

**Planning Commission  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, April 15, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.  
Meeting held in person & via Zoom  
Saugatuck Township Hall**

**Call to Order:** Vice Chair Ground called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**Roll Call:**

Present: Jackie Ground, Denise Webster, Ken Butler, Cindy Osman, Steve McFadden

Absent: Dave Ihle, Gordon Stannis

Also Present: Planning and Zoning Administrator Lynee Wells, Recording Secretary Morgan Coulston, Jon Helmrich, Jane Dickie, Chuck Carlson, Eric Murch (via Zoom).

**Approval of Agenda**

Ground introduced the agenda.

A **Motion** was made by Butler to approve the agenda as presented. Supported by Osman. Motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Minutes from the March 18, 2025 were reviewed.

A **Motion** was made by Butler to approve the minutes from the March 18, 2025 meeting as presented. Supported by Webster. Motion carried unanimously.

**Public Comments:**

Ground opened the floor for Public Comment.

- Jane Dickie highlighted her involvement with the Rural Character Committee for the Zoning Ordinance and her service on the Parks Commission, expressing her support for the Land Conservation and Public Access Plan.

Ground closed Public Comment.

**New Business:**

1. Public hearing to consider an ordinance to amend sections 8.20, 12.70, 18.20, & 22.10 of the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to clarify the definition of "structure" and correct miscellaneous typos.

Wells provided a summary of the proposed ordinance amendment.

Ground opened the Public Hearing at 6:10 PM for public comment. There was none. Ground closed the Public Hearing at 6:11 PM.

A **Motion** was made by Webster to approve the recommendation to the Township Board for a zoning ordinance amendment to amend sections 8.20, 12.70, 18.20, & 22.10 of the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to clarify the definition of "structure" and correct miscellaneous typos. Supported by Butler.

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Yes:** Ground, Webster, Butler, Osman, McFadden

**No:**

Discussion: None

Motion carried unanimously via roll call vote.

2. Public hearing to consider an ordinance to amend section 3.40 of the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to change the side setback in the R-3 zoning district from 10 feet to 15 feet.

Wells outlined the key provisions of the proposed ordinance amendment.

Ground opened the Public Hearing at 6:13 PM for public comment. There was none. Ground closed the Public Hearing at 6:14 PM.

A **Motion** was made by Webster to approve the recommendation to the Township Board for a zoning ordinance amendment to amend section 3.40 of the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to change the side setback in the R-3 zoning district from 10 feet to 15 feet. Supported by Butler.

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Yes:** Ground, Webster, Butler, Osman, McFadden

**No:**

Discussion: None

Motion carried unanimously via roll call vote.

3. Public hearing to consider an ordinance to amend section 14.60 of the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to provide that Township's low impact development standards apply to all developments requiring site plan review.

Wells presented an overview of the proposed changes to the ordinance.

Ground opened the Public Hearing at 6:15 PM for public comment. There was none. Ground closed the Public Hearing at 6:16 PM.

A **Motion** was made by Webster to approve the recommendation to the Township Board for a zoning ordinance amendment to amend section 14.60 of the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to provide that Township's low impact development standards apply to all developments requiring site plan review. Supported by Butler.

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Yes:** Ground, Webster, Butler, Osman, McFadden

**No:**

Discussion: None

Motion carried unanimously via roll call vote.

4. Public hearing to consider an ordinance to amend sections 8.180 and 8.300 of the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to modify the special use criteria for mineral extraction and mobile food units.

Wells reviewed the details of the proposed ordinance amendment.

Ground opened the Public Hearing at 6:20 PM for public comment. There was none. Ground closed the Public Hearing at 6:21 PM.

A **Motion** was made by Webster to approve the recommendation to the Township Board for a zoning ordinance amendment to amend sections 8.180 and 8.300 of the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to modify the special use criteria for mineral extraction and mobile food units with modifications. Supported by Butler.

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Yes:** Ground, Webster, Butler, Osman, McFadden

**No:**

Discussion: None

Motion carried unanimously via roll call vote.

5. Public hearing to consider an ordinance to amend section 7.120 of the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to private streets that are required to be paved must use MDOT 21A specification aggregate.

Wells delivered a briefing on the proposed amendment to the ordinance.

Ground opened the Public Hearing at 6:22 PM for public comment.

- Jane Dickie inquired whether alternative grade levels could be considered or if the ordinance language could be revised to allow greater flexibility.

Ground closed the Public Hearing at 6:24 PM.

A **Motion** was made by Butler to approve the recommendation to the Township Board for a zoning ordinance amendment to amend section 7.120 of the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to private streets that are required to be paved must use MDOT 21A specification aggregate with modifications. Supported by Osman.

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Yes:** Ground, Webster, Butler, Osman, McFadden

**No:**

Discussion: None

Motion carried unanimously via roll call vote.

6. Public hearing to consider an ordinance to add a new section 7.140 to the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to require and establish standards for the review of grading plans.

Wells explained the intent and scope of the proposed ordinance amendment.

Ground opened the Public Hearing at 6:27 PM for public comment. There was none. Ground closed the Public Hearing at 6:28 PM.

A **Motion** was made by Webster to approve the recommendation to the Township Board for a zoning ordinance amendment to add a new section 7.140 to the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to require and establish standards for the review of grading plans. Supported by Butler.

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Yes:** Ground, Webster, Butler, Osman, McFadden

**No:**

Discussion: None

Motion carried unanimously via roll call vote.

7. Use Determination, Blue Star Bend LLC, 5500 sf. office building, parcel 20-003-039-00 on a 2.19 acre lot in the C-1 district. Applicant: Andrew Murch.

Applicant Eric Murch presented an overview of the revised site plan, highlighting modifications made in response to prior feedback from both the public and the Planning Commission. He emphasized that the primary use of the building was for office space.

The Planning Commission discussed the proposed use, focusing on the definition of the use category, the function of the attached garage, and the overall intended use of the building.

A **Motion** was made by Webster to determine that the proposed 5,500 sq. ft. office building and storage garage by Blue Star Bend LLC, located on parcel 20-003-039-00 (2.19 acres) in the C-1 district, was not consistent with the intent or permitted uses of the C-1 district zoning classification as their global business model does not serve the local community and storage is not a permitted use. Supported by Butler.

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Yes:** Webster, Butler, McFadden

**No:** Ground, Osman

Discussion: None

Motion carried 3-2 via roll call vote.

#### **Old Business:**

1. Consideration of a Planned Unit Development for a proposed 30 unit development comprised of 10 duplex buildings (20 units total) and 2 townhome buildings (12 units total) on parcel: 20-003-028-00. Item postponed on February 11, 2025.

Wells provided an update based on her memo, outlining the revisions made to the project and highlighting key concerns for the Planning Commission to consider.

The project engineer presented the updated plans and explained the changes made since the previous review.

The Planning Commission discussed several aspects of the proposal, including available sewer capacity, the potential need for a rezoning request, clarification of open space as public or private, compliance with density bonus requirements, the inclusion of pickleball courts, pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks and trails, the revised architectural styles, the location of the retention pond, and applicable setbacks.

A **Motion** was made by Butler to postpone the consideration of a Planned Unit Development for a proposed 30 unit development comprised of 10 duplex buildings (20 units total) and 2 townhome buildings (12 units total) on parcel: 20-003-028-00 based on the criteria in the planner's memo. Supported by Osman.

**Voice Vote:** 5-0

Discussion: None

Motion carried unanimously via voice vote.

#### **Communications**

- A. Presentation on Land Conservation Plan: Postponed until the May meeting.

- B. Correspondence: None.

- C. Commission Comments:

Webster states that she and Planning and Zoning Administrator Wells would be meeting to review the bylaws and create a list of them to review at one of the upcoming meetings.

- D. Township Board Report: Osman gave a brief overview of the Township Board meeting.

- E. Staff Updates: No updates were provided on Blue Star Brewery (approved October 15, 2024) or Best Buds (extension granted until May 20, 2025). AutoCamp received a demolition permit for part of the hotel, and the first building permit for Barno on Warner Drive was issued.

#### **Public Comments:**

Ground opened the floor for Public Comment.

- Jon Helmrich thanked the Planning Commission for its thoughtful discussion of the PUD proposal and emphasized the importance of maintaining the tree buffer—a concern shared by neighboring residents. He expressed support for the proposed rezoning of the C-2 portion of the property and commended the Commission for choosing to postpone its decision to allow for further consideration.

Ground closed Public Comment.

#### **Adjourn:**

A **Motion** was made by Butler to adjourn at 8:09 PM. Supported by Webster. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

## MOTIONS

1. A **Motion** was made by Butler to approve the agenda as presented. Supported by Osman. Motion carried unanimously.
2. A **Motion** was made by Butler to approve the minutes from the March 18, 2025 meeting as presented. Supported by Webster. Motion carried unanimously.
3. A **Motion** was made by Webster to approve the recommendation to the Township Board for a zoning ordinance amendment to amend sections 8.20, 12.70, 18.20, & 22.10 of the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to clarify the definition of "structure" and correct miscellaneous typos. Supported by Butler.  
**Roll Call Vote:**  
**Yes:** Ground, Webster, Butler, Osman, McFadden  
**No:**  
Discussion: None  
Motion carried unanimously via roll call vote.
4. A **Motion** was made by Webster to approve the recommendation to the Township Board for a zoning ordinance amendment to amend section 14.60 of the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to provide that Township's low impact development standards apply to all developments requiring site plan review. Supported by Butler.  
**Roll Call Vote:**  
**Yes:** Ground, Webster, Butler, Osman, McFadden  
**No:**  
Discussion: None  
Motion carried unanimously via roll call vote.
5. A **Motion** was made by Webster to approve the recommendation to the Township Board for a zoning ordinance amendment to amend section 14.60 of the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to provide that Township's low impact development standards apply to all developments requiring site plan review. Supported by Butler.  
**Roll Call Vote:**  
**Yes:** Ground, Webster, Butler, Osman, McFadden  
**No:**  
Discussion: None  
Motion carried unanimously via roll call vote.
6. A **Motion** was made by Webster to approve the recommendation to the Township Board for a zoning ordinance amendment to amend sections 8.180 and 8.300 of the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to modify the special use criteria for mineral extraction and mobile food units with modifications. Supported by Butler.  
**Roll Call Vote:**  
**Yes:** Ground, Webster, Butler, Osman, McFadden  
**No:**  
Discussion: None  
Motion carried unanimously via roll call vote.
7. A **Motion** was made by Butler to approve the recommendation to the Township Board for a zoning ordinance amendment to amend section 7.120 of the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to private streets that are required to be paved must use MDOT 21A specification aggregate with modifications. Supported by Osman.  
**Roll Call Vote:**

**Yes:** Ground, Webster, Butler, Osman, McFadden

**No:**

Discussion: None

Motion carried unanimously via roll call vote.

8. A **Motion** was made by Webster to approve the recommendation to the Township Board for a zoning ordinance amendment to add a new section 7.140 to the Saugatuck Township Zoning Ordinance to require and establish standards for the review of grading plans. Supported by Butler.

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Yes:** Ground, Webster, Butler, Osman, McFadden

**No:**

Discussion: None

Motion carried unanimously via roll call vote.

9. A **Motion** was made by Webster to determine that the proposed 5,500 sq. ft. office building by Blue Star Bend LLC, located on parcel 20-003-039-00 (2.19 acres) in the C-1 district, was not consistent with the intent or permitted uses of the C-1 zoning classification. Supported by Butler.

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Yes:** Webster, Butler, McFadden

**No:** Ground, Osman

Discussion: None

Motion carried 3-2 via roll call vote.

10. A **Motion** was made by Butler to postpone the consideration of a Planned Unit Development for a proposed 30 unit development comprised of 10 duplex buildings (20 units total) and 2 townhome buildings (12 units total) on parcel: 20-003-028-00 based on the criteria in the planner's memo. Supported by Osman.

**Voice Vote:** 5-0

Discussion: None

Motion carried unanimously via voice vote.

11. A **Motion** was made by Butler to adjourn at 8:09 PM. Supported by Webster. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Respectfully,

*Morgan Coulston, Recording Secretary*