



CITY OF HURON  
CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

July 8, 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. The City has received full plans which are currently under review.

**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 developers have since decided to slightly reduce the size of the originally approved Harbormaster house to eliminate the second story. Based on these revisions, the project was re-presented to the Planning Commission at the April 27<sup>th</sup> meeting. We are excited to see continued development and improvement to this property and look forward to a successful second phase.

**Buckeye Sports:** The Company has officially broken ground on its new facility located at 309 Lake Erie Parkway. The approximate \$10.0M investment will include a marine sales and repair center as well as heated indoor storage. This is the company's second Ohio facility and when completed will employ approximately 15 individuals. The project is anticipated to be completed in the fall of 2022 in time for the fall/winter storage season. We are so appreciative of the company's choice to locate and invest in Huron and wish them well on their project build out.

In case questions arise, Buckeye Sports is in the process of splitting the detention pond onsite into two distinct ponds. This was included in their plans and is a permitted activity. To accomplish this task, the detention pond needed to be cleared of debris and drained. The pond, upon completion of site work revert to normal functioning. Since the detention pond is a man-made structure and entirely on private property this is a permitted activity.

**South Shore Marine:** All administrative approvals are now complete for the tax abatement request from the Company and ground has been broken for the next phase of their expansion. The Company is seeking to construct an approximate \$1.6M indoor heated storage facility on its Sawmill Parkway Campus. The company was awarded a 15-year, 100% tax abatement, however also agreed to dual compensation agreements with Huron Schools and EHOVE to ensure they receive all tax revenues they would have been due without an abatement. With these steps completed, the City has sent final application materials down to the Ohio Development Services Agency for final approval.

**ConAgra:** The City is currently underway developing/drafting a purchase agreement for the eventual sale of the former ConAgra property. Accompanying this document will be a

development agreements detailing roles and responsibilities of each party related to infrastructure and private development responsibilities along with developing a timeline for commencement of each phase. Further, during the week of June 6<sup>th</sup>, the City held an update meeting with the development team to review updated concepts for the site and to provide feedback and will be hosted a follow up meeting with their design and construction team during the week of June 27<sup>th</sup>. Staff anticipates being presented with one more site plan concept by mid-July prior to moving the project forward to Planning Commission and Design Review for additional input and recommendations.

The City is also starting the process to secure an engineering firm to undertake the seawall revetment design which is needed to apply to the Army Corps of Engineers who will ultimately need to permit the revetment work.

**Sawmill Creek:** On July 13<sup>th</sup>, 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 16<sup>th</sup>, 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 20<sup>th</sup>, 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 Road. 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:

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

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

Currently, the TIF Ordinance and Service Payment Agreements have been agreed to between the City and Cedar Fair. The Final Annexation Petition is near complete with some final survey items being finalized. We are hoping to wrap up all activities and legislation by the end of June/July 2022.

As mentioned in last Manager's Report, Cedar Fair is desirous of adding an additional three (3) parcels to the annexation petition. These parcels are in addition to the original nine (9) parcels agreed to by the City and Township. The additional parcels comprise approximately .8 acres and are currently serving a beach access to the northwest marsh land, a detention pond and gazebo and sand trap. Given the lack of development potential of these three parcels, the Township has stated they are supportive of the request, therefore the City and the Township are moving forward with an amendment to the Annexation Agreement. Once this amendment is completed, the final annexation petition can be submitted to the Erie County Board of Commissioners. It should be noted, the City is not planning to include these additional parcels in the Tax Increment Financing area.

During the week of July 4<sup>th</sup>, staff did meet with the County Auditor's officer to gain a better understanding of the timing of the new service payments which will be distributed to the Huron School District, EHOVE and the City. Based on the 12-month delay in real estate tax payments, it is anticipated that service payments will commence with the first half tax bills in 2024.

**Two Rivers:** Staff recently met with the owners and developers of the Two Rivers development by Huron Lagoons Marina. Developers are looking to re-start the housing development – which has since lost its planned-unit development designation. Developers presented conceptual plans for the project which included finishing out the Sheltered Brook roadway with similar housing and then moving forward on additional phases on the undeveloped portions of the property. The site could also include a series of connected walking trails and retention ponds. Developers, to move forward, will need to present updated plans to the planning commission in hopes of securing a new planned-unit development designation prior to moving forward. We will keep council apprised as this project moves forward.

## 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 Roads. 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. This application has successfully been submitted and awards are anticipated in August of 2022.

**Sawmill Parkway:** All required submittals were submitted to EDA for final approval in late March. Once final approval is given, the City is ready to put this project out to bid. The estimated time from approval, to bid and then award is eight weeks. Staff will start stakeholder meetings and updates at this point to ensure that all affected parties are fully informed about plans and schedules.

**Safe Routes to Schools:** The City submitted 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 to the railroad tracks. 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. A big thank you to OHM and our planning and zoning staff for all their hard work in submitting these grant applications on behalf of the City. Results of the funding applications should be announced by the Ohio Department of Transportation in June of 2022.

It should be noted that both of these applications were unsuccessful which is not surprising since it was their first year applying. Typically, these applications require multiple submittals to achieve funding given the high level of competition for funding across the state. The City and Township will continue to explore funding opportunities are still underway on the design component of the east side sidewalks.

**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 \$500,000 project. To date, the project has secured \$25,000 from Huron Township and just over \$120,000 from Erie County Metropolitan Planning Organization.

**Street Resurfacing:** The City is in receipt of two (2) bids for our 2022 street resurfacing program. Bids were due to the City on May 19, 2022, and were reviewed by OHM Advisors for completeness. Based on that review, OHM Advisors recommended contracting with Erie Blacktop as both the lowest and best bidder. Per the bid documents, streets anticipated to be resurfaced this year include:

- Gumwood
- Rose
- Vine
- Bruns
- Williams (Cleveland to Rt. 6)

- Williams (Rt. 6 to Standard)

We have also selected two alternatives which may get included based on results of bidding. These roads include:

- Stowe
- Woodside

Based on the bids, the City can undertake all road improvements, including the alternates for approximately \$516,000. Although this is over the \$500,000 budget from the capital account, staff is still recommending moving forward and tapping into some of the ARPA funding to undertake all the alternates as well. Since crews will already be mobilized in the location of the alternated roadways, the City is likely to see savings to undertake this road work in 2022 versus later years.

This project has been awarded, along with both alternates to Erie Blacktop and PO's have been issued to enable work to start. We expect to see mobilization by the end of the month, with a project completion date in early September (weather permitting).

**Pavement Condition and 2023+ Resurfacing:** OHM is currently putting the finishing touches on the 2022 Pavement Condition Report. This bi-annual document will rate the conditions of all public roadways in the City and will be the main informational guide for the City's future road resurfacing recommendation in 2023 and 2023. Based on this information, the City will quickly look to prioritize road resurfacing recommendations for 2023 during the fall of 2022. As mentioned in past reports, the City is looking to undertake a multi-year, multi-million road resurfacing effort beginning in 2023 based upon the City's available debt capacity.

**Main Street:** The Erie Regional Planning Metropolitan Planning Organization held its combined Technical Advisory and Policy Committee meeting on June 23. At that meeting, the committee considered the funding recommendations for the 2025/2026 Surface Transportation funding. A reminder, Main Street was tentatively recommended to receive \$360,000 from the scoring committee. At the meeting on June 23, the committee voted to approve the \$360,000 award to the City of Huron for future Main Street enhancements. This is a significant funding award for the future overhaul of the corridor which will be informed by the currently underway Mainstreet/Downtown planning and visioning process – which is set to wrap up around the end of the year or very early 2023. Again, and big thank you to Erik Engle and his team and the folks at OHM Advisors.

**Stormwater Management:** Based upon positive Council feedback and an affirmative vote, the City is moving forward with the first phase of a stormwater management plan in partnership with OHD Advisors. 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.

The stormwater management plan phase 1 kickoff meeting will be held with internal staff in the next few weeks. This project is expected to last eight (8) months and will deliver a visual stormwater inventory to take us in to the future.

**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. Departments have identified a funding possibility for the fall of 2022 – with implementation in 2023. Staff anticipates seeking Council approval to make a grant application in late summer or very early fall of 2022.

**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 June with hopes of presenting a preferred firm to Council for consideration shortly thereafter.

**General:** 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.

Lake Erie Parkway is scheduled to be closed for utility work in the coming days/weeks as Buckeye Sports makes their connections to local services.

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](mailto:stuart.hamilton@huronohio.us).

## ZONING/CODE/PLANNING

**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 summer of 2022.

**Main Street Corridor Plan:** The first steering committee for the Main Street/Downtown plan was held on Tuesday May 31, 2022, at the Boat Basin. This served as the official kickoff of the plan and a project schedule was reviewed. Most of the steering committee was in attendance as well as staff and several members of the OHM Advisors planning team. Members had an opportunity to talk openly about what is good and bad with the existing corridor and what opportunities exist to make improvements whether that be to infrastructure, public spaces, underutilized sites, and programming. We are looking forward to continuing to push the plan forward and will be hosting several public input meetings in the upcoming months, dates to be determined.

The next meeting to advance the conceptual plan will be a second steering committee which is set for July 27<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 at the Huron Boat Basin facility.

**Transient Rentals:** As an update, the City currently has 139 registered and licensed transient rental units in the City – a reminder that the maximum permitted is 165 units. Additionally, HB 563, the state law that would restrict local oversight of transient rental units was passed out of a house committee and will move to the full house. The City and Council wholeheartedly oppose this bill along with our neighboring cities, the Ohio township association, the Ohio municipal league and our local convention and visitor's bureau. We will continue to monitor the progress of this bill.

It should be noted that Representative Swearingen has been in communication with the City regarding HB 563. In those conversations, Representative Swearingen stated he is vehemently opposed to HB 563 and in the event, it ever reaches the floor for a vote, he has committed to voting "no." This conversation was also utilized to being discussing the City's needs/requests for the next round of state capital funding which is set for early 2024. The City is hoping to secure significant funding for the rehabilitation of the Boat Basin.

**Fireworks:** As an update to the revised fireworks ordinance which was adopted by Council in June and became effective on July 1, 2022 – we wanted to mention that the police did not receive a single call regarding issues with fireworks since the new law's effective date. The administration has received 3 complaints which have been responded too and Council has a copy of. We view the limited issues a testament to the level of responsibility and neighborliness of our residents.

**Permitting:** Staff from multiple departments have begun meeting internally regarding the idea of centralizing all permitting from an intake standpoint. The goal is to create one central location for residents and contractors to go for ALL permits regardless of department. Currently, depending on the type of permit, folks may have to go to multiple facilities across the City. For



efficiencies, we do envision moving all permitting to City Hall and through the planning and zoning department. We are currently working on the internal structure of this change and will provide press releases and other media messages to ensure the public is aware of this change and when it goes live.

**Floodplain Ordinances:** Based on a recent audit, the City needs updating and modernizing its flood plain ordinances. These ordinances are aimed at both protecting the City's waterways and protecting property owners who may inadvertently place or construct building or other appurtenances in a flood plain. Based on the complexity of the topic, staff anticipates presenting the revisions to Council at the June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022, meeting and ensuring we go through the entire three reading process to ensure as many questions are answered as possible. The planning department will be leading a discussion at the next Council meeting during the legislation's initial consideration.

## PARKS AND RECREATION

**Fish Cleaning Station:** Construction has officially commenced at the Fish Cleaning Station. Contractors have surveyed and staked the location of the building itself and are also currently making utility connections throughout the site. Additionally, crews have begun excavating locations of the new sidewalks/walkways. Based on the current schedule, we are anticipating the station to be completed in September but will continue to try to condense the timeline as best as possible.

**Tennis Courts:** The City has asked OHM to update cost estimates for new tennis courts at Fabens Park. It is our believe that the useful life of the tennis courts has expired, and full reconstruction is likely necessary. We are exploring simultaneously exploring whether there is some form of interim fix but still felt it prudent to update costs for full reconstruction so that we can develop a plan to undertake and finance this work.

**Boat Basin:** The City has solicited a proposal from KS and Associates to update the capital needs assessment for the Boat Basin and related facilities/improvements. The previous report was completed in 2015 and in need of updating the project costs and to take into consideration both improvements that have been completed since then and determining if any further deterioration has occurred. The City is hoping to utilize this report as we undertake an aggressive fundraising effort to completely modernize and rehabilitate the facility in addition to making a capital request through the State's next capital budget bill.

**Riverfest:** A huge thank you to the Riverfest Committee, countless volunteers and the City's Parks and Recreation, Streets, Police and Fire Departments for all their efforts in planning and organizing a great Riverfest. It was truly great to see the festival return to a more robust event and we had great cooperation from the weather. Thank you all again who helped organize and those that attended.

**Cameras on Lighthouse:** Parks and Recreation and the Service Departments are in process of pricing out cameras for the lighthouse. Once installed, these cameras will be streamed on the City's website or other streaming service 24/7. The cameras will be able to show conditions both down the river to the south but also conditions on the lake. The hope is that they will be able to show weather and wave conditions for potential beachgoers and boaters. We will keep Council apprised as this project progresses with potential timelines.

## 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 7<sup>th</sup> and on May 9<sup>th</sup>. The following link will direct you to the ARPA spending plan, as well. Staff is currently trying to schedule a special finance committee meeting for some time in July of 2022 to review a draft ARPA spending plan which will eventually be presented to Council. The goal of the spending plan will be to both address projects that are eligible under federal guidelines but that also align with elements of the Vision 2020 Action Plan.

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

**2023 Tax Budget:** On May 27, the Finance Department distributed a copy of the 2023 tax budget. The City's tax budget process is an annual statutory requirement under the City Charter and Ohio Revised Code Section 5705. The tax budget for the ensuing fiscal year must be submitted to Council prior to June 1<sup>st</sup>. Council will be holding a public hearing at the June 28, 2022, meeting to discuss the tax budget prior to final submission to the Erie County Budget Commission (Auditor's office). The ORC and City Charter requires adoption by Council and submission to the Budget Commission by July 15<sup>th</sup> of each year. If there are any questions regarding the budget in advance, they can be directed to Jeff Hall – Finance Director.

**Monthly Financial Reports:** The May 2022 Financial Report is now complete. The report has been sent to Finance Committee members and the entirety of Council. The City remains in a strong financial position based mainly on very positive income tax returned through the first 5 months of the year. Any questions related to the financial reports can be directed to Jeff Hall. A link to the financial reports can be found below:

<https://stories.opengov.com/huronoh/published/mYmnGk8J4>

## WATER DEPARTMENT

Recent Activity:

- **Water Meters.** Neptune reading transmitters are currently being installed by water distribution.

### Active Project Updates:

- Sludge Lagoon – Ohio EPA NPDES. Poggemeyer has completed its study of comprehensive options and alternatives, draft report expected within a week.
- Alternate Intake. Poggemeyer has completed a study of location with engineer's estimated cost for a river intake. Draft study has been issued and is in review.
- Boilers. Two of the three WTP boilers have failed. Wilkes quote: \$53,262.00; Gundlach quote: \$63,000.00; awaiting third quote from Hartland Heating & Cooling.
- Tube Settler Expansion. All sedimentation basins are installed and operable regarding this project. Also, the sedimentation building is currently under construction.
- Water Main Break: There was a water main break on Buckeye Road during the week of June 13<sup>th</sup>. This break was repaired very quickly. A big thank you to our crews for addressing the issue immediately with very little disturbance to affected homeowners.

**Water Rates:** The City is in receipt of a final water rate study completed by Poggemeyer. The study aimed to explore whether any alterations to the water rates are needed based upon, annual inflation for products such as chemicals, future capital needs over the next 10 years and existing fund balances. The final draft report has been presented and reviewed by the Utilities Committee which occurred in early June. **Next the draft report will be presented to and analyzed by the Finance Committee as a special meeting on July 18<sup>th</sup>.**

## PERSONNEL/ADMINISTRATION

**Water Department:** The City has completed the interviewing process for the Maintenance Worker III position in the water plant to replace Mr. Frankboner. After two rounds of interviews, the City has extended an employment offer to Mr. Martin Luipold – who is a Huron resident and comes very highly recommended. Contingent on background checks, Mr. Luipold will begin his employment with the City on July 25<sup>th</sup>.

## CONTRACTS

Agreements/contracts that will expire in 2022 include:

- OHM Advisors (Engineering) – expires 12/31/22
- Erie Soil and Water Conservation District (Engineering) - **COMPLETED**
- Republic Services – **COMPLETED**
- HJR Annual Agreement (Recreation) –expires 12/31/22
- Dispatch Agreement – Erie County Sheriff – expires 12/31/22
- Seeley, Savidge, Ebert & Gourash Co., LLP (Law) – **COMPLETED**
- Dynegy Energy Services – Electric Aggregation Program – expires 10/31/22 **Will let expire due to price of supply.**
- Bricker & Eckler – HPP Legal Services (Law) – Expires 9/30/22
- Police Chief Employment Agreement – Expires 12/31/22

- Erie County Cablevision, Inc. (Buckeye Cable) Franchise Agreement – Expires 12/30/22 **Franchise will be renewed at the State level and not locally.**

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### July

- City Council Work Session: July 12, 2022, at 5:30 in the Council Chambers
- City Council Meeting: July 12, 2022, at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers
- Special Finance Committee Meeting: July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022, at 5:00pm in the Council Chambers.
- City Council Work Session: July 26, 2022, at 5:30pm in the Council Chambers
- City Council Meeting: July 26, 2022, at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers
- Planning Commission: July 27, 2022, at 5:00pm in the Council Chambers