



CITY OF HURON
CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

November 23, 2021

Matthew Lasko, City Manager

ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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.

OHM continues to progress with final design and construction drawings in hopes of bidding out the construction in early 2022.

Staff and Ardagh are also in final review of a proposed CRA Tax Abatement request/agreement. We hope to bring forth that agreement to Council shortly after review and consideration of the agreement by both the Huron School Board and EHOVE. It should be noted, as of today, Ardagh has verbally agreed to a 15-year abatement that would leave both school districts whole.

ConAgra: Based on the recent Council resolution authorizing staff to begin negotiations with NAI Harmon Group from Toledo, a kick-off call is schedule to occur during the week of October 11th. Action steps and updated timelines will begin to become clearer over the next few weeks. The city has engaged the assistance of Cushman Wakefield of Cleveland, a global commercial real estate service company, to assist the city in providing an updated broker price opinion (like an appraisal) for both the land as-is and with certain public infrastructure improvements in place. We receive the draft appraisal yesterday and are currently reviewing the results of the analysis. This will provide a great reference point during site control negotiations. Additionally, the City and NAI Harmon have begun the process of putting a framework together for a development agreement which would outline, amongst other items, responsibilities for infrastructure investments and timelines for development/construction to commence.

Council referred the application for rezoning of the ConAgra property from I-2 General Industrial to MU-GD Mixed Use Granary District to the Planning Commission at its last meeting on November 9, 2021. Planning Commission will be holding a public hearing on the request at its December meeting. If approved, the matter will be referred to City Council for a public hearing which will be set in January of 2022.

The city has entered into an agreement with KS Associates Inc., from Elyria to undertake an analysis of the existing seawalls and provide recommendations and cost estimates for repair or full replacement. Crews will minimally be undertaking diving exercises for two (2) days along with a great deal of additional field work with the final report to be delivered to the City no later than the end of December. Understanding these costs along with other infrastructure needs and costs will be instrumental in negotiating a final development agreement with NAI Harmon Group.

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
- School compensation agreement with Huron Schools
- School compensation agreement with EHOVE
- TIF Ordinance
- Final Annexation Agreement
- Bond issuance for Sawmill Creek redevelopment

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 also consideration of the final TIF Ordinance.

INFRASTRUCTURE/STREETS/UTILITIES

Leaf Pickup: City crews are continuing with leaf pickup throughout the City. Crews began leaf pick up around October 25th. Reminder, crews will begin each round on the east side of town and head westward. As usual, crews are hoping to make 3-4 passes through the city. Reminder that leaf piles must be placed within 6 feet of the curb line and cannot contain sticks or other non-leaf debris.

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 draft 2022 budget does include the City covering half of the design costs for the project.

Rt. 6 Streetlights: Installation of the new streetlights as part of Route 6 Phase I is substantially complete. Ohio Edison has been energizing the lights this week and also started old light hear/wire and pole removal which will continue over next few weeks. It should be noted, Ohio Edison inadvertently removed the light heads over the bridge. Ohio Edison is aware of the mistake and is working to eradicate the issue.

Rt. 6 Striping/Signage: Final striping is 100% completed. Crews will be returning in late November/early December to make final changes to traffic signage needing to be replaced or changed to reflect the new traffic pattern. Once completed, staff will be approaching council with a legislative request to amend the traffic code to recognize the reviews traffic pattern and striping.

Additionally, the City was approached by Seal Master, requesting the ability to showcase a bike lane painting product for consideration next time the City repaints the bike lane. The City was happy to oblige and permitted the company to place approximately 500 painted square feet of their product on Cleveland Road west denoting the bike lane. Crews have put down about a third of the product and had to stop due to weather. Crews are still hoping to put down additional test painting when the weather breaks again.

Additionally, planning and engineering staff are near completion on a Rt. 6 user guide. This guide is meant to provide guidance and detail regarding the new traffic pattern and explain what certain pavement marking mean to vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians. We will provide link to brochure via social media and website when completed and have hard copies available in the office.

Maritime Assistance Program: in October, the City, on behalf of The Huron Joint Port Authority (HJPA) officially submitted a \$4 million request to the Ohio Department of Transportation's Maritime Assistance Program. The funding is only eligible to port authorities in Ohio for projects including, but not limited to, land acquisition, equipment purchase, and dredging to name a few. Since HJPA does not own a full operational port, eligible projects are limited. However, the city is in communications with the Army Core of Engineers on future dredging needs of the Huron River. Therefore, the HJPA requested funding to assist in future dredging cycles which would serve as the local match for any federally funded work through the Army Core of Engineers. We will keep Council up to date on status of the application and ultimate funding decision.

Safe Routes to Schools: The City is exploring submission of multiple applications for the Safe Routes to Schools program administered by the Ohio Department of Transportation. The grant

application deadline is set for March 4th, 2022. Currently, the city is exploring making reapplication for sidewalks/multi-use path along Jim Campbell Boulevard and additionally, installation of sidewalks along Berlin Road heading southward to the city limits.

Street Resurfacing: The City has requested a proposal from OHM Advisors to complete and update of the City's pavement condition report. We hope to undertake this work in early 2022 to develop a plan for resurfacing some roads in 2022, but more importantly, undertaking a more aggressive road resurfacing program in 2023/2024 which would consider the issuance of general obligations bonds to undertake extensive repair/replacement throughout the city. This potential bond issuance would coincide with the payoff of a previously issued series of bonds around 2015.

"No Wake" Buoy for Mudbrook Creek: On Wednesday, November 17th, the City received a letter from ODNR confirming approval for placement of a "No Wake" buoy in Mudbrook Creek pursuant to an application filed more than a year ago. Approval for placement of this buoy was inadvertently omitted from the prior approval letter. With this approval, the City can move forward with placement of a No Wake buoy at the approved location early next spring. The City has a No Wake buoy in storage that will be loaned for the approved placement. With the location approval, the City will have authority to enforce this no wake zone.

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 considering in the upcoming weeks.

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.

Vision 2020 Action Plan: Staff, through the capital planning process, is continuing to move projects forward identified from that plan. Staff has requested OHM Advisors begin to develop community engagement and conceptual plan proposals for proposed streetscape and public

space enhancements along all segments of Main Street. Staff hopes to review proposals in the next few weeks and commence the community and stakeholder planning processes throughout 2022.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Costal 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.

Based on this news, the City is approaching Council at an upcoming meeting to secure approval to submit both applications in full to ODNR. Final funding announcements would be made in early 2022. Once awarded, projects must be completed in 12-18 months – most likely in 2023.

Winterfest: A reminder that Winterfest, presented by the Huron Chamber of Commerce and City will be held on Saturday December 4 at the Huron Boat Basin and Amphitheatre. The bulk of the festivities will occur between 1-6 p.m. the parade, showcasing Santa and Mrs. Claus will begin at 12:30 in the St. Peters Church parking lot and will continue down Main and Williams Streets. Festivities also include holiday themed activities, food trucks, restaurant specials, entertainment, shopping, carriage rides and will be capped with a fireworks show beginning at 6 p.m.

FINANCE

2022 Budget Preparation: Staff has completed presenting the 2022 budget to the Finance Committee with the final meeting being held on November 15th to review the city-wide capital plan. The finance committee unanimously approved the budget and recommended its consideration to City Council. I want to thank all the department heads and staff for their efforts in constructing the 2022 budget and a special thank you to Cory Swaisgood and his team for all their efforts in developing the budget and organizing the budget work sessions. A link to the currently proposed budget book is provided below:

<https://stories.opengov.com/huronoh/published/NRBeyu58b>

2022 Budget: The City is considering a few additions from a staffing standpoint which are being considered and discussed as part of the 2022 budget process. These new or increased positions include converting the current part-time zoning/code inspection position to a full-time position, adding a new full-time staff member to the Parks and Recreation Department, and hiring a new full-time police officer.

City staff also attended a Huron Township Trustees meeting on November 17th to participate in a presentation related to the 2022 Fire Budget and Huron Joint Recreation District budget. Great discussion occurred and the City was able to answer questions from the Township. We are hopeful the 2022 budget are approved as presented or with only modest alterations in December.

Monthly Financial Report: The October financial report was emailed to the Finance Committee and Council by this week. Please let the Finance Director know if you would like to see any other information in the monthly financial report.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA): On July 22, the City received the first tranche of the ARPA funds, totaling \$359,767.52. The second and final distribution will be received 12 months from now for the same amount. The City will have until December 2024 to commit these funds to a purchase/project, and December 2026 to expend the funds. Staff is preparing plans and analysis using the most recent guidance from the U.S. Treasury. Staff is planning to present an initial spending plan at the December 13th Finance Committee meeting.

WATER DEPARTMENT

Active Projects:

- The annual valve exercising and hydrant flushing continues.
- The Filtration Plan expansion work began the week of November 15th. The work is anticipated to continue through mid- to late-2022.
- The annual intake inspection and cleaning has been completed by Lake Erie Diving.

Ohio EPA Audit: The annual Ohio EPA Audit has been completed, and the City has received a copy of the final report. As anticipated the audit did mention a handful of items already being explored by the City including updating our rate study to compare it against needed capital improvements, a recommendation to increase the level of finished water storage and recommendation to explore alternate intake options in the event we experience issues with our existing intakes. Only two minor repairs were noted which were a few screen repairs at the clearwell and Rye Beach Tower. The clearwell repair has already been completed and the Rye Beach Tower repair will be done early the week of the 22nd. I want to thank Jason Gibboney and his entire team for the positive audit and their continued diligence and hard work.

Employee Certification: Luke Frankboner passed his examination and received his Class III Water Supply License. We want to congratulate him on all his hard work and thank him for his continued efforts to elevate his professional development on behalf of the City.

Rye Beach Tower: The City was contacted this week by Lake Erie Shores and Islands about possibly repainting a portion of the tower to reflect the organization's new logo. The cost of the project would be entirely born by LESI. The City is still collecting additional details and will keep Council apprised as more information is gathered.

PERSONNEL

Director of Operations: The first round of application acceptance for the position has closed. Although the City will continue to accept applications for the position until filled, we have begun the interview process with qualified candidates. We will continue to keep Council up to date on the eventual filling of this critical position within the city.

CONTRACTS

2021 will be busy with renegotiation of several multi-year agreements/contracts that expire this year. Agreements/contracts to be reviewed and renegotiated for 2021 include:

- OHM Advisors (Engineering) – **Completed.**
- Erie Soil and Water Conservation District (Engineering) – **Completed.**
- Chief Building Official and Inspection Services (Building) – **Completed.**
- Prosecutor (Court) - **Completed**
- HJRD Annual Agreement (Recreation) – **Completed.**
- Huron Township Fire Protection Agreement - **Completed**
- Seeley, Savidge, Ebert & Gourash Co., LLP (Law) - **Completed.**
- FOP – Patrol Officers (Police) – **Completed.**
- FOP – Sergeants (Police) – **Completed.**
- IAFF (Fire) – **Formal Negotiations in Progress.**
- AFCSME – **Formal Negotiations in Progress.**

The Garbage contract with Republic is set to expire in the summer of 2022. As soon as the administration is completed with all bargaining unit negotiations, attention will turn to review of the 5-year garbage contract.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

November

City Council Work Session: Tuesday November 23, 2021 at 5:00pm in the Council Chambers.

City Council Meeting: Tuesday November 23, 2021 at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers.

December

City Council Organizational Meeting: Wednesday, December 1, 2021 at 5:00pm in the Council Chambers.

HJRD Meeting: Tuesday, December 7, 2021 at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers.

Utilities Committee Meeting: Wednesday, December 8, 2021 at 5:00pm in the main conference room.

Finance Committee Meeting: Monday, December 13, 2021 at 5:00pm in the Council Chambers.

Building and Zoning Appeals: Monday, December 13, 2021 at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers.

City Council Meeting: Tuesday, December 14, 2021 at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers.

Planning Commission: Wednesday, December 17, 2021 at 5:00pm in the Council Chambers.

City Offices Closed for Christmas Holiday: City offices will close at 12:00pm on Thursday, December 23, 2021 and will reopen on Monday, December 27, 2021.

City Council Meeting: Tuesday December 28, 2021 at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers.

City Offices Closed for New Year's Holiday: City offices will close at 12:00pm on Thursday, December 30, 2021 and will reopen on Monday, January 3, 2021.