



**Saugatuck Township
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, December 11, 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 6:02 PM

Roll Call:

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

Absent:

Also Present: Township Manager Daniel DeFranco, Recording Secretary Morgan Coulston, Lori Myer-Austin, Eric Austin, Lynn Kirkaldy, Nancy Bonham, Andrew Milauckas, Joe Milauckas, Chadd Hartman.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Agenda:

Supervisor Bigford introduced the agenda. Helmrich requested that item 4 under "New Business" be moved up to item 1.

A **Motion** was made by Helmrich to approve the agenda as amended. Supported by Marcy.

Discussion: None

Voice Vote: 5-0.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Public Comment:

- Joe Milauckas expressed gratitude to the Board for thoroughly reviewing the potential moratorium before implementation. He also raised concerns about the Planning Commission's adherence to the Open Meetings Act, alleging that a secret meeting occurred following the November 19th regular Planning Commission meeting.
- Andrew Milauckas thanked the Board for postponing the moratorium to gather additional information. He also shared concerns regarding the language and word choice in the memo under the "New Business" section related to the moratorium.

Public Comment Closed

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

1. Bills & Review of Invoices
 - a. Total Bills and Payroll: \$168,251.01
2. Approval of the Minutes: November 13, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes
3. Disbursements: \$99,793
4. Reports:
 - a. Fire Board
 - b. Parks Commission
 - c. Interurban Board
 - d. Tri-Community Wildlife Committee
5. Correspondence
 - a. MERS Renewal

- b. Comcast Franchise Renewal
 - c. ACCF Letter
6. Operations:
- a. Farmland Agreement
 - b. Comcast Local Franchise Agreement Amendment
 - c. Regular Board Meeting Schedule, Res. 2024-30
 - d. Off-Premise Tasting Room License, Res. 2024-31
 - e. Superseding Purchase and Sale Agreement and Restrictive Covenant
 - f. Progressive Professional Planning Services

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

Discussion: None

Voice Vote: 5-0.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Presentations: None

Policy

1. Clerk Transition

The term for Rebecca Israels as Township Clerk concluded, and Cindy Osman was elected to serve as the new Township Clerk for a four-year term. Osman was sworn in prior to the meeting. Supervisor Marcy read a proclamation on behalf of the Board of Trustees, expressing their deepest gratitude to Israels for her outstanding contributions to the community. Newly elected Clerk Osman introduced herself to attendees and conveyed her heartfelt appreciation to Israels for paving the way and establishing a strong foundation for the Clerk's office.

2. Short Term Rentals

At the November Township Board meeting residents expressed concerns related to Short Term Rentals. The Board recognizes those who have brought it to their attention, stating that they aren't taking immediate action but are going to look into the matter and take the appropriate action after. The Board thanked those who have raised their concerns.

Old Business: None

New Business:

1. High Risk Erosion Moratorium Ordinance 2024-03

The Board considered adopting a six-month moratorium on accepting new building and zoning applications for properties located in the High-Risk Erosion area along Lake Michigan. The Planning Commission recommended the temporary moratorium to allow time for reviewing permitted activities in the High-Risk Erosion area and drafting zoning regulations aimed at reducing development impacts on coastal erosion while respecting private property rights.

The proposed moratorium exempted building and zoning permits for constructing or repairing beach stairs. For new stairs, the minimum lot line setback was set at 15 feet. Purely interior renovations and demolition projects were also exempt. However, Planning Commissioners did not reach a consensus on whether to exclude applications for new stairs, leaving the Board to decide whether to retain or eliminate this exemption.

The Township received a request from the Lakeshore Association to exempt single-family home building permits from the moratorium for properties pending sale or sold within the last two months. The exemption required that new homes maintain a 150-foot setback from the Lake's ordinary high-water mark and avoid excavation altering bluff elevations. The Zoning Administrator expressed concerns about the exemption's ability

to address construction techniques that might further destabilize the bluff. Additionally, the Planning Commission had not reached a consensus on the matter, and the Township Attorney warned that the exemption could complicate moratorium enforcement during permit reviews.

The proposed moratorium was set to terminate after six months or upon the adoption of a new High-Risk Erosion Ordinance, whichever came first. The Board retained the option to extend the moratorium through a resolution if needed.

Helmrich noted that the Planning Commission believed it could complete the new ordinance within four months. Osman, however, recommended keeping the six-month timeline, emphasizing that the Board could lift the moratorium early if the ordinance was finalized ahead of schedule. The Board deliberated whether to maintain the six-month duration or shorten it to four months.

A **Motion** was made by Marcy to adopt Ordinance No. 2024-03 An Ordinance to Impose a Temporary Moratorium on the Acceptance of New Building and Zoning Applications for Properties Located on the Shoreline of Lake Michigan and to include the change in duration to 4 months instead of 6 months. Supported by Helmrich.

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Osman, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously.

2. Board Liaison to Planning Commission

At the start of the new term for elected Trustees, the Board needed to appoint a Liaison to the Planning Commission for a four-year term. Treasurer Jon Helmrich, who had been serving in this role, announced his decision to step down, expressing appreciation for his time on the Commission and a desire to support the Township in other capacities.

Clerk Cindy Osman expressed interest in the position, citing her prior experience and a commitment to assisting the Planning Commission. Supervisor Bigford nominated Osman to serve as the Board Liaison to the Planning Commission.

A **Motion** was made by Helmrich to approve the appointment of Cindy Osman as Board Liaison to the Saugatuck Township Planning Commission. Supported by Marcy.

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Osman, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously.

3. Board Liaison to Road Commission

As the start of the new term for elected Trustees, the Board needed to appoint a Liaison to the Road Commission. Trustee Brenda Marcy, who previously held the role, expressed her desire to continue serving in this position.

A **Motion** was made by Aldrich to appoint Brenda Marcy as Board Liaison to the Allegan County Road Commission. Supported by Aldrich.

Discussion: None

Voice Vote: 5-0

Motion Carried Unanimously

4. Blue Star Hwy Sidewalk

At the Board's request, the Township Engineer provided an updated estimate of \$1,050,000 for constructing a sidewalk on the east side of Blue Star Highway from Old Allegan Road to 134th Avenue. The project scope included the following:

- Installation of an ADA ramp at the northeast corner of the Old Allegan Road Roundabout.
- Enclosure of the roadside ditch from 3277 Blue Star Highway to 3319 Blue Star Highway.
- Installation of a mid-road pedestrian crossing with signage and lighting to alert traffic, along with ADA ramps on both sides of Blue Star Highway.
- Construction of a boardwalk crossing the stream north of Starlite Resort.
- Installation of a retaining wall south of North Street/134th Avenue.
- Installation of an ADA ramp on the south side of North Street.

The project was planned to coincide with the construction of the Blue Star Drain District to capitalize on cost-saving opportunities and avoid future disruptions in the area. Sidewalk construction along this route was identified as a key safety improvement in the Blue Star Corridor Safety Plan. Additionally, residents prioritized pedestrian enhancements, including sidewalks and crosswalks, in surveys and public input sessions for both the Blue Star Safety Plan and the Non-Motorized Infrastructure Master Plan.

The Board noted the Drain Office's contribution to covering the drains and discussed the financial implications, particularly in relation to the Road Fund's other significant obligations for fiscal year 2025–2026.

A **Motion** was made by Aldrich to approve the inclusion of the construction of a sidewalk on the east side of Blue Star Hwy between Old Allegan Rd and 134th Ave in the scope of construction for the Blue Star Drain Project and direct Township Manager to request next steps from the County Drain Office. Supported by Osman.

Discussion: None

Voice Vote: 5-0

Motion Carried Unanimously

5. Adoption of Blue Star Highway Corridor Safety Plan, Resolution 2024-32

The Board considered adopting the Blue Star Highway Corridor Safety Plan, which was developed by the Safe Street Committee formed in December 2023. The Committee, tasked with improving safety along the northern section of Blue Star Highway, reviewed crash and traffic data and conducted various public engagement activities, including a walking audit, online survey, open house, and public presentation. Based on this input, the Committee drafted a safety plan aimed at serving all users of Blue Star Highway, outlining specific road design modifications and principles to guide future planning and zoning decisions. The Board was asked to carefully review the plan and consider formal adoption via resolution.

A **Motion** was made by Helmrich to adopt Resolution 2024-32, a resolution adopting the Blue Star Highway Corridor Safety Plan. Supported by Aldrich.

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Osman, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously

6. MERS Amendment and Adoption of a Health Care Savings Plan, Res. 2024-33

The Board considered several proposals: (1) a contribution addendum to the Township's MERS Defined Contribution portion of its Hybrid plan, (2) an amendment to the existing Hybrid Adoption Agreement introducing a vesting schedule for the Employer 457 match, and (3) adoption of and participation in a Health Care Savings Program (HCSP).

The proposed contribution addendum would establish a maximum Employer match of 3% to an employee's 457 account. The amendment to the Hybrid Adoption Agreement would introduce a 5-year graded vesting schedule for the Employer 457 match, with 20% increments. Currently, no vesting schedule exists for this match.

The Board also considered establishing an HCSP. If authorized, the Township would adopt a .5% Employer contribution and a .5% mandatory Employee contribution. The proposal also included permitting up to 40 hours of unused PTO per year for leave conversion. Adopting the HCSP would require the Board to pass a resolution and authorize the HCSP Participating Agreement and Contribution Addendum. The HCSP allows employee

accounts to grow tax-free, and upon separation, funds can be accessed for tax-free medical reimbursements. This program would also address unused PTO accumulation, compensating employees without allowing excessive carryover, as current Township policy does not permit PTO or sick time accumulation.

A **Motion** was made by Helmrich to authorize the amendment of an existing Adoption Agreement and Contribution Addendum for MERS Defined Contribution effective January 1, 2025 as well as to adopt Resolution 2024-33 adopting the MERS Health Care Savings Plan and authorize the execution of the MERS Health Care Savings Program Participation Agreement and Contribution Addendum for MERS Health Care Savings Plan effective January 1, 2025. Supported by Osman.

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Osman, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously

7. Roundabout Landscape Notice of Award

The Board considered issuing a Notice of Award to Apex Contractors, Inc. for hardscaping and sculpture installation at the Blue Star Hwy Roundabout. A bid opening was held on December 4th, with Apex submitting the lowest bid at \$74,400. Following an interview with Viridis Design, the Township's landscape design firm, Apex was deemed capable of completing the work.

A **Motion** was made by Osman to award the Roundabout Landscape project to Apex Contractors, Inc. and authorize the Township Manager to execute necessary contracts for this work. Supported by Helmrich.

Discussion: Aldrich stated that her stance on the sculpture and placing it in the middle of the roundabout has not changed and she is not in favor of this.

Voice Vote: 4-1

Motion Carried

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 a Planning Commission meetings 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:

- Aldrich thanked Helmrich for his dedication and contributions to the Planning Commission.
- Helmrich congratulated Osman on her new role and the Board on their re-election, as well as Osman's election to the Board.
- Osman expressed gratitude to the Board for the opportunity to apply her skills and knowledge on the Planning Commission.
- Marcy joined Aldrich in thanking Helmrich for his service on the Planning Commission.

Public Comment:

- Lynn Kirkaldy expressed gratitude to the Board for their dedication and service to the community.

Public Comment Closed

Adjournment: Supervisor Bigford adjourned the meeting at 7:21 PM

MOTIONS

1. A **Motion** was made by Helmrich to approve the agenda as amended. Supported by Marcy.
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 Osman.
Discussion: None
Voice Vote: 5-0.
Motion Carried Unanimously.
3. A **Motion** was made by Marcy to adopt Ordinance No. 2024-03 An Ordinance to Impose a Temporary Moratorium on the Acceptance of New Building and Zoning Applications for Properties Located on the Shoreline of Lake Michigan and to include the change in duration to 4 months instead of 6 months.
Supported by Helmrich.
Discussion: None
Roll Call Vote:
Yes: Bigford, Osman, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy
No:
Motion Carried Unanimously.
4. A **Motion** was made by Helmrich to approve the appointment of Cindy Osman as Board Liaison to the Saugatuck Township Planning Commission. Supported by Marcy.
Discussion: None
Roll Call Vote:
Yes: Bigford, Osman, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy
No:
Motion Carried Unanimously.
5. A **Motion** was made by Aldrich to appoint Brenda Marcy as Board Liaison to the Allegan County Road Commission. Supported by Aldrich.
Discussion: None
Voice Vote: 5-0
Motion Carried Unanimously
6. A **Motion** was made by Aldrich to approve the inclusion of the construction of a sidewalk on the east side of Blue Star Hwy between Old Allegan Rd and 134th Ave in the scope of construction for the Blue Star Drain Project and direct Township Manager to request next steps from the County Drain Office. Supported by Osman.
Discussion: None
Voice Vote: 5-0
Motion Carried Unanimously
7. A **Motion** was made by Helmrich to adopt Resolution 2024-32, a resolution adopting the Blue Star Highway Corridor Safety Plan. Supported by Aldrich.
Discussion: None
Roll Call Vote:
Yes: Bigford, Osman, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy
No:
Motion Carried Unanimously
8. A **Motion** was made by Helmrich to authorize the amendment of an existing Adoption Agreement and Contribution Addendum for MERS Defined Contribution effective January 1, 2025 as well as to adopt

Resolution 2024-33 adopting the MERS Health Care Savings Plan and authorize the execution of the MERS Health Care Savings Program Participation Agreement and Contribution Addendum for MERS Health Care Savings Plan effective January 1, 2025. Supported by Osman.

Discussion: None

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: Bigford, Osman, Helmrich, Aldrich, Marcy

No:

Motion Carried Unanimously

9. A **Motion** was made by Osman to award the Roundabout Landscape project to Apex Contractors, Inc. and authorize the Township Manager to execute necessary contracts for this work. Supported by Helmrich.

Discussion: Aldrich stated that her stance on the sculpture and placing it in the middle of the roundabout has not changed and she is not in favor of this.

Voice Vote: 4-1

Motion Carried

Respectfully,

Morgan Coulston

Recording Secretary

I, Cindy Osman, Township Clerk, certify that these minutes were approved on January 8, 2024 by the Township Board.

Township Clerk

1/8/2025

Date

