



CITY OF HURON
CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

August 21, 2023

Matthew Lasko, City Manager

ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ConAgra: Based on recent Planning Commission approval of the conceptual site plan, the City held another meeting with the development team to talk through next steps. Ridgestone has engaged their own engineering firm to complete the necessary submittals to planning commission for plat review.

Two Rivers: The public hearing at City Council related to the Phase I PUD has been completed. At the next Council meeting on Tuesday July 11th, 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. 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 a 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 eleven (11) households have physically relocated. Also, late last week, the first of multiple trailers was moved from the park to its new location. Additional trailers are planned to be moved this week as well and will continue through September.

Legal counsel on both sides of the transaction are also considering a contract amendment to provide tenants with additional time if they are actively engaged in the relocation process and seeking assistance from the multiple social service agencies engaged in the project. If agreed upon, that amendment would need to come before council for consideration.

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.

Lakeway Manufacturing: With a recent corporate acquisition completed, the City is in receipt of plans for the facility requesting approval of a major expansion. The company, set to present to Planning Commission later this month, will be seeking approval of a nearly 11,000 square foot addition estimate at \$1.5M in value. We are appreciative of the company commitment to Huron and plans for future growth.

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.

There was a presentation at the regular Council meeting on July 11th, 2023, to update Council on this project. In this update, staff explained that to achieve the plan of removing the light at Center St, Closing Jim Campbell at the easterly end and adding a new roundabout at Liberty, the City would need to take over the Limited Access Right of Way between Center St and the pedestrian bridge from ODOT control. Staff will continue to work with ODOT on this option.

Sawmill Parkway: As of May 30th, the temporary roadway is now closed, and the western end of Sawmill Parkway is reopened to traffic. Crews have fully taken advantage of the good weather and it is approximated that 70% of the roadway is complete. Based on current progress, the roadway is anticipated to be completed in September.

The weather has cooperated on this project and construction of the main roadway is expected to be completed in early August. We expect work to continue utilities and punch list items throughout August.

The final pour on the road was carried out last week. There will still be ROW work and punch list items to be completed. The new roadway looks great and we would like to thanks Smith Paving for being a great partner in such an important partner.

East Side Sidewalks: The City was notified by Governor DeWine's office on June 9th that the Ohio Department of Transportation awarded the City of Huron and Huron Township \$650,000 for the east side walk project. The funds were awarded through ODOT's Highway Safety Improvement Program and were highly competitive since it was a statewide program. This award is in addition to the previously awarded \$120,000~ from Erie County.

We truly believe our multi-jurisdictional partnership and collaboration with Huron Township was instrumental in this award. A big thank you as well to Stu Hamilton and really OHM Advisors – as OHM Advisors prepared the application. 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 sidewalk. It is intended to bid this out at the same time as the main sidewalk project.

Pavement Condition and 2023+ Resurfacing: Crews have begun emergency patching in Old Homestead I and II and Chaska. This work commenced during the week of July 31 and will be finished shortly. This is truly an emergency patch in the worst areas of these neighborhoods to get us through the winter prior to the larger comprehensive concrete patching to occur in 2024.

Berlin Road Sidewalks: The City continues to receive requests to consider sidewalk installation on Berlin Road – south of Shawnee School. We unsuccessfully applied for Safe Routes to School funding in 2022. And with the school ceasing to exist moving forward, this source of funding is not an option. The City will look to research other funding opportunities and placement of this project in a future capital planning year. We will also need to engage the railroad to determine what hurdles exist to install a pedestrian crossing over the rail tracks.

Bike Lane Repainting: This project went out to bid on April 24th, 2023, and closed May 11th, 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 were 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.

Huron Public Power Third Transformer: On January 17th, 2023, an RFP was released to purchase, deliver, ramp up and test this third 69kV transformer. 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 will bring back legislation to award it to the Council soon. Legislation was presented to Council at the April 25th meeting for approval to purchase from Niagara Power Transformer. The bid price was \$1,039,837.00, with 100% due at time of receipt.

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.

Shawnee School Zone: Staff have removed all the school signage from Shawnee and submitted the required paperwork to ODOT. We will be storing these signs at the service complex in case they are needed for future projects. The flashing beacons will remain in their current place until relocated to the entrance of Bald Eagle Drive as part of the east side sidewalk project.

Republic Trash Collection Contract: This closed on April 28th with a single respondent, who was Republic Services. The results of this bid were presented to the Council at the regular Council meeting on May 9th, 2023. The Council directed staff to proceed with the option that kept the service level the same as it currently is. This would take quarterly bills from \$63.03 to \$70.92. Staff are also looking at assessing trash bills through the County Auditor, so residents would pay them as part of their real estate taxes. This removes an administration overhead charge of about \$2 per account as we try to keep the prices down.

The new Republic Services contract was authorized by Resolution at the regular Council meeting of June 27th, 2023, along with the corresponding ordinance to change the trash rates billable to residents. The new rate of \$71 per quarter, per owner will be effective July 1st, 2023.

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. Awards will be given in July/August.

Main Street Corridor Plan: Staff and OHM are currently revising the final plan to incorporate some of the final feedback received from the public at our recently held open house at the Boat Basin. We hope to present a final plan to Planning Commission and Council in September.

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.

Mural on RS Cycle Building: The Design Review Board approved the application of Joel & Jenny Hagy proposing a 20 x 30 mural to be painted on the outside wall of RS Cycle, which faces Standard Street, at their meeting on August 16, 2023. The mural is to be painted by local artist, Darcy Berardi. The applicant is also seeking to add a small 11" x 14" plaque with the name of the mural, "Wild Hope" and a dedication to the community from the Chris & Owen Kedas Memorial Foundation. The applicant is proposing to remove the existing strip of grass in front of the wall and add river rock, pavers, and a bench. Applicant has noted that they intend to add small bushes and flowers, as well, and the area will be maintained by the Foundation.



PARKS AND RECREATION

Tennis Courts: The contractor continues work on this project. Last week contractors completed saw cutting and installation of under drains and commenced base repairs. This will be in advance of installing the coating that will take up to 30 days to cure. We are anticipating a late-September completion, weather permitting.

624 Berlin Road: On May 2nd, 2023, City Architecture presented progress on the imagining process for this park to the HJRD. Conceptual ideas were presented for conversation and some good feedback was received. This feedback will be incorporated as City Architecture and staff continue to move through this process. Next steps will include a joint City Council / Planning Commission presentation to review draft recommendations for improvements to the site. This has been scheduled for the August 22nd Regular Council meeting at 6:30PM.

FINANCE

July Monthly Financial Report: The July financial report is available for review and linked below.

<https://stories.opengov.com/huronoh/published/gkLJk9jFT>

Moody's Visit: The City received Moody's credit opinion this week. They affirmed the AA3, but with a positive outlook. This is the best rating the City has ever received. Although this is not an immediate upgrade, the positive outlook reflects the likelihood that the City's credit profile will continue to strengthen with the maintenance of strong reserves and continued growth of the local economy. If this continues, the City could see an upgrade to AA2 in the next 12-18 months. The benefit of an upgrade will provide more affordable financing rates moving forward. We believe we are in a very strong financial position with minimal debt and a robust future capital plan – which will provide us a good chance to see a credit rating increase in the coming year to year in a half. Here is a link to the published credit opinion.

https://www.moody's.com/research/Moodys-assigns-Aa3-GOLT-and-A1-non-tax-revenue-ratings-to-Rating-Action--PR_908253500

2024 Budget: The Finance Department has completed initial meetings with all departments to review draft budgets and capital requests for 2024. Over the next few weeks, departments will be refining budgets in anticipation of final meetings in late August and early September. A big thank you to Cory Swaisgood and our department heads for being prepared to start this process in anticipation of final budget adoption in early December.

WATER DEPARTMENT

Recent Activity:

- **Sawmill Water Main Break:** On the evening of August 16th the Water Plant reported a large drop in the water levels in the elevated storage tanks. After a few hours of searching, we found a 12inch main break between Rt2 and the north side of the properties on Sawmill Parkway. Water Distribution worked extremely hard over many long hours to fix a complicated main break and we thank them for their commitment to ensuring our customers can rely on us. Full service was restored on August 18th.
- **Neptune AMR Transmitters.** The Neptune AMR Transmitters project has been completed.
- The city received a \$10,000 equipment grant from the Ohio EPA which will go towards the purchase of a hydraulic power pack and hydraulic valve turner.
- Staff are collecting quotes for damage done to the 12' main (150 ft) on Sawmill Parkway after a semi-truck hit a hydrant. The supply loop is currently valved off, but all customers still have service. We have only managed to have one company respond with quotes for repair on this project. At this point we need to move ahead with repairing the watermain. The approximate cost for all the damage will be ~\$115,000. The party responsible has to this date agreed to pay for any damages.

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 an updated proposal.

West Side Water Tower: On June 16th, 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: Staff recently met with designers from OHM to review progress set drawings for this project. We anticipate this project being bid in late summer or early fall.

PERSONNEL/ADMINISTRATION

Open Positions:

- The City has begun the interview process for the open Maintenance I position within our streets department. Starting hourly rate is \$21.14. We hope to make an offer to the preferred candidate imminently.

AGREEMENTS

Amplify Banner: Approved a request of Amy Claus to place a 3x6 banner in the median to advertise "Amplify," which is a praise and worship gathering that was held at the boat basin amphitheater on Sunday, August 20, 2023. The banner was placed in the median from August 13-20.

St. Peter Catholic Church – Spooktacular 5K and Fun Run Banner: Request of St. Pete to place a 3x5 banner in the median to advertise its St. Peter's 9th Annual 5K Spooktacular running race and fun run, which will be held on Saturday, October 28, 2023. This race is part of the Huron 5K Series, and the banner will be in the median from mid-September through the date of the race.

CONTRACTS

- Bricker & Eckler – HPP Legal Services (Law) – **Expires 9/30/23.**
- 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

September Meetings:

- HJRD – Tuesday, September 5th at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers.
- Utilities Committee Meeting – Wednesday, September 6th at 5:00 in the main conference room.
- BZA Meeting – Monday, September 11th at 5:30pm in the Council Chambers.
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, September 12th at 6:30 in the Council Chambers.
- Planning Commission Meeting – Wednesday, September 20th at 5:00 in the Council Chambers.
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, September 26th at 6:30 in the Council Chambers.