



CITY OF HURON
CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

November 27, 2023

Matthew Lasko, City Manager

ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ConAgra: On November 8th, the City officially released a new Request for Qualifications and Conceptual Proposals for the former ConAgra site. This was sent to many potential developers along with firms that have expressed interest in the site in recent months. Responses are due to the City by January 12. A new proposed development partner and conceptual plan are intended to be presented to the Council for consideration in February of next year.

Two Rivers: The public hearing at City Council related to Phase I PUD has been completed. At the next Council meeting on Tuesday July 11th, 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-five (25) households have physically relocated. Also, six (6) trailers have been moved to new locations for residents with one (1) more trailer remaining to be moved in the next few weeks. In total, there are only two (2) occupied units remaining on site.

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, twenty (20) mobile homes have been demolished and additional site clearing and grading is underway.

The City also has reviewed the asbestos survey on the house and must abate about 600 linear feet of window glazing. The City has contracted with MAD Cleaning, LLC of Sandusky to handle the abatement which is less than \$5,000. This work will be completed on December 11th.

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: 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 to make final draws on our grant funds and close out the associated agreements.

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 24th 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 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 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.

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 23rd. Leaf pickups will be done on a rotating basis from east to west, with at least two trips throughout the City, through Friday, December 8th – 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. 23rd. 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. 8th 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: See the "Projects Out to Bid" section for further details.

Main Street Corridor Plan: The final draft of the Main Street/Downtown masterplan will be presented to Council on November 28th, 2023, during a work session beginning at 5:45pm. 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 16th. The staff is also working on a final draft of a Request for Qualifications to select a design firm to undertake design and engineering drawings for Phase I of the plan which spans from Cleveland Road on the north southward to Bogart Road.

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.

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. We have also received a request from the Greater Sandusky Partnership to meet on projects that communities want to advance for State Capital budget consideration.

Huron Boat basin Dredging: The City finally received permission to open lake dump dredged material. Staff put out a bid to complete this work and received two (2) bids. Both bids were extremely close and while they came in over the budgeted amount, the unit price was very close to bids received in 2018. The lowest and best bidder was Huffman Equipment Rental Inc. in the amount of \$366,477.50.

FINANCE

October Financial Report: The October financial report is linked below. Income tax revenue was up 9%, or \$268,000, from October of 2023. The unencumbered general fund balance at the end of June was \$2.5 million, or 38% of annual expenditures. Although the City is experiencing better than anticipated revenue growth in income tax, growing inflation in various costs such as streets maintenance, stormwater maintenance, public safety equipment and healthcare costs will offset income tax increases in the short-term. The City is expecting to subsidize the healthcare fund in 2024, which was an unanticipated cost up until the 2024 renewal required a 36% increase in annual premiums. Current City income tax cannot subsidize other revenue sources that fail to maintain consistency in annual receipts, such as the fire levy and street supported state taxes. The City will need to utilize any additional income tax dollars for pension and debt liabilities, and healthcare costs. The City also has upcoming capital improvements needed to fulfill the City's master plan, which will increase the City's future debt service liability.

<https://stories.opengov.com/huronoh/published/arCws6p-l>

2024 Budget Recommended to Council: The 2024 Budget meetings concluded on November 20th. The Finance Committee recommended the 2024 budget to Council for approval as presented during the five budget meetings. The Finance Committee also recommended the Council explore additional revenue sources as the City is expected to face unsustainable, long-term budget shortfalls in various departments, such as Fire, Street, and Parks, in the next 3-5 years. A public hearing on the 2024 budget will be held on December 12th before the regularly scheduled Council meeting. I want to thank all the departments and especially the Finance Committee for their input and dedication to the budget process.

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 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: 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

An offer was extended to and accepted by Shari Lynn Kreutzfeld for the open Maintenance III (Operator) at the water filtration plant. She comes to us via the City of Sandusky and her start date will be December 4th, 2023. We are excited to have Shari join us.

AGREEMENTS

N/A

PROJECTS OUT FOR BID

Huron Boat Basin Maintenance Dredging Project: This project went out to bid on October 31st, with the bids due by November 17th. The City received two qualified bids, one from GEO Gradel Co. and one from Huffman Equipment Rental & Contracting Inc., with Huffman being the lower bidder at \$366,447.50 (including contingency and bonds). The award of bid to Huffman is on the agenda for the November 28th meeting (Resolution No. 79-2023).

Huron Waterfront Parks Plan: This project went out to RFQ for Park Planning Services on November 3rd, and proposals are due by 2:00pm on Monday, November 27th. The RFQ was emailed to 10+ planning firms/planning organizations.

Demolition of Structure(s) Located at 531 Berlin Rd.: This project went out to bid on November 20, 2023, with bids due by 2:00pm on December 13, 2023.

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.**
 - **City is in the process of finalizing negotiations for continued services with Mrs. Andrea Rocco for 2024.**
- Personnel Officer Employment Agreement – expires **12/31/23.**
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- 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:

- City Council Work Session – Tuesday, November 28th at 5:45pm in the Council Chambers.
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, November 28th at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers.

December Meetings:

- City Council Organizational/Regular Meeting – Friday, December 1st at 5:00pm in the Council Chambers.
- HJRD – Tuesday, December 5th at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers.
- Utilities Committee Meeting – Wednesday, December 6th at 5:00pm in the main conference room.
- BZA Meeting – Monday, December 11th at 5:30pm in the Council Chambers.
- Finance Committee Quarterly Meeting – Tuesday, December 12th at 5:30pm in the Council Chambers.
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, December 12th at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers.
- Planning Commission Meeting – Wednesday, December 20th at 5:00pm in the Council Chambers.
- CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY – City offices will be closed at noon on Friday, December 22nd and all day on Monday, December 25th.
- City Council Meeting (if needed) – Tuesday, December 26th at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers.

- NEW YEARS HOLIDAY – City offices will be closed at noon on Friday, December 29th and all day on Monday, January 1st.

- Please mark your calendars for Winterfest 2023. The event is currently scheduled for Saturday, December 2nd. Events start at 12:30pm 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.