



CITY OF HURON
CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

March 10, 2023

Matthew Lasko, City Manager

ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Firelands Scientific: Due to pending legislative changes in Columbus, expansion activities are currently on hold until any changes are finalized.

USGS/Harbor Point Marina: The next phase of the Harbor North revitalization is underway. Crews are currently hard and fast at work constructing the approximate 2,500 square foot Harbor Master Building. The entire framing of the facility is completed at this point.

ConAgra: The development team presented to the Planning Commission on Wednesday December 14th for consideration of their conceptual site plan. There was good conversation and the developer left with some suggestions and will return with updated conceptual soon – in March of 2023. If approved, developers will still be required to complete the thorough design review process and final site plan approval including landscaping and lighting plans in 2023.

Warren Slag Property: As of March 10, 2023, the City has officially closed on the purchase of the property and has accepted title. The City will not move to the next step in the process of layout out potential designs for the site along with getting more detailed utility and infrastructure cost estimates for improvements.

Also, the City has met with Mr. Ray Enderle who is currently farming the property. The City is proposing to enter into a year-to-year lease with Mr. Enderle for \$5,000.00. Consideration of this lease agreement will be considered at our March 14, 2023, Council Meeting.

Erie County was also notified by the Economic Development Administration this month that their \$26,000 grant request to aid in the completion of a multi-county Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy was selected for further consideration. We hope to have an answer on the grant request shortly in hopes of commencing planning activities shortly thereafter. As a reminder, the completion of a CEDS is not a requirement for future EDA funding.

Main Street Parking Lot: The City has received preliminary plans from a developer interested in developing the vacant parking on Main Street that currently sits across the street from Comfort Inn. The preliminary plan calls for the construction of 14 townhouses. This project will first be presented to BZA in December as a handful of variances are needed. We will keep Council apprised as this project progresses.

Two Rivers: Developers and architects presented their Phase I PUD to Planning Commission on February 15th. The request was conditionally approved. Next steps will be a request of City Council to set a public hearing at the next Council meeting on February 28th. Phase I plans call for the buildout of the remaining single family lots on Sheltered Brook – which total 27 houses in all. Later phase plans will be submitted near the completion of Phase I.

Related, we anticipate presenting a development agreement to Council in the upcoming weeks related to the development. Moving forward, the City would like to start requiring developers

to enter into development agreements which include assurances for construction and completion of roadways, utilities, sidewalks, streetlights, etc....and creates the ability for the City to intervene through bonding to complete the work if needed. It also will create safeguards to ensure any public infrastructure eventually being dedicated to the City is designed to our specification and subject to our inspections.

INFRASTRUCTURE/STREETS/UTILITIES/IT

Rt 6 Phase II: Staff and Council hosted a second work session related to the second phase of Route 6. This work session aimed to finalize the preferred conceptual design of engineers and City staff as well as reviewing the possible options that were considered and will cover rough costs for certain options. Regardless of the preferred option, and final design decision will need to be approved by ODOT District 3 based on results of traffic studies and past precedence.

Sawmill Parkway: City staff, OHM and Smith Paving held a project update meeting the week of February 6th. Work is expected to start picking up again shortly. With the mild winter, the contractor will mobilize again hopefully in a few weeks to finish off storm work, and water work prior to working on the roadway itself. The team is also finalizing plans to hopefully install a temporary road off Rye Beach Road to ensure no disruption to traffic while contractors work on the most western portion of Sawmill Parkway.

A Stakeholders kickoff meeting was held in the Council Chambers on Wednesday February 22nd. This event was well attended with over twenty (20) representatives from impacted businesses. An overview of the project schedule was covered, along with anticipated problems and pinch points. All attendee we genuinely excited to see this project finally get underway and having a forewarning project schedule and impacts.

Sidewalks: The City has executed the design contract with OHM Advisors to commence design work on the new sidewalk installation project which will travel from Gateway Boulevard inside the City limits to Huron Green subdivision in Huron Township. Design will take several months, and both the city and the Township will continue to explore funding opportunities to construct the approximate \$600,000 project. To date, the project has secured \$25,000 from Huron Township and just over \$120,000 from Erie County Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Staff has sent easement documents for review to the four (4) property owners positioned between Anchorage and Gateway. Easements are needed to install and maintain this sidewalk connection. The City is also awaiting the results of a \$650,000 funding application made to ODOT Central office for the project. Results of that funding request are slated for April or May of this year.

Pavement Condition and 2023+ Resurfacing: OHM are currently in the design phase of this project. Core samples have been taken in multiple problem areas to discover any possible base issues and are currently being reviewed by staff and OHM.

Stormwater Management: The stormwater management plan phase 1 kickoff meeting was held with internal staff and the OHM Stormwater team. Everyone is excited to get this project rolling. The discovery phase will be very manual as staff will need to digitize old as built plans etc. This digitization needs done regardless, so this is a good means to prioritize this task. This project is expected to last eight (8) months to a year and will deliver a visual stormwater inventory to take us in to the future. During the time this project is active, you will see OHM staff around the city collecting data. If anyone has any questions or concerns, please contact Stuart Hamilton at 419-433-5000 x 1104 or email at stuart.hamilton@huronohio.us.

Body Worn Cameras: Huron Police Department was awarded \$92,602.02 which was short of the full application amount of \$154,336.70. We are still excited to get this amount and to move forward with the project. Local funds will be used to fill any gap in cost. A reminder, this is a 5-year project budget, and any gap in funding will be spread out over that five-year timeframe.

General: Reminder, there will be a lot of utility work over the summer months, and we wanted to alert our Residents. We will have two fiber internet providers starting to install their fiber for their "Fiber To The Home" (FTTH) offering. This is a wonderful expansion of service providers for the city giving Residents not only choice, but also hopefully driving down the cost. The two companies are OmniFiber and Frontier.

We will also see our OHM partners throughout the city for the remainder of the year collecting our Stormwater asset inventory.

If you have any questions regarding ongoing Utility work in your neighborhood, please reach out to Stuart Hamilton at 419-433-5000 x1104 or email stuart.hamilton@huronohio.us.

Quiet Zone: The City requested a work session at the second Council meeting in January of 2023 to be updated and educated on the idea of establishing a quiet zone. I know some council members are familiar, but we wanted to take time to ensure all members understand what they are, the benefits of them, and what potential timelines and costs would be to consider such a zone in the City. The City, in order to continue the exploration of the project, has received a proposal from Alfred Benesch and Co., out of Fort Worth, Texas to update the quiet zone study and related costs estimates. The City is currently reviewing the proposal.

Huron Public Power Third Transformer: On January 17th, 2023, an RFP was released to purchase, deliver, ramp up and test this third 69kV transformer. Bids will close February 28th at 2PM EST. We do not expect to be in possession of this unit until the Fall of 2024. This RFP will only cover the purchase, install and ramp-up of the transformer itself. Once we have a good delivery date, we will issue a second RFP for services to bring it online and provide new controls and switching equipment.

The RFP closed, and we received a single respondent. We have issued a request for clarification on some technical details, and if these are answered satisfactorily, we would bring back legislation to award to Council in the near future.

Huron Public Power Expansion: The City is getting close to bidding out our first expansion project for Huron Public Power. This project will allow Huron Public Power to be extended northward down Rye Beach Road, under the railroad tracks and across the entrance to Sawmill Parkway. By doing so, the City will be able to pick up additional customers along Sawmill Parkway on a case-by-case basis should property owners be interested in switching their power provider to Huron Public Power.

Republic Trash Collection Contract: Our current agreement expires on June 30th 2023, after exercising a one-year extension on the original contract. Staff attempted to negotiate within the current contract to manage costs, but could not come to agreement. This means we will issue a new Request for Proposals. This RFP will take a tiered and options approach allowing the city to compare pricing options and service levels to contain escalating costs. Staff do believe we will see higher pricing than we currently have.

Huron Port/West Pier: The City was recently notified that the U.S. Army Corp. of Engineers was recently approved to undertake \$11.5 million worth of work in the Huron River and on the West Pier. \$1.5 million is dedicated to dredging and \$10.0 million has been dedicated to West Pier maintenance. The City is still in talk with the USACE to understand the final scope of work for the West Pier. As soon as this is detailed, we will alert Council and the public. This award was one of the largest awards to any port in the great lakes region. A very big thank you to U.S. Representative Marcy Kaptur for all her advocacy in helping secure this critical funding.

ZONING/CODE/PLANNING

Coastal Management Assistance Grants: On February 22, the City was notified of the results of our grant applications to the Office of Coastal Management of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. The City's request for capital dollars to help install a public pathway to the beach behind the water plant was denied. However, we did receive notification that our grant request for Showboat/Wall Street/Lakefront Park planning has been advanced in the process. The application has been sent to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for review to ensure compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act. Final notification will be made in May or June.

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 fall of 2022.

Main Street Corridor Plan: OHM organized a joint planning commission and council meeting on November 16th, along with members of the steering committee regarding plan progress. This meeting covered work completed to date and reviewed results of the public survey that sought out the public's preferred amenities and land uses for the Main Street/downtown area. The City received over 725 unique responses to the survey in addition to feedback from the pumpkin festival and steering committee. The Planning Commission and Council were also provided an

opportunity to provide their feedback on desired streetscapes, land uses, and amenities. This meeting marked the close of the feedback phase of the plan. OHM will now utilize this information to begin drafting actual recommendations for the corridor. The Third Steering Committee meeting was carried out on February 7th. At this meeting, OHM planners presented the preferred land use recommendations for the corridor as well as the preferred streetscape plan based on feedback received during 2022. There will be one more steering committee prior to scheduling a joint Planning Commission and Council meeting – likely to take place sometime in March.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Fish Cleaning Station: At this late stage in the year, it has been decided to not install the actual fish cleaning tables until the spring. It is still anticipated that the rest of the facility will be substantially completed, less punch list items, by year end. All work on this project has been completed for this year. All that remains is to install the fish cleaning station in the spring. It was decided that we were far enough into the winter months that to protect this investment we would put it in to storage and install in the spring.

The tables have been installed, with the electrical work to follow soon, and testing to take place in April once the water has been turned on. ODNR is looking toward an official ribbon cutting in mid to late May, but a soft opening will take place prior to this and after testing is complete to make the station accessible to the public prior to the state ribbon cutting.

Tennis Courts: The City hopes to begin bidding this project in late March or very early April. The City will bid the project two (2) ways. Option 1 will include 5 tennis courts with 4 stiped pickle ball courts with mobile net systems. Option 2 will include 3 tennis courts with 6 permanent pickle ball courts. During the bidding process, the City will also be issuing a community survey to determine which type of sport is more desired and most likely to further activate Faben's. Results of this survey and bid will be presented at a work session to make a final decision on final design selection.

624 Berlin Road: Ed Burdue and Co. have demolished the single-family home and removed debris from the site. Crews will return to the site in the Spring of 2023 to complete final grading and seeding.

After soliciting multiple proposals, the City has decided to select City Architecture out of Cleveland. An agreement has been signed with the firm to guide staff and the community through the reimagining of this space. Deliverables will include multiple stakeholder meetings, community survey, structural analysis of the barn, aerial renderings, multiple site renderings and cost estimates.

Huron Joint Recreation District: Staff recently met with both Huron Township and the Huron School District regarding contributions to the district for 2023. We are happy to report, proposed contributions by the partners are proposed to decrease ever so slightly. The Township viewed the proposed budget very favorably and will hopefully act on the HJRD Agreement at an upcoming meeting. The School District met on February 21 and did not take action on the HJRD Agreement, nor did they vote on a revised financial contribution plan set forth by the School Administration. Based on the results of that meeting, the City will not be seeking School Board approval of any agreement in which they will be a party to moving forward.

Fieldhouse: The City organized a kickoff brainstorming session regarding the potential development of a field house – which was held on November 17th. These conversations are very exploratory to determine the appetite for such a facility amongst stakeholder groups and to talk very high level in terms of potential locations, amenities, fundraising plan, and operations. This meeting included representatives from the City, HJRD, Huron Township, Huron Schools, and the Boosters. A second fieldhouse exploratory meeting was held on January 9th at the Boat Basin. Attendees included the City, Township, School District, Boosters, and HJRD. Enthusiasm remains high. Action steps include securing operations expense comparisons from other like facilities and developing a community survey to determine what amenities initially are most desired by the community and student athletes. Initial conversations occurred regarding potential facility locations which include Fabens Park or spaces around Woodlands and McCormick. The group hopes to meet in the next month to review progress.

FINANCE

1st Quarter Water Bills: The first quarter water bills will be sent out by the end of March. This will be the first bill with the new water rate, approved by Council last fall. Customers should expect a 5% increase from the previous water bill. Notification of this rate change was included with the prior water bills.

2021 and 2022 Financial Audits: The auditors completed their audit testing this week on the 2021 financial statements and hope to have a draft audit report in the next week. Council will receive the audit report before it is released. There has been no indication of any reportable findings for 2021. The Finance Department expects to get back on schedule with the 2022 audit, which will result in the audit being released by July/August.

Link to February Monthly Financial Report:

<https://stories.opengov.com/huronoh/published/Ku0SDY6hN>

(email sent to Council on 3/10/2023)

WATER DEPARTMENT

Recent Activity:

- Chief Operator Training. Continued training and onboarding of Chief Operator Jones to cover absence until March 1st.
- Neptune AMR Transmitters. Actively installing Neptune AMR Transmitters on round 2.
- Completed 2022 ODNR withdraw report.
- Neptune East gateway operable.
- Submitted documentation to the State of Ohio for a second round of consideration for the \$5 Million water tower H2Ohio grant opportunity.
- Organized active projects with detailed notes to assist with departure.
- Painted boiler room following installation of new boilers.
- Completed annual water rate reconciliation with Erie County – no change in tier.
- Consumer Confidence Report draft in the hands of OEPA for review.
- Assist in review of application for Water Superintendent.

Active Project Updates:

- Sludge Lagoon – Ohio EPA NPDES. Poggemeyer completing study of comprehensive options and alternatives, report presented to Utilities Committee with preference found to be routing decant to plant recycle. Current plan is to merge this project with the Alternate Intake (below).
- Primary Intake. The annual intake crib inspection was completed on August 10th. During inspection, the diving crew noted that just inside the intake and past the riser, the intake was ½ full of debris. A full-length cleaning is required, which was last conducted in 1991. Funds will be budgeted in 2023 and the project will be bid in Spring 2023.
- Plant Re-Rating – Post-construction, it is now the goal to have the filtration plant rerated at 5.87 million gallons per day. The documentation for this process falls under the original contract with Poggemeyer for the expansion. PDG has submitted one application to the State for this rerating, but it has been returned for additional information with a notation that cited tables were missing. Jason Gibboney has emailed PDG on this and will continue to call and email until resolved. Poggemeyer has submitted a second application to the OEPA to rerate at 4.9 MGD which will remain a Class III facility. When and if we have a Water Superintendent certified at that level, we can then reapply to rerate to the full capacity of 5.87 MGD.

Sewer Shutoff's: The City has received final comments from Erie County on a potential agreement. We are currently reviewing these comments. This agreement, if approved, would be combined with a water rate increase agreement with Erie County. Related to that agreement, the City has received final comments back from Erie County and has approved the content. We are now waiting on Erie County to legislate and vote on the agreement.

South Main Street Watermain Replacement: The proposed improvements for this project include:

- Portions of South Main (south of Valleyview) approx. 775'
- Portions of Huron Avery from the Mudbrook to city limits, approximately 1300'
- Portions of Mudbrook Road approx. 650'
- Full replacement on Forest Hills, Valleyview, and Hickory Drive – approximately 2332'
- Full replacement on Mill Street approx. 342'
- Partial replacement on Huron Street approx. 605'

The City will also be exploring whether any road resurfacing should be included in this project as well and under the same contract to secure efficiencies in work and potential cost savings. Staff and OHM personnel have submitted one funding application already and are in process of completing one additional funding application for imminent submittal. OHM are currently in the design phase of this project. A pre-design walk through has been scheduled with City staff and we hope to have this project ready to bid my March 2023.

Secondary Water Intake Project: On January 17th, 2023, an RFQ was issued to choose a partner to design and bid this project. This RFQ will close on February 28th. Once a partner has been selected, and a design and bidding services proposal has been agreed upon, this will then come back to Council for final approval.

The city received two responses to this RFP. Staff is currently reviewing the qualifications and hopes to begin negotiations the preferred firm in the upcoming weeks. Additionally, staff is seeking additional funding for this project through U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur's office to offset a large portion of this project.

West Side Water Tower: The City unsuccessfully applied for \$5M to aid in the construction of a 2M gallon west side water tower in late 2021 through the state of Ohio's Water and Wastewater Infrastructure grant program. Our project was ranked second in Erie County in terms of priority. We were just informed that the state of Ohio is allocating another \$250M for this program in 2023 and is not accepting new applications. The funds will only be awarded to projects that were submitted in 2021 which is a positive. We will keep council apprised as the grants are announced later in 2023. We are reaching out to both our state representative and state senator for aid in advocating for this project.

PERSONNEL/ADMINISTRATION

Zoning Inspector/Assistant Planner: The City has made a conditional offer to a preferred candidate. We hope to hear back on the results of the offer sometime next week.

Police Department: The Police Department has posted both the promotional process for consideration of a new Sgt. To replace Chief Graham and has also posted the employment opportunity for a new patrol officer to replace the promoted Sgt. We hope to wrap up these hirings in the next 2-3 months.

School Resource Officer: The City has sent a School Officer renewal agreement to the Huron City Schools for consideration. Under the agreements, the City, School and Township each pay for 1/3 of the wages and benefits of a school resource officer. We anticipate the School District voting on the renewal at their March meeting.

AGREEMENTS

Temporary Easement Agreement: The City has executed a Temporary Easement Agreement with Bradley Francis, who owns property at the westerly end of Sawmill Parkway. Having this temporary easement will help to avoid backups on Rye Beach Road by installing a temporary access road across Mr. Francis' property.

CONTRACTS

Agreements/contracts that will expire in 2023 include:

- OHM Advisors (Engineering) – Expires **12/31/23**
- Erie Soil and Water Conservation District (Engineering) – Expires **1/31/24**
- Republic Services – Expires **06/30/23**
- HJRD Annual Agreement (Recreation) –**expired** 12/31/22
 - See above in Parks and Recreation section.
- Dispatch Agreement – Erie County Sheriff – Expires **12/31/23**
- Seeley, Savidge, Ebert & Gourash Co., LLP (Law) – Expires **6/3/23**
- School Resource Officer – Expires **8/31/23**
- Bricker & Eckler – HPP Legal Services (Law) – Expires **9/30/23**
- City Prosecutor Employment Agreement – expires **12/31/23**
- Personnel Officer Employment Agreement – expires **12/31/23**

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, March 14th at 6:30pm in Council Chambers;
- Planning Commission – Wednesday, March 15th at 5:00pm in Council Chambers;
- BZA – Monday, March 20th at 5:30pm in Council Chambers;
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, March 28th at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers;
- Records Commission Meeting – Thursday, March 30th at 9:00am in the Main Conference Room.