



CITY OF HURON  
CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

November 10, 2023

Matthew Lasko, City Manager

## ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**ConAgra:** Based on recent conversations with the development team, the City and the proposed developers of the former ConAgra site have agreed to mutually part ways. We want to thank the development team for their interest in Huron and time invested in hopes of bringing a project to fruition. We will be continuing to look for other opportunities for the companies to develop in Huron in the future. Moving forward and understanding the interest in developing the site remains strong, the City has issued a new Request for Qualifications and Conceptual Development proposals to multiple developers with responses due in early January. A new partner will be identified in January or February of 2024.

**Two Rivers:** The public hearing at City Council related to Phase I PUD has been completed. At the next Council meeting on Tuesday July 11<sup>th</sup>, the Council will consider the PUD request as well as the Development Agreement for Phase I. If approved, developers can move forward with plans to commence construction on the twenty-seven (27) homes comprising Phase I. Additional Phases of the project will require Planning Commission and Council approval.

**Norfolk Southern Holdings:** The City hosted Solomon Jackson from Norfolk Southern approximately a week ago to talk about their holdings and the future of the Carmuese Plant. Per Norfolk, the lease with Carmuese expires in early 2024 and neither party desires to renew it. As such, Carmuese continues to work on site cleanup as required by the lease. Upon vacation, Norfolk Southern will be working with the City to ultimately facilitate the sale and development of their waterfront acreage.

**Oster's:** The City continues to work diligently with our non-profit partners to continue relocation efforts for residents at the park. We believe approximately twenty-three (23) households have physically relocated. Also, five (5) trailers have been moved to new locations for residents with two (2) more trailers remaining to be moved in the next few weeks – with one of those likely to occur this week weather permitting. In total, there are only four (4) occupied units remaining on site with only two (2) of those households still needing to identify housing for relocation.

The City has commenced demolition activity on vacant units on site, more specifically, those homes owned by the City, Osters Mobile Home Park, LLC, or Robert P. Day individually. To date, eighteen (18) mobile homes have been demolished and additional site clearing and grading is underway.

**Residential Development:** It is our understanding that several sites in Huron and Huron Township are of interest to Triban Investment and their potential clients. During the week of July 31, we were updated that the company is working on several LOI's for potential land purchases. We will keep Council up to date and the identity of these site become known and the likelihood of development is better understood.

**Townhomes:** The Planning Commission last week approved the site plan for the eventual construction of fourteen (14) market-rate townhomes to be constructed on the private vacant lot on the west side of Main Street across from the Comfort Inn. This type of development is supported by both the Vision 2020 Masterplan and the soon to be recommended downtown/Mainstreet Masterplan.

**Huron Chamber of Commerce:** The Huron Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors has been in ongoing conversations to become an affiliate of the Greater Sandusky Partnership. Due to financial constraints at the Chamber, the Board has been exploring ways to ensure the long-term viability of the Chamber to ensure ongoing representation and advocacy for its members and the broader business community. At the Boars meeting in September, it was unanimously voted to allow GSP to begin drafting necessary documents to lay out a proposed framework for consolidation. The Board agrees this is a beneficial result to ensure the future operations of the Chamber and benefits to its members. I will keep the Council updated as these talks continue.

## 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:** A walkthrough was carried out with City Staff, OHM Project team and Smith Paving to create a final punch list. This final list was agreed upon and we hope that all points will be addressed by the end of October.

The final punch list has been completed and the project construction is complete. The City along with our partners will work toward shutting down the project and all associated billings and grant draw.

**East Side Sidewalks:** This project is slated for 2024 construction. The City has been granted the required easements to complete the segment of sidewalk on the northside of Rt6, between Gateway and Anchorage. We would like to thank our residents and Beachwood Cove HOA for working with the City to allow us to install this critical portion of the sidewalk. It is intended to bid this out at the same time as the main sidewalk project.

**Pavement Condition and 2023+ Resurfacing:** At our October 24<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting, the Council will be considering a change order for the design of this project. This will convert the design from comprehensive asphalt resurfacing to selective concrete reconstruction. Based on recent conversations with OHM, we are anticipating being able to bid the comprehensive selective reconstruction and patching of the Old Homestead I and II and Chaska neighborhoods in either November or December of this year.

**Bike Lane Repainting:** This project went out to bid on April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and closed May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023. We received two bidders, but unfortunately both were outside the 10% allowance of engineers estimate. Both bids were rejected. Staff will analyze why the delta between the estimate and bids was so wide.

**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 three companies are OmniFiber, Buckeye 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](mailto:stuart.hamilton@huronohio.us).

**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.

**Huron Public Power Rate Study:** Staff engaged Sawvel and Associates of Findlay, OH to carry out a rate study for HPP. This cost-of-service study will look at our distribution and capital costs, along with our revenue history and projections to ensure this utility is efficient and can keep expanding to serve other businesses and start serving residents.

**Website:** A review committee comprising of four staff members was formed in the spring to review options for partners to replace our current website. The committee requested presentations for eight providers for a preliminary round review. Six vendors presented and the committee narrowed these options down to three for a deeper dive. In August, the final three carried out in-depth presentations and took question and answer sessions. After final voting, [Revize](#) of Troy, Michigan was selected. We will enter negotiations on modules and pricing and hope to return to Council for approval to move forward in early October.

Staff decided rather than to try and put this project out to bid, we would investigate multiple options and find the best fit for the job rather than the best response to an RFP. This is common for technology type projects as an RFP is not able to capture all the nuances needed, regardless of how well it is written. A robust vetting process of a solution and how each will fit our needs is more thorough and ultimately will return a more tailored solution.

**Fall Leaf Pickup Program:** The City of Huron's leaf pickup will begin on Monday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>. Leaf pickups will be done on a rotating basis from east to west, with at least two trips throughout the City, through Friday, December 8<sup>th</sup> – weather contingent.

The City will offer two methods of pickup:

- Method 1 – bagged curbside pickup: All city residents that receive services from Republic have access to unlimited weekly yard waste collection, including for the fall leaf season. Residents can continue to bag leaves and place them at the curb for weekly pickup. The leaves will need to be in cans (marked yard waste) or yard wastepaper bags. Cans and bags can contain any acceptable yard waste materials.
- Method 2 – Residents are permitted to place leaf piles at the curb to be picked up by the city's Street Department. REMINDER - The leaf pickup program will begin on Monday, Oct. 23<sup>rd</sup>. The leaf collections will be done on a rotating basis from east to west with at least two trips throughout the city. The final date will be Friday Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> weather contingent.

When utilizing method 2, please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Leaf piles must be placed within 6ft. of the curb.
- Pickup is for *leaves only* - no sticks or other yard waste materials are permitted.
- Do not place leaves in the street or behind parked vehicles – they will not be picked up.
- Piles of leaves that fail to meet these guidelines will be painted with an X and will not be collected.

If you have any questions about the process, please contact the City of Huron's Street Department at (419) 433-9504.

## ZONING/CODE/PLANNING

**Coastal Management Assistance Grants:** Staff were informed that City was awarded the Coastal Management Assistance Grant from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources in the amount of \$35,000. Reminder this is a 1:1 matching grant. Funds will be utilized to engage the community and stakeholders in a lakefront masterplan primarily in the vicinity of the former Showboat property westward through Lakefront Park. The City will be issuing a Request for Qualifications in the upcoming weeks to select the desired architectural firm to lead the efforts.

**Main Street Corridor Plan:** The final draft of the Main Street/Downtown masterplan will be presented to Council on November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023, during a work session beginning at 6:00pm. Representatives from OHM Advisors will be presenting the plan and present to answer questions. This is the final step in the adoption process following the unanimous recommendation of approval from Planning Commission during the week of October 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area:** As part of the main street/downtown plan – we heard from many folks about the desire to have a designated outdoor refreshment area, also referred to as a DORA, in Huron. DORA's are governed by the State of Ohio and have recently been approved in Sandusky, Milan, and Port Clinton. Staff has met internally to begin discussing the possibility of such an area within the City and begin to understand the potential safety and operational challenges of such a district. We are still very early on in the process and ultimately, if moving forward, will be subject to significant public and stakeholder feedback.

## PARKS AND RECREATION

**Tennis Courts:** This project is almost complete. All work that can be performed this year has been completed. There are a few punch list items that will be carried out when we warm up again in the springtime.

**624 Berlin Road:** The City completed presentation of the final plan during a joint presentation to City Council and Planning Commission on August 22<sup>nd</sup>. The plan was very well received. The City is now currently looking for opportunities during the 2024 budgeting process to move some of the recommendations forward as early as next year including parking improvements, fishing piers, benches, and landscaping/plantings.

**State Capital Budget:** Initial guidance was released last week regarding the 2024/2025 State Capital Budget process. As mentioned previously, the City views this as a viable, albeit highly competitive, source of funding for Boat Basin improvements. The City has previously provided information to our state legislators regarding our needs and will look to further this conversation with our elected officials in the next few weeks along with the Greater Sandusky Partnership who will be advocating for local projects at the state level.

## FINANCE

**September Financial Report:** The September financial report is linked below. Income tax revenue was up 7%, or \$225,000, from September of 2022. This increase continues to mostly be due to the Ardagh expansion. However, income tax increases from Sawmill Creek Resort and Mucci Farms play a factor in this growth, as well. The unencumbered general fund balance at the end of June was \$2.2 million, or 36% of annual expenditures. Major revenue sources are showing growth in 2023 compared to 2022. Most notably, interest earnings are more than budgeted at the end of September, and up 366% from 2022. Nickel Plate Beach parking revenue had a strong August and September as total revenue for the year exceeded budget by \$5,000.

<https://stories.opengov.com/huronoh/published/wYFAKCr4o>

**2024 Budget:** Budget meetings are scheduled for five consecutive Mondays from October 23<sup>rd</sup> through November 20<sup>th</sup>, at 4 PM in Council Chambers.

## WATER DEPARTMENT

### Recent Activity:

- Huron Water Filtration Plant received a good report from the OEPA limited scope site survey. There were no violations and recommendations were made for sludge lagoon rehabilitation and additional clearwell storage.
- Smith Paving completed work removing the north sludge retention dike.

### Active Project Updates:

**Alternate Intake/Sludge Lagoon:** A proposal was received from Kleinfelder to undertake the design for this project. Clarifications were returned to them recently and staff are waiting for an updated proposal. A grant loan combination was applied for this project through OPWC for an amount not to exceed \$262,500.

**West Side Water Tower:** On June 16<sup>th</sup>, The City was awarded \$5M from Governor DeWine's Ohio BUILDS water and wastewater infrastructure grant program. This is the largest allowable grant in the State of Ohio, and we believe it to be the largest single grant the City of Huron has ever received. We are thankful to our State and Local partners that help make projects like this possible.

**South Main Street Water Line Replacement:** Based on recent conversations with OHM, we are anticipating being able to bid this project in November or December of this year which will also include the complete resurfacing and select curb replacement of Forest Hills Drive, Hickory Road, and Valleyview Drive. The City has also been asked to consider, as part of this project, installing a crosswalk at Valleyview Drive to connect to the sidewalks on the east side of Main Street.

## PERSONNEL/ADMINISTRATION

**15-Year Work Anniversary for Jerod Smith:** Firefighter Jerod Smith completed 15 years of service with the City earlier this month. Jerod was hired by the City on November 10, and has served his community responding to all types of emergencies for all 15 of his years with the City. We want to thank him for his commitment and dedication to serving the residents of Huron and Huron Township.

**Board and Commissions:** The City recently sent out letters to all Boards and Commissions who have members whose terms are set to expire. The City anticipates doing this annually moving forward. The intent of the letters is to let the Boards and Commissions whose terms are set to expire and detail incumbents or interested parties who can make an application to the City if interested in a particular Board or Commission.

**New Hire Whitney Hermes - Finance Specialist Position:** Staff interviewed several applicants for the recently vacated Finance Specialist position in the Finance Department, resulting in the hiring

of our preferred candidate, Whitney Hermes. Whitney comes to us with several years of experience working for public entities, most recently the Erie County Health Department. She has a Masters of Business Administration degree, and we are excited to have her join our team. Whitney's first day was November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

**Charter Review Commission Established:** Ballot Issue 13 was approved with an overwhelming 75% YES vote during the 2023 General Election held on November 6, 2023. All interested parties are encouraged to complete an application noting their interest prior to Council considering their appointments to the Charter Review Commission in early 2024.

**K-9:** The City has purchased our K-9 police dog. Officer Ryan Boesch has been selected as the handler for the dog and started his 5-week handler training on November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The patrol dog will be making a guest appearance at the Huron Police Department booth at Winterfest and we are planning a formal swearing in ceremony for the patrol dog at our December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Council meeting.

## AGREEMENTS

**Friends of Huron Public Library Signage Request:** The Friends of Huron Public Library's request to place a sign in the median west of Center Street for their Library Book Sale to help raise money for the library was approved on October 27, 2023. The 2'x3' sign will be placed in the median from December 1<sup>st</sup> through December 3<sup>rd</sup>. The money they raise from this sale helps to support popular Huron Public Library programs like the new Memory Lab (free conversion of pictures, slides, home videos and musical recordings to digital format), quarterly in-library concerts, summer reading program and the new "Tween and Teen Gaming Club" after-school program.

## CONTRACTS

- OHM Advisors (Engineering) – **Expires 12/31/23.**
- HJRD Annual Agreement (Recreation) - **Expires 12/31/23.**
- Dispatch Agreement – Erie County Sheriff – **Expires 12/31/23.**
- City Prosecutor Employment Agreement – expires **12/31/23.**
- Personnel Officer Employment Agreement – expires **12/31/23.**
- Erie Soil and Water Conservation District (Engineering) – **Expires 1/31/24.**
- Seeley, Savidge, Ebert & Gourash Co., LLP (Law) – **Expires 6/3/24.**
- Dynegy Electric Aggregation Agreement – expires **7/30/25.**
- Dynegy Electric Standard Large Stable Service Agreement – expires **08/2025**
- School Resource Officer – **Expires 8/31/26.**
- Republic Services – **Expires 12/31/26.**

## UPCOMING MEETINGS



**November Meetings:**

- Finance Committee Budget Meeting – Monday, November 13th at 4:00pm in the Council Chambers.
- BZA Meeting – November 13<sup>th</sup> meeting has been cancelled.
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, November 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 in the Council Chambers.
- Planning Commission – Wednesday, November 15<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm in the Council Chambers.
- Finance Committee Budget Meeting – Monday, November 20th at 4:00pm in the Council Chambers.
- THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY – City offices will be closed on Thursday, November 23<sup>rd</sup> and Friday, November 24<sup>th</sup>.
- City Council Work Session – Tuesday, November 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm in the Council Chambers.
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, November 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers.

**December Meetings:**

- City Council Organizational Meeting – Friday, December 1<sup>st</sup> at \_\_\_\_ in the Council Chambers.
- HJRD – Tuesday, December 5th at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers.
- Utilities Committee Meeting – Wednesday, December 6<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm in the main conference room.
- BZA Meeting – Monday, December 11<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm in the Council Chambers.
- Finance Committee Quarterly Meeting – Tuesday, December 12<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm in the Council Chambers.
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, December 12<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers.
- Planning Commission Meeting – Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm in the Council Chambers.
- CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY – City offices will be closed at noon on Friday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> and all day on Monday, December 25<sup>th</sup>.
- City Council Meeting (if needed) – Tuesday, December 26<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers.
- NEW YEARS HOLIDAY – City offices will be closed at noon on Friday, December 29<sup>th</sup> and all day on Monday, January 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Please mark your calendars for Winterfest 2023. The event is currently scheduled for Saturday December 2<sup>nd</sup>. Events start at 12:30 with the Winter Holiday Parade and culminate with the Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony at 6:15 in the Boat Basin Parking Lot and Fireworks beginning at 6:30pm.