



CITY OF HURON  
CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

August 4, 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. OHM advisors, who have already designed a good portion of the utility work with be submitting a proposal to the City and Ridgestone to complete work needed to submit a preliminary and final plat to Planning Commission for consideration.

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

**Two Rivers:** The public hearing at City Council related to the Phase I PUD has been completed. At the next Council meeting on Tuesday July 11<sup>th</sup>, 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 ten (10) households have physically relocated. We will continue to work over the upcoming weeks and months with our partners to aid relocation efforts.

**ECEDC:** The Annual Meeting and Awards for ECEDC will be held on Tuesday August 8<sup>th</sup> at Sawmill Creek Resort – Willows Hall. I will provide all Council members with invitations at our meeting on June 27<sup>th</sup> in case they would like to attend. Arrival begins at 4:30PM and the program begins at 5:00PM. The Keynote Speaker will be Eric Wobser who was recently announced as the incoming CEO of the Greater Sandusky Partnership who will be merging organizations with ECEDC.

**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 11<sup>th</sup>, 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 30<sup>th</sup>, 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 on utilities and punch list items throughout August.

**East Side Sidewalks:** The City was notified by Governor DeWine's office on June 9<sup>th</sup> 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 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 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](mailto:stuart.hamilton@huronohio.us).

**Huron Public Power Third Transformer:** On January 17<sup>th</sup>, 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 25<sup>th</sup> 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 28<sup>th</sup> 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 9<sup>th</sup>, 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 27<sup>th</sup>, 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 1<sup>st</sup>, 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 the upcoming weeks.

**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:** 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 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, City Architecture presented progress on the imagining process for this park to the HJR. 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 22<sup>nd</sup> Regular Council meeting at 6:30PM.

## FINANCE

**Garbage Assessment:** Council approved legislation on the City's new garbage rate in June. The City increased the quarterly rate to match the proposed contract from Republic from \$65 to \$71 per quarter through the end of 2023. Council is also on the second of three readings to add the garbage fee to residential property tax bills, beginning in 2024. Communication on this process was sent out with the June bill. If passed on third reading at the August 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting, we will distribute more information to all residential property owners through the end of 2023. The garbage fee for residents will match the Republic Services contract going forward. If assessed on residential properties, no administrative fee will be charged on top of the contractual rate with Republic Services. There are approximately 3,200 residential properties receiving garbage services through the City contract with Republic Services.

**July Monthly Financial Report:** The July financial report is available for review and linked below. At the end of July, income tax revenue was up 10%, or \$232,000, from July of 2022. This increase continues to mostly be due to the Ardagh expansion and growth from Sawmill Creek Resort and Mucci Farms, as well. The unencumbered general fund balance at the end of June was \$2.1 million, or 35% of annual expenditures. Major revenue sources are showing positive growth in 2023 compared to 2022. Most notably, interest earnings are more than budgeted at the end of July, and up 118% from 2022. Although Nickel Plate Beach parking fees are still expected to be greater than pre-pandemic revenues, the total revenue for the year is trending lower than budgeted for 2023. This revenue source is directly impacted by weather conditions around holidays and weekends during the summer. Unfavorable weather conditions, such as strong winds and cooler temperatures, have negatively impacted parking fee revenue through July.

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

**Moody's Visit:** The City will be traveling to Chicago on Monday's August 7<sup>th</sup> to meet with Moody's. The goal of the meeting will be to hopefully enhance our credit rating, which if occurs, will result in more affordable financing rates moving forward. We believe we are in a very strong financial position with minimally debt and a robust future capital plan – which will provide us a good chance to see a credit rating increase.

**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:

- Neptune AMR Transmitters. Actively installing Neptune AMR Transmitters on round 2. There are only a few transmitters still needing to be installed. A major thank you to all staff who have been aggressively swapping out these transmitters.
- 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 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:** 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

**Police Department:** The Huron Police Department is in the process of hiring part-time patrol officer Connor Rospert, as a full-time patrol officer. He will begin with the Department during the week of August 7th and will be formally introduced to the community and Council during a swearing in ceremony at the August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Council meeting.

### **Open Positions:**

- The City is still accepting applications for the open Maintenance I position within our streets department. Starting hourly rate is \$21.14. Applications can be emailed to [andrea.rocco@huronohio.us](mailto:andrea.rocco@huronohio.us) or dropped off at City Hall at 417 Main St, Huron, Ohio 44837.

**Charter Amendment:** The City has successfully submitted necessary paperwork to the Erie County Board of Elections to ensure inclusion of our proposed charter amendment on the November 2023 ballot.

## AGREEMENTS

N/A

## 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

### August Meetings:

- Finance Committee Meeting - Tuesday August 8<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 in the Council Chambers.
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday August 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 in the Council Chambers.
- BZA Meeting – Monday August 14<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 in the Council Chambers.
- Planning Commission Meeting – Wednesday August 16<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 in the Council Chambers.
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday August 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30 in the Council Chambers.