



CITY OF HURON
CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

February 18, 2022

Matthew Lasko, City Manager

ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Firelands Scientific: The City has received final site plans from Firelands Scientific related to a substantial expansion of their facility in the Huron Corporate Park. The site plan was presented to the planning commission on 12/15/21 and received unanimous approval. The project does need to get additional approvals on lighting plans, however. This is truly an exciting project, and we are appreciative of the Company's willingness to expand operations in the City. The expansion includes, but is not limited to additional growing space, offices, warehousing, and parking along with landscaping enhancements.

USGS/Harbor Point Marina: At the planning commission meeting on 12/15, the next phase of the Harbor Point Marine project was presented. The second phase (the first being the construction of the USGS facility which is underway) includes a new storage facility and the construction of an approximate 2,500 square foot Harbormaster House. The site plan received approval, however, the developers will need to still secure approval of their landscaping plan and undergo design review of the exterior materials for the facility. We are excited that the owners/developers continue to move forward with additional phases of this transformational project. Developers are still determining what, if anything, will happen to the larger blue storage building on site.

Buckeye Sports: The City has received plans from Buckeye Sports for the construction of their water/marine craft facility in Lake Erie Parkway. This will be a wonderful addition to the City and the corporate park and will result in development on the last remaining parcel within the Corporate Park. We are hoping to see construction commence soon and want to wish them a big welcome to the community.

South Shore Marine: Staff recently met with representatives from South Shore Marine regarding an upcoming expansion. The company is looking at adding another large indoor storage facility just east of their campus. The currently facility is estimated to represent an additional \$1.5M investment in the community. We hope to be able to present this project to planning commission at an upcoming meeting and we are grateful for the company's continued investment and expansion efforts in Huron.

Ardagh/Sawmill Pkwy: Construction continues on the approximate 300,000 square feet worth of additions to the expanded facility. The City has approved the vacation of about 300-400 feet of roadway at the eastern end of Sawmill Parkway based on a recommendation of approval from the Planning Commission. That vacation agreement has now been fully executed. Related, the city is finalizing the process of receiving a dedication of land from Ardagh which will be partially utilized for the installation of a turnaround primarily to aid emergency vehicles in their maneuvering the eastern terminus of the Parkway. We hope to have the new plat recorded shortly, although it will require for the city to publicly dedicate the eastern most 1/3rd of the road prior – which was found to have never been completed through our title search.

Additionally, based on recent conversations with corporate representatives, the total investment in the facility that is anticipated by year end is closer to \$580M versus the historically reported

\$411M. Additionally, they are anticipating 322 employees by year end versus the earlier reported 211 employees.

Regarding Sawmill Parkway reconstruction. The engineering drawings and bid documents are nearly complete. However, as the city was finalizing the title report (as a requirement of the EDA funding) it was discovered that the easternmost approximately 40% of the roadway was never publicly dedicated – even though it is publicly owned. Therefore, staff plans to present a dedication plat to Planning Commission on February 23, 2022 – which if approved will be presented to Council at our first meeting in March and if approved there, will be immediately recorded with the County. Once that step is complete, the city will be sending all title documents and final construction drawings to EDA for final sign off as a last step before publicly bidding the construction project.

ConAgra: The late fall and winter months were critical months for completing several items to continue to move the ConAgra development further. Since the announcement and selection of NAI Harmon Group out of Toledo as the preferred developer, the following has occurred:

- The city completed the rezoning process for the approximate 10-acre parcel from Industrial to mixed-use zoning. This went through the three-reading process. Additionally, 4 amendments were simultaneously made to the zoning code which included: (1) restricting residential uses on the ground floor of only commercial buildings, (2) permitting transient-rental uses, (3) requiring conditional use permits for any outdoor display of goods and permitting places of worship.
- The city, in partnership with Huron Schools and EHOVE, approved a Tax-increment financing package to aid in the City's financing of the public infrastructure of the site.
- Completed an appraisal of the entirety of the site in partnership with Cushman and Wakefield – one of Ohio's premier appraisal and commercial brokerage firms.
- Completed an engineering analysis of the condition of the existing seawalls at the site with the aid of KS & Associates which reviewed the existing condition of the seawalls as well as provided cost estimates and options for improvements to the revetment treatments at the site.
- Completed const estimates for the installation of a new public loop road throughout the site and extension of utilities through the site.

We therefore held a re-kickoff meeting with the folks from NAI Harmon this week to talk next steps. These steps include among other items:

- Completing detailed engineering drawings for roadway, seawall, and utility improvements.
- Completing detailed site plan for planning commission review.
- Finalizing site control and agreed upon purchase price (if the site control if to be an outright sale of the property) – with of course a claw back to ensure publicly accessible green space in perpetuity.

- Completion of comprehensive development agreement laying out responsibilities and development timelines.
- Beginning the permitting process with Army Corp of Engineers for revetment activities.

We will keep Council and the public aware of updates as the occur.

Sawmill Creek: On July 13th, the City voted to pursue the annexation of nine (9) parcels currently located in Huron Township – and more easily recognized as the Sawmill Creek Resort, Conference Center and Golf Course. On July 16th, Huron Township consented to the annexation and agreed to move forward. The reasoning behind the proposed annexation is to provide local subsidy to the project via a financing tool commonly referred to as a “Section 41 Tax Increment Financing.” The type of proposed financing can only be undertaken by a municipality and cannot be undertaken by a township – hence the need for the proposed annexation. The final major hurdle needing to be accomplished was consideration and approval of the TIF by the Huron School District. We are happy to report that on July 20th, the School Board voted to approve the 30-year, 75% TIF. We are so grateful for the support of the School Board and the Administration and believe we set forth a truly mutually beneficial package that will both ensure a long-term predictable revenue stream to the district while also ensuring adequate revenues to both complete the Sawmill Creek Resort project and fund a capital infrastructure fund to address the western gateway to the City and the intersection of Cleveland Road and Rye Beach. This is truly a tremendous public private partnership involving the city, Township, School District and Cedar Fair. There is still a great deal of legislation needing to be brought forth to effectuate the annexation and TIF, which will be occurring over the next several months including but not limited to:

- Development agreement
- Service payment agreement
- TIF Ordinance
- Final Annexation Agreement
- Bond issuance for Sawmill Creek redevelopment

On January 11th, 2022, Council approved both school compensation agreements for the project, one with Huron Schools and one with EHOVE.

Most recently, Cedar Fair is in the process of executing the deed sets and will be sending to the City in the very near future. Once this step is accomplished, the City will be able to move forward immediately with consideration of both School Compensation Agreements and consideration of the final TIF Ordinance.

Additionally, Cedar Fair agreed verbally to an annual service payment of \$450,000 on top of what is currently being collected from the property. Based on the agreed upon School Compensation Agreements, this will equate to a new \$112,500 annually for Huron Schools and \$6,750 for EHOVE. The remainder, \$330,750 a year (or nearly \$10M over the life of the TIF) will be utilized to retire the debt to renovate the project and to undertake public infrastructure investments around the property.

508 Main Street: An interested developer for 508 Main Street has officially presented the city with a Letter of Intent (LOI) for review. Staff and legal counsel are currently reviewing the terms of the proposed LOI. We hope to be able to present the LOI to Council for consideration in the next few weeks. The LOI would be the first in a two-step process that results ultimately in the consideration of a Purchase and Sale Agreement. The proposal would be for predominantly or exclusively a residential type of development.

INFRASTRUCTURE/STREETS/UTILITIES/IT

Rye Beach Road/Cleveland Road Corridor: Based on the continued redevelopment of Sawmill Creek Resort and all the existing and growing investments along Rye Beach Road and industrial parks, the city has begun conversation with the Ohio Department of Transportation about safety and traffic control upgrades along Rye Beach Road – with major emphasis on the intersection of Rye Beach and Cleveland Road. These upgrades include roundabouts on Rye Beach Road, and the intersection of Rt. 6 and Camp Street, road widening in front of Sawmill Creek Resort, intersection upgrades at Perkins Avenue and Rt. 6 and the installation of a multi-use bike path connecting Huron to Sandusky. ODOT District 3 and Central Office are so impressed with the amount of investment along the corridor, that ODOT District 3 has been encouraged to submit a TRAC application to Central Office seeking funding for engineering, right of way acquisition and eventual construction. That application will require collaboration with Sandusky, Perkins Township, Huron Township, and the Railroad. A series of weekly meetings has been established to ensure District 3 is poised to submit their TRAC application to Central office by May of this year – with funding to be announced in December.

Additionally, it has come to the City's attention that Central Office thinks so highly of the corridor project that it has been selected as one of two projects in the state to be submitted by ODOT to the U.S. Department of Transportation. These applications are due to the federal government in April of this year with funding decisions to be made in August or September of this year.

Participating jurisdictions will be expected to provide some form of local match which will be requested in late-march or early April. Based on this, staff plans to present updated plans and cost estimates to Council during an upcoming work session in March.

Safe Routes to Schools: The City will be making two (2) applications to the Ohio Department of Transportation for Safe Routes to Schools funding. These applications will be for Berlin Road – from Shawnee Elementary School southward. Additionally, the city will be seeking additional funding for new sidewalks east of Shawnee Elementary from Gateway Boulevard eastward to Huron Green. Based on poor scoring, the city is not going to submit the application for Jim Campbell.

Sidewalks: The City, in partnership with Huron Township is exploring a sidewalk installation project that would link the current eastern sidewalk terminus (Gateway Boulevard) all the way

to the entrance of Huron Green. This project is instrumental for enhancing walkability and connectivity between multiple subdivisions and Huron's multiple amenities but will more importantly create a safe connection for those traversing Cleveland Road. OHM has completed their proposal for design which is approximately \$40,000. If Council and the Trustees desire to move forward, 2022 would be used a planning design year with construction to occur in 2023. It should be noted, the 2022 budget does include the City covering half of the design costs for the project.

Additionally, staff will be making application for this project through Erie Regional Planning Commission – Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for supplemental funding for this project. The MPO recently released a request for proposals, due February 25th, 2022, seeking transportation alternative projects (bike and pedestrian) based on having additional Coronavirus Relief and Response dollars. The MPO has approximately \$280,000 available with project maximums set at \$93,414. As part of this application, the city and the Township will need to enter into a collaborative agreement. A draft of that agreement has been prepared by the city and has been approved by Huron Township. Ultimately, this agreement will also need to be presented to Council for consideration which will be done at the normal Council meeting on February 22, 2022.

Rt. 6 Streetlights: Installation of the new streetlights as part of Route 6 Phase I is substantially complete. There are several of the new lamp heads that malfunctioned during testing which have since been removed. It is anticipated that these will be replaced in the next two weeks, contingent on weather conditions. The new flashing beacon for the pedestrian island near Shawnee School has also been installed. Finally, as mentioned before, the city will continue ongoing conversations with Ohio Edison to ultimately have the poles abandoned to permit the city to install similar heads that exists throughout the corridor.

Street Resurfacing: The City has received a proposal from OHM to undertake an update to our pavement condition report and is currently reviewing in hopes of approving in early 2022. We hope to undertake this work in early 2022 to develop a plan for resurfacing in future years. We are planning to have approximately \$500,000 available for local street resurfacing and critical repairs in 2022 which is a combination of normal capital budgeting of \$200,000 and year end transfers of \$300,000. The list of roads to be recommended for resurfacing and repair will be based on the 2020 pavement condition report. Our Streets Foreman and OHM will be meeting shortly to provide recommendations for roadwork for 2022.

Stormwater Management: The City and OHM staff recently met to review a proposal to undertake a stormwater management plan for the city. The City continuously is engaged by residents related to stormwater issues they are facing across the City. The ultimate plan would be to undertake an exhaustive process to map the existing stormwater system throughout the City, undertake hydraulic modeling to determine capacities of the system, and then put together a capital improvements plan to systematically make upgrades to the system which will

denote cost and priority. Staff is in receipt of the proposal and is currently reviewing to determine what portions of work may be able to be accomplished in 2022.

Body Worn Cameras: in 2022, the IT Department and the Police Department will begin exploring funding opportunities to acquire and begin implementation use of body worn cameras. These cameras are becoming prevalent in nearby police departments and our officers and sergeants have expressed interest in them as well. In addition to exploring funding opportunities, we will also begin getting a sense of the cost of purchase and understanding any additional IT upgrades to store the content.

Website: The City has budgeted \$50,000 for a revamp of the City's website in 2022. Although this work may extend into early 2023, the city desires to begin the process in the upcoming months. First, we are recommending issuing a Request for Proposal to IT/web development firms in April with hopes of presenting a preferred firm to Council for consideration shortly thereafter.

ZONING/CODE/PLANNING

Condemnation and Demolition: Staff is currently working with SSEG to explore ways to increase the expediency and efficiency of the City's condemnation and demolition process. Although not needed often, when it is, time is usually of the essence. We hope to have recommendations for Council review within thirty (30) days.

Tree Assessment: Similar to the sidewalk assessment program, the City is exploring a tree assessment program for property owners who need to remove dead, dying or diseased trees from their property. The cost of removing a tree can be very expensive. Through the assessment program, property owners would have the option of, in essence, financing the removal through an assessment on their real estate taxes. Additionally, we are proposing to amend the code to ensure the services of a certified arborist are engaged to determine the health of trees being removed. Additionally, it may be worth considering a requirement be included to replant a new tree in its place to ensure long term health of the City's tree canopy.

Signage Code: The City is also undertaking a comprehensive review of our signage code – related to both permanent and temporary signage. This review is aimed at simplifying our code for greater clarity while also taking into consideration some recent court rulings at the state level regarding enforcement capabilities. We hope to have a draft for consideration in early Spring of 2022.

Main Street Corridor Plan: Staff met with the team from OHM this week to review the draft workplan and scope for the Main Street visioning and community outreach process. We are planning a robust community outreach process facilitated by OHM that will include broad community meetings, stakeholder meetings and a steering committee as we move towards adoption of a plan that will enhance the corridor and create cohesion from Bogart Road to the Pier. The plan will be achievable, financeable, and most importantly, informed by the

community. We anticipate presenting a proposal to Council in the upcoming weeks to begin this process.

Local Preference: Staff and SSEG put together a memorandum or Council review regarding the exploration of a local preference ordinance. Local preference in essence, provides a legally permissible means to increase the likelihood of local suppliers and contractors to be selected to receive City contracts. The memorandum will provide detail on how local preference works and a cross section of other communities to determine if they have local preference ordinances and how they are structured. Staff will await guidance from Council in terms of whether to move this conversation forward and to begin drafting legislation. This also may prove to be a good topic for an upcoming work session of Council in March of April.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Coastal Management Assistance Grant: on October 15, 2021, the City submitted two (2) pre-applications to ODNR for their Coastal Management Assistance Grant Funding. Upwards of \$500,000 (which requires a 1:1 match) is available to communities within a limited coastal area to help fund projects related to coastal planning, public access, water quality, land acquisition, habitat restoration and research. On November 2, the city was notified by ODNR that we are being encouraged to re-submit both of our applications for full consideration. The City submitted two (2) pre-applications:

- A request to secure funding to increase public access to the developing beach behind the water plant and
- A coastal planning grant that would cover the area of Lakefront Park eastward to the Huron River also encompassing the northern portion of main street.

Staff has officially submitted both proposals and will be awaiting decisions from the grant funding applications at some point in 2022. We will keep Council aware of any news related to these applications throughout 2022.

Public Boat Launch: Staff received notification from ODNR this week of their intent to replace the lamp heads at the public boat launch. ODNR plans to contract with All Phase Lighting, Inc. to replace all twenty-five (25) lamp heads. The replacements will be LED and will help with the continued loss of light that has been occurring at the boat launch and parking lots for the last few years. Based on our agreement with ODNR, capital replacements costs are the responsibility of ODNR who will be funding the entire project. Staff will keep Council aware of proposed timeline for the work to be completed – which will be dictated by material availability and contractor's schedule. We continue to be appreciative of ODNR's continued investment in the boat launch property.

Fish Cleaning Station: The City held a pre-bid meeting with interested contractors and/or sub-contractors for the upcoming fish cleaning station construction project. The pre-bid meeting was held during the week of February 14th. Final bids and cost-estimates are due to the City on Friday,

February 25th, 2022. If the results of that bidding process result in submission of an acceptable bid, staff hopes to present a contract to Council for consideration in March. Based on this timeline, we are still planning for the project to be substantially completed by June 30, 2022.

FINANCE

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA): The final ruling on APRA fund guidance was issued in January. The guidance provides more flexibility on allowable uses for smaller governments. Staff discussed these updates and the preliminary spending plan with the Finance Committee on February 7th. The following link will direct you to the ARPA spending plan, as well. Staff will request a work session with Council to review this plan more in detail.

<https://stories.opengov.com/huronoh/published/YTvWGM0YO>

Monthly Financial Report: The December 2021 financial report was distributed to Council at the end of January. The City's General Fund ended the year with a 32% reserve balance, which allowed the City to increase the paving budget for 2022 by \$300,000. 2021 income tax revenue was 18% higher than 2020. The January 2022 financial report will be sent to Council by mid-February.

WATER DEPARTMENT

Active Projects:

- Plant expansion underway – currently removing deck of sedimentation basin #5. Work is still anticipated to be completed by the summer of 2022.
- Installing new Cat5 conduit and wire to all CCTV locations in WTP
- Assembling first order of Neptune automated meter reading transmitters
- Completing year end closeout reports for OEPA and ODNR
- Assembling data for Poggemeyer water rate study (finance as well)

PERSONNEL

Annual Report: The City plans to reinstitute the production of an annual report. Hopefully to be published and available in early March, the report is meant to provide the public with a summary of department outcomes and accomplishments for 2021 and a snapshot of the City's financial position. We feel it is very important to both celebrate the accomplishments and hard work of our various departments and staff while also increasing the avenues that we can communicate to the public about the work of the City. Based on the amount of content, we are likely

considering a 10–12-page annual report for 2021. This will be in addition to our normal set of two (2) newsletters we also publish.

Police: The City is beginning the process to add an additional full-time police officer to the force – which was included as part of the 2022 budget. Final testing is underway for the preferred candidate in hopes of having that process completed shortly. We anticipate this hire to be completed either February or very early March.

Human Resources: The City is currently developing a plan to enhance our human recourse capacity – a dedicated function that has been needed for years. Currently, Human Resources needs are handled through our Commission Clerk, City Manager's Office, and Finance. However, neither of these departments or personnel are specifically trained in human resources – although they have done a tremendous job filling in. We envision needing 10-20 hours weekly (and on call availability). We will keep Council up to date when the plan is finalized – and look forward to enhancing these services for our employees.

Finance Director: The City continues to receive resumes and applications for the Finance Director position. The administration will begin the interview process with qualified candidates during the week of February 21 and likely continue those interviews through the week of February 28th.

CONTRACTS

Agreements/contracts that will expire in 2022 include:

- OHM Advisors (Engineering)
- Erie Soil and Water Conservation District (Engineering)
- Republic Services
- HJRD Annual Agreement (Recreation)
- Dispatch Agreement – Erie County Sheriff
- Seeley, Savidge, Ebert & Gourash Co., LLP (Law)
- Dynegy Energy Services – Electric Aggregation Program
- Bricker & Eckler – HPP Legal Services (Law)
- Police Chief Employment Agreement

UPCOMING MEETINGS

February

Planning Commission: February 23, 2022, at 5:00pm in the Council Chambers.

Records Commission: February 25, 2022 at 9:00am in the Main Conference Room.