israels.

Discussion: None

Voice Vote: 5-0.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Public Comment:

- Dorothy Hansen advocated for implementing a cap on short-term rentals and requiring annual safety inspections.
- Brad Lubbers, the newly appointed County Commissioner succeeding the late Dean Kapenga, introduced himself and shared his background.
- Russ Borsma of Arrowaste outlined the company's expanded recycling services and emphasized offerings that set them apart from competitors.

Public Comment Closed

Approval of Consent Agenda: Supervisor Bigford introduced the consent agenda.

1. Bills & Review of Invoices
 - a. Total Bills and Payroll: \$335,198.65
2. Approval of the Minutes: October 9, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes, October 18, 2024 Special Meeting Minutes, and October 25, 2024 Special Meeting Minutes
3. Disbursements
4. Reports:
 - a. Fire Board
 - b. Parks Commission
 - c. Interurban Board
5. Operations:
 - a. GEI Contract Amendment
 - b. County Ground Water Monitoring Well Agreement

A **Motion** was made by Aldrich to approve the consent agenda as presented. Supported by Marcy.

Discussion: None

Voice Vote: 5-0.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Presentations:

1. Allegan County Legal Center

Linda Teeter from the Allegan County Legal Center presented an overview of the Center's history and its current efforts to assist Allegan County residents with legal needs.

2. Lakeshore Erosion Presentation

A video by Lynn Kirkaldy and Doug Manning highlighted concerns from Lakeshore Drive residents regarding excavation and erosion in the area.

Old Business:

1. Blue Star Hwy Sidewalk

At the Board's request, the Township Engineer provided an updated estimate for constructing a sidewalk along the east side of Blue Star Highway from Old Allegan Road north to 134th Avenue, with a total estimated cost of \$1,050,000 for engineering and construction. The project scope included:

1. Installing an ADA ramp at the northeast corner of the Old Allegan Road roundabout.
2. Enclosing the roadside ditch from 3277 Blue Star Highway to 3319 Blue Star Highway.
3. Adding a mid-road pedestrian crossing with signage and lighting to alert traffic, along with ADA ramps on both sides of Blue Star Highway.
4. Building a boardwalk to cross the stream north of Starlite Resort.
5. Constructing a retaining wall south of North Street/134th Avenue.
6. Installing an ADA ramp on the south side of North Street.

This project aligned with the Blue Star Drain District construction, creating cost-saving opportunities and reducing future disruptions in this area. Sidewalks along Blue Star were highlighted as key safety improvements in the Blue Star Corridor Safety Plan, and residents consistently prioritized pedestrian enhancements, including crosswalks, in public surveys and input sessions for the Safety Plan and Non-Motorized Infrastructure Master Plan.

The Board considered this project in the context of other major financial obligations for the Road Fund in the 2025–2026 fiscal year.

The Board discussed the project's costs and the potential for increased expenses if delayed. They also weighed the urgency of completing the work all at once versus dividing it into phases.

A **Motion** was made by Helmrich to table the decision until the December Board meetings. Supported by Aldrich.

Discussion: None

Voice Vote: 5-0.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

New Business:

a. Commission and Board Appointments

a. Fire District Board

The Board reviewed the need to appoint a representative to the Saugatuck Township Fire District Board, as Trustee Aldrich's term had expired. The Board considered reappointing Aldrich, noting the precedent of having a Township Trustee serve as one of the appointees. The appointment carried a six-year term.

A **Motion** was made by Marcy to appoint Stacey Aldrich as Board Representative of the Saugatuck Township Fire District Board for a 6-year term. Supported by Marcy.

Discussion: None.

Voice Vote: 5-0

Motion Carried Unanimously.

b. Community Recreation Advisory Board

The Township had one appointment to fill on the Community Recreation Advisory Board for a two-year term expiring June 30, 2026. Ashley Little-Rea, a Township resident, expressed interest in the community recreation program and the Parks Department. As the sole applicant, the Board considered appointing Ms. Little-Rea as the Township Representative to the Community Recreation Advisory Board.

Little-Rea was in attendance and answered questions from the Board regarding her background on the Community Recreation Advisory Board along with

A **Motion** was made by Aldrich approve the appointment of Ashley Little-Rea to the Community Recreation Advisory Board for a term set to expire on June 30, 2026. Supported by Israels.

Discussion: None.

Voice Vote: 5-0

Motion Carried Unanimously.

b. High Risk Erosion

DeFranco distributed materials and introduced a memo highlighting the need for a High Risk Erosion Overlay along Lake Michigan's lakeshore, west of Lakeshore Drive. He explained that this initiative would involve Planning and Zoning Administrator Lynee Wells working with the Planning Commission. He also proposed a temporary moratorium on building permits west of Lakeshore Drive to ensure proper safeguards were in place during the overlay's development.

The Board discussed the earlier presentation on lakeshore erosion, emphasizing the urgency of addressing the issue to prevent further collapse. However, members expressed reservations about implementing a moratorium before the Planning Commission had thoroughly reviewed it.

During the discussion, Andrew Milauckas interjected, noting that materials related to the moratorium were not included in the public meeting packet and expressing concern that the public had not been given an opportunity to review them. DeFranco clarified that the materials would be made available following the meeting.

Ultimately, the Board hesitated to take formal action on the matter, opting to defer decisions until further review could be conducted.

c. Moore's Creek Watermain Loop

The Board reviewed a proposal to loop an existing dead-end watermain in conjunction with the Moore's Creek residential development on Blue Star Highway, south of Clearbrook Drive. The approved development includes a 343-foot watermain extension, as required by the Developer, to reach the property line. An existing dead-end watermain on Clearbrook Court lies 450 feet from the planned termination point of the Moore's Creek watermain. This presents an opportunity for the Township to extend the watermain and create a loop to improve water system reliability.

Looping the watermain would require the Township to secure an easement from a property owner on Clearbrook Court. The Developer has offered to design and manage the construction of the looped watermain, while the Township would bear the cost of securing the easement and the additional 450-foot extension, estimated at approximately \$73,000.

The Board authorized staff to work with the Developer and Township Attorney to draft a formal agreement for Board review, detailing the shared responsibilities and costs for completing the watermain loop.

d. Lakeshore Drive Resolution 2024-29

The Board considered adopting a resolution to classify a proposed road as a major collector for national functional classification purposes. The planned road, to be designed and constructed parallel to Lakeshore Drive between 126th Avenue and 130th Avenue, aimed to achieve two objectives: reconnecting the southern end of Lakeshore Drive to 130th Avenue, which had been severed in 1988 due to coastal erosion, and providing an alternative route for residents and businesses in the event of future road failures.

Classifying the road as a major collector was essential for eligibility in a federal grant program being pursued by the Road Commission to partially fund its design and construction. The resolution also conveyed the Township's support for the Road Commission's efforts and expressed interest in converting Lakeshore Drive into a non-motorized linear park once all parcels gained access to the new road and the Road Commission opted to abandon Lakeshore Drive.

A **Motion** was made by Marcy to adopt Resolution No. 2024-29, a resolution for National Classification of a new road as a Major Collector. Supported by Aldrich.

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Israels, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously

Reports: Supervisor Bigford opened the floor for reports.

Treasurer's Report

Helmrich gave an update on the Township finances; the report is on file.

Planning Commission

Helmrich gave an Planning Commission meeting report; the report is on file.

Manager's Report

Township Manager DeFranco gave an update on the Township projects; the report is on file.

Open Board Report:

- Israels provided an overview of the general election, including key moments, voter turnout statistics, and feedback from voters.
- Bigford commended Israels for her efforts during the election.
- Aldrich thanked Israels for her work and provided an update on the initial Tri-Community Wildlife Board meetings.
- Helmrich congratulated Israels on the successful election, acknowledged the reelected Board Members, and welcomed Clerk-Elect Cindy Osman.
- Marcy expressed gratitude to Israels for her professionalism, organization, and respect during the election process.

Public Comment:

- Andrew Milauckas apologized for his earlier interruption and criticized the lack of transparency in presenting and handling the high-risk erosion materials.
- Bill Lefley commended Clerk Israels for her election work, echoed Milauckas's concerns about the high-risk erosion materials, and raised objections to the Lakeshore Drive Resolution, specifically the proposal to convert Lakeshore Drive into a non-motorized linear park.

Public Comment Closed

Adjournment: Supervisor Bigford adjourned the meeting at 8:12 PM

MOTIONS

1. A **Motion** was made by Bigford to approve the agenda as amended. Supported by Israels.
Discussion: None
Voice Vote: 5-0.
Motion Carried Unanimously.
2. A **Motion** was made by Aldrich to approve the consent agenda as presented. Supported by Marcy.
Discussion: None
Voice Vote: 5-0.
Motion Carried Unanimously.
3. A **Motion** was made by Helmrich to table the decision until the December Board meetings. Supported by Aldrich.
Discussion: None
Voice Vote: 5-0.
Motion Carried Unanimously.
4. A **Motion** was made by Marcy to appoint Stacey Aldrich as Board Representative of the Saugatuck Township Fire District Board for a 6-year term. Supported by Marcy.
Discussion: None.
Voice Vote: 5-0
Motion Carried Unanimously.
5. A **Motion** was made by Aldrich approve the appointment of Ashley Little-Rea to the Community Recreation Advisory Board for a term set to expire on June 30, 2026. Supported by Israels.
Discussion: None.
Voice Vote: 5-0
Motion Carried Unanimously.
6. A **Motion** was made by Marcy to adopt Resolution No. 2024-29, a resolution for National Classification of a new road as a Major Collector. Supported by Aldrich.
Discussion: None
Roll Call Vote:
7. Yes: Bigford, Israels, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy
8. No:
Motion Carried Unanimously

Respectfully,

Morgan Coulston

Recording Secretary

I, Cindy Osman, Township Clerk, certify that these minutes were approved on December 11, 2024 by the Township Board.


Cindy Osman, Township Clerk

12/11/2024
Date

