



CITY OF HURON
CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

November 5, 2021

Matthew Lasko, City Manager

ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Ardagh/Sawmill Pkwy: Construction continues on the approximate 300,000 square feet worth of additions to the expanded facility. The City has approved the vacation of about 300-400 feet of roadway at the eastern end of Sawmill Parkway based on a recommendation of approval from the Planning Commission. That vacation agreement has now been fully executed. Related, the city is finalizing the process of receiving a dedication of land from Ardagh which will be partially utilized for the installation of a turnaround primarily to aid emergency vehicles in their maneuvering the eastern terminus of the Parkway. We hope to have the new plat recorded shortly.

Staff and Ardagh are also in final review of a proposed CRA Tax Abatement request/agreement. We hope to bring forth that agreement to Council shortly.

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

Also, staff will soon be approaching Council to begin the re-zoning process for the Conagra site from its current zoning to a new designation which will permit mixed-use development/residential.

Additionally, the city is currently reviewing proposals from engineering firms to complete an analysis of the existing seawalls and provide recommendations and cost estimates for repair or full replacement. We are anticipating dive work to occur in November with a final report and recommendations to be received prior to the end of the year. Understanding these costs along with other infrastructure needs and costs will be instrumental in n negotiating a final development agreement with NAI Harmon Group.

Sawmill Creek: On July 13th, the City voted to pursue the annexation of nine (9) parcels currently located in Huron Township – and more easily recognized as the Sawmill Creek Resort, Conference Center and Golf Course. On July 16th, Huron Township consented to the annexation and agreed to move forward. The reasoning behind the proposed annexation is to provide local subsidy to the project via a financing tool commonly referred to as a “Section 41 Tax Increment Financing.” The type of proposed financing can only be undertaken by a municipality ad cannot be

undertaken by a township – hence the need for the proposed annexation. The final major hurdle needing to be accomplished was consideration and approval of the TIF by the Huron School District. We are happy to report that on July 20th, the School Board voted to approve the 30-year, 75% TIF. We are so grateful for the support of the School Board and the Administration and believe we set forth a truly mutually beneficial package that will both ensure a long-term predictable revenue stream to the district while also ensuring adequate revenues to both complete the Sawmill Creek Resort project and fund a capital infrastructure fund to address the western gateway to the City and the intersection of Cleveland Road and Rye Beach. This is truly a tremendous public private partnership involving the city, Township, School District and Cedar Fair. There is still a great deal of legislation needing to be brought forth to effectuate the annexation and TIF, which will be occurring over the next several months including but not limited to:

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

We hope to wrap everything up prior to the end of 2021.

INFRASTRUCTURE/STREETS/UTILITIES

Leaf Pickup: Beginning on Monday October 25th, the first round of leaf pickup began. Crews began leaf pick up on the east end of town and continue westward. Once completed, crews will begin another round on the east side of town. As usual, crews are hoping to make 3-4 passes through the city. Reminder that leaf piles must be placed within 6 feet of the curb line and cannot contain sticks or other non-leaf debris.

Sidewalks: The City, in partnership with Huron Township is exploring a sidewalk installation project that would link the current eastern sidewalk terminus (Gateway Boulevard) all the way to the entrance of Huron Green. This project is instrumental for enhancing walkability and connectivity between multiple subdivisions and Huron's multiple amenities but will more importantly create a safe connection for those traversing Cleveland Road. OHM is currently putting a proposal together for design costs to be shared between City and Township. If Council and the Trustees desire to move forward, 2022 would be used a planning design year with construction to occur in 2023.

Rt. 6 Streetlights: Installation of the new streetlights as part of Route 6 Phase I is substantially complete. It is anticipated that Ohio Edison will be energizing the new lights during the week of November 8th. Once the new lights are energized crews will investigate for proper functioning

and installation. If approved, Ohio Edison is anticipating removing the old streetlamps during the week of November 22 or November 29.

Rt. 6 Striping: Final striping is approximately 60% completed. Crews will be returning to the corridor on November 5th and 6th to continue working in hopes of finishing up final striping in its entirety during the week of November 8th. Once completed, staff will be approaching council with a legislative request to amend the traffic code to recognize the reviews traffic pattern and striping.

Maritime Assistance Program: On Friday October 15, the City, on behalf of The Huron Joint Port Authority (HJPA) officially submitted a \$4 million request to the Ohio Department of Transportation's Maritime Assistance Program. The funding is only eligible to port authorities in Ohio for projects including, but not limited to, land acquisition, equipment purchase, and dredging to name a few. Since HJPA does not own a full operational port, eligible projects are limited. However, the city is in communications with the Army Core of Engineers on future dredging needs of the Huron River. Therefore, the HJPA requested funding to assist in future dredging cycles which would serve as the local match for any federally funded work through the Army Core of Engineers. We will keep Council up to date on status of the application and ultimate funding decision.

Safe Routes to Schools: The City is exploring submission of multiple applications for the Safe Routes to Schools program administered by the Ohio Department of Transportation. The grant application deadline is set for March 4th, 2022. Currently, the city is exploring making reapplication for sidewalks/multi-use path along Jim Campbell Boulevard and additionally, installation of sidewalks along Berlin Road heading southward to the city limits.

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

ZONING/CODE/PLANNING

Condemnation and Demolition: Staff is currently working with SSEG to explore ways to increase the expediency and efficiency of the City's condemnation and demolition process. Although not needed often, when it is, time is usually of the essence. We hope to have recommendations for Council considering in the upcoming weeks.

Tree Assessment: Similar to the sidewalk assessment program, the City is exploring a tree assessment program for property owners who need to remove dead, dying or diseased trees

from their property. The cost of removing a tree can be very expensive. Through the assessment program, property owners would have the option of, in essence, financing the removal through an assessment on their real estate taxes. Additionally, we are proposing to amend the code to ensure the services of a certified arborist are engaged to determine the health of trees being removed. Additionally, it may be worth considering a requirement be included to replant a new tree in its place to ensure long term health of the City's tree canopy.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Costal Management Assistance Grant: on October 15, 2021, the City submitted two (2) pre-applications to ODNR for their Coastal Management Assistance Grant Funding. Upwards of \$500,000 (which requires a 1:1 match) is available to communities within a limited coastal area to help fund projects related to coastal planning, public access, water quality, land acquisition, habitat restoration and research. On November 2, the city was notified by ODNR that we are being encouraged to re-submit both of our applications for full consideration. The City submitted two (2) pre-applications:

- A request to secure funding to increase public access to the developing beach behind the water plant and
- A coastal planning grant that would cover the area of Lakefront Park eastward to the Huron River also encompassing the northern portion of main street.

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

Newsletter: On November 5, staff finalized the Fall issue of the newsletter and sent everything to the printer. Based on this timing, the Fall issue of the newsletter is anticipated to hit everyone's doorsteps and mailboxes around Thanksgiving. Many thanks to the staff who assisted in finalization of the fall issue and Jennifer Kilbury with Cottage Designs. Items to be highlighted in the newsletter include Conagra Redevelopment, bike lane finalization, Vision 2020 Action Plan update, Fish Cleaning station update, Winterfest, 50th Anniversary of the Boat Basin and more.

FINANCE

2022 Budget Preparation: Staff has been presenting the 2022 budget to the Finance Committee over the past month. The final budget meeting to discuss the capital improvement plan is scheduled for November 15th at 4 pm in Council Chambers. A link to the currently proposed budget book is provided below:

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

Monthly Financial Report: The October financial report will be emailed Finance Committee and Council by November 15th. Please let the Finance Director know if you would like to see any other information in the monthly financial report.

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

WATER DEPARTMENT

Active Projects: The annual valve exercising, and hydrant flushing is in progress, the sludge lagoon spoils removal is in progress, and preparations are underway for the OEPA audit in mid-October.

Ohio EPA Audit: The annual Ohio EPA Audit was conducted on October 20th and November 3rd. We anticipate results of that audit to be released shortly. We are anticipating the audit to mention a handful of items already being explored by the City including updating our rate study to compare it against needed capital improvements, a recommendation to increase the level of finished water storage and recommendation to explore alternate intake options in the event we experience issues with our existing intakes.

PERSONNEL

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

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

CONTRACTS

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

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

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

UPCOMING MEETINGS

November

Finance Committee (work session): Monday November 15, 2021 at 4:00p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Planning Commission: Wednesday November 15, 2021 at 5:00pm in the Council Chambers.

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

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

December

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

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

Utilities Committee Meeting: Wednesday, December 9, 2021 at 5:00pm in the main conference room.

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

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

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

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

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