



CITY OF HURON
CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

October 18, 2024

Matthew Lasko, City Manager

ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ConAgra: The City received three (3) submittals from qualified and interested development companies. Interviews commenced during the week of March 11th – with two interviews occurring with each respective development team. Based on those interviews and fact-finding efforts, the City has narrowed the list down to two (2) finalists including K. Hovnanian/Knez Homes and Prephan Enterprises. These two finalists presented to the Council and the public at two (2) separate work sessions on July 9th and July 23rd. Council discussed the preferred developer at the August 24th regular Council meeting. After discussion regarding the pros and cons of each development, Council made a motion directing staff to begin negotiations on a purchase/option agreement and development agreement with K. Hovnanian/Knez Homes. The city has sent the draft Letter of Intent (LOI) to the development partners for review and comment. Additionally, the Law Department has sent a draft development agreement to the city for review. Staff have provided comments to the Law Department who are currently in the process of amending the development agreement. The Law Department has also sent a draft purchase and sale agreement to the staff which is currently under review internally.

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 Carmeuse Plant. Per Norfolk, the lease with Carmeuse expires in early 2024 and neither party desires to renew it. As such, Carmeuse 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.

Two Rivers Residential Development: Reminder that there will be a Builder's Preview event for the restart of the Two River's development on September 14th from 1-4 p.m. Council should have been forwarded the email invitation as RSVP's are required. There will also be a ribbon cutting event soon for the construction of their model home. We look forward to this development restarting and welcoming many new families to the City of Huron.

INFRASTRUCTURE/STREETS/UTILITIES/IT

Rt 6 Phase II: Pursuant to authorization provided by Resolution No. 50-2024 adopted by Council on June 11, 2024, the city executed an Agreement with TranSystems Corporation of Ohio for professional design and bidding services relating to the US 6 Phase II Project in the amount of \$369,469. Legislation was passed for this project on June 11th, 2024, and a contract has been signed. We will work on design and will carry out public engagement throughout the project. It is hoped to construct this project in 2025.

Survey of the project limits has commenced. Once this step is completed, design can start for the layout and limits of all aspects of the project. Staff continue to hold project meetings.

East Side Sidewalks: For the southside portion, we are currently working through some ODOT ROW acquisitions for temporary access enabling construction. Once this has been concluded, we are ready to put this project out to bid.

ROW acquisition is complete. ODOT are now reviewing our stage three plans. Once this is complete, staff are ready to put this project out to bid.

Route 13 Crosswalks: The City has applied to the Ohio Department of Transportation for Systemic Safety Dollars and was awarded funding to cover 90% for this project. The expected cost is \$134,000, with \$120,600 being covered by grant funding. This project will install new crosswalks and flashing beacons on Route 13 at both Forest Hills and Valley View. It is not yet known if these will be able to be installed during the S. Main Street Watermain replacement and resurfacing project or will have to be installed in 2025.

The final design package has been submitted to ODOT for approval. As soon as this is approved, we will put this project out to bid. We are still expecting to contract this in 2024.

Pavement Condition and 2023+ Resurfacing: All construction work is completed, and a final walkthrough was carried out 7/2/2024. A punch list has been generated and associated work should be completed by the end of August.

The contractor has remobilized and is working on the punch list. Concrete work is in process, to be followed up by crack seal work and striping work. Lawns will be tackled after Labor Day to give the grass seed the best chance. The intent is to remove the topsoil and replace, then seed. Other misc. items will be tackled along the way.

Concrete repairs and crack seal repairs have been completed. Lawn restoration is underway. Other misc. items will be worked on in conjunction with the lawn restoration.

South Main Street Streetscape Design and Engineering: Staff continues to meet regularly with representatives from OHM regarding initial plan designs and preliminary engineering. Shortly, OHM and City staff will begin meeting individually with property owners to review preliminary drawings.

A conceptual plan has been developed and the next step will be to engage business owners within the project limits. These discussions will be very high level explaining the intent of the plan and talking through any potential issues that the concept plan may cause to the operations of each business.

South Main St Watermain Replacement Project: This project was advertised December 14th, and bids were received on February 15th, 2024. Spear Brothers, Inc were lowest and best at a bid amount of \$2,549,899.00. The pre-award meeting was carried out on March 1, 2024. This award was presented to the Council at the March 12, 2024, meeting.

All water taps have been completed on Huron and Mills St. Restoration work began the week of the 26th of August. The paving contractor started on Huron Avery and will move north, through Valley View, Forrest Hills and Hickory. The paving will result in single lane closures/temporary closures at times as the crews move through.

Full curb replacement has commenced on Valleyview, Forest Hills and Hickory. Once this has been completed, a second finish layer of asphalt will be laid.

A low-interest loan has been granted from OWDA with a repayment term of 20 years at 3.48%.

The City recently executed an Ohio Public Works Commission Infrastructure Program Project Agreement relating to the South Main Street Water Main Replacement Project for financial assistance in the form of a grant and loan in an amount not to exceed \$412,500. The grant portion is in the amount of \$275,000 and the loan portion is \$137,500. The project must be completed by April 2025 to be eligible for these funds.

Huron Public Power Expansion Phase 1: This is the first expansion project for Huron Public Power. The city is finally out to bid on 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. This project went out to bid 1/4/2024 and bids closed on 2/16/2024. A single bid was received in the amount of \$369,870.00 and was presented to Council for consideration at the March 12th meeting. There was also a purchase of switchgear before Council for \$58,700, bringing the project cost to a total of \$428,570.

The city received the final go ahead to start boring under the tracks. Once the contractor mobilizes, we expect this project to take less than a month.

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: 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, and a proposal has been approved by Council. Work has commenced on the website, and we hope to unveil in 2024.

City Hall Parking Lot: Work is substantially complete on the parking lots, selective sidewalk replacement and catch basin repairs. All parking lots are now open to vehicular traffic. Final inspections and punch list items will be completed in near future.

ZONING/CODE/PLANNING

Coastal Management Assistance Grants: We expect to have this project completed by the end of 2024 or shortly thereafter. A second meeting (conceptual) was carried out this week and staff feedback given. We expect to see some more concepts at the end of the month. A joint work session between Council, HJRD and Planning Commission will be held at 5:30 on October 8th to review concept plans for the Lakefront Park improvement and connectivity. After this meeting, a public online survey will be launched for the community to weigh in on the concept plans and their desired improvements to the greenspaces.

Light Trespass: The law department has completed an initial draft to address light trespass on residential buildings. Staff has reviewed and offered comments. This code creation will need to be presented to the Planning Commission at an upcoming meeting for feedback prior to being presented to Council on first reading.

802 Williams Street: The City is in conversations with the owners of 802 Williams about possible accepting the property as a donation. The property, which sits just north of RPM Automotive Repairs has had longstanding code compliance issues. The Erie County Land Reutilization Corporation (ECLRC) has officially agreed to contribute \$20,000 towards the eventual demolition of the property. Prior to presenting a donation agreement and grant agreement to Council for review, the City will complete an asbestos survey to properly inform us on the cost of the eventual demolition.

PARKS AND RECREATION:

State Capital Budget: The city submitted State Capital budget requests for during the week of April 1st to our respective state legislators – Sen. Nathan Manning and Rep. Dick Stein. Each request was for \$750,000 which is in line with past state capital grant awards in previous years.

The city has informally been told that we will be receiving between \$200,000-\$250,000 from the State of Ohio as part of the first \$350M in one-time Strategic Investment funding. There will be another \$350M announced shortly which is on top of the state capital funding bill. The \$700M is from a one-time allocation of surplus operating funds from the state of Ohio. These funds will be used to offset part of the necessary capital improvements needed at the Boat Basin site. We will keep Council up to date as we get more formal information about this funding.

Nickel Plate Beach: As some may be aware, the city currently leases the beach and parking areas from Norfolk Southern Railroad. The lease, as written, permits Norfolk Southern to terminate the lease with 30 days' notice to the city. The city has reached out to Norfolk Southern to begin conversations on securing this regional asset as publicly accessible recreation space – in perpetuity. We will keep Council and the public informed as the process moved forward.

Berlin Road Park: The floating dock has now been installed and is open for public use. Additionally, the city has commenced the naming process for the Berlin Road Park. Staff has narrowed the list of potential names down to 10. These 10 names will be presented to the HJRDC at their next meeting with the goal of sending three (3) finalists to Council for final selection. The city is simultaneously working on entry sign designs for eventual installation in early 2025. Because the entry of the park is technically in Huron Township, we have begun conversations with the Township about the process to permit and construct the sign.

SAFETY SERVICES

FLOCK License Plate Readers: After six months of operation, the FLOCK cameras have recorded over 1 million license plate reads. The program continues to be a huge asset for the police department with investigations and the solvability rate of our hit/skip accidents has increased exponentially.

12-Hour Shifts: The police department started 12-hour shifts on Sunday, August 4th. The transition has been very positive and the operational and economic benefits will continue to be evaluated.

Officer Training: Several officers received additional training in self-aid/buddy-aid, defensive tactics, and standardized field sobriety testing.

FINANCE

Income Tax: The city has commenced its next round of income tax information sessions. Two sessions have been held with 2 additional meetings to occur prior to the election. Details of the meetings can be found in the meeting calendar at the end of this report. Additionally, the Library will be hosting City staff on October 29th to undertake a podcast at 10:00 a.m. to talk about the income tax ballot measure. Finally, the Library will be hosting myself and the community at 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. on Saturday November 2 for a “Coffee and Conversation” to both talk about the income tax measure but also any other matters of concern or interest to our local stakeholders.

Finally, the City, as required by ORC, has sent out mailers to all property owners in the City regarding our ballot measures (income tax and charter changes) providing descriptions of what is being proposed.

2025 Budget: The 2025 budget process has commenced, and multiple meetings have been held with all departments. Additionally finance committee meetings start on Monday October 21st and will continue weekly for 5-6 weeks. The first meeting will cover Parks and Recreation, Planning and Zoning and Economic Development.

September Financials: <https://stories.opengov.com/huronoh/published/ND-NSTTL0>

Please note that income tax receipts through September are 6.9% lower than in 2023. Fortunately, the general fund balance remains strong due to both interest earnings continuing to remain strong and departments have minimized or delayed purchases. General fund balance remains strong at \$2.1 million, which equates to 33% of expenditures. The rule of thumb is to maintain a balance between 15-25%. This balance will eventually drop during the 4th quarter as there is still one more quarterly transfer to occur in December.

WATER DEPARTMENT

Recent Activity:

Lead Service Lines: Distribution staff has completed investigating meter pits for service line material and entering them into the GIS database. The lead service line inventory is due to the OEPA by October 16th. Staff discovered one lead service lines which was on the customer side. They were informed of this discovery.

Active Project Updates:

Alternate Intake/Sludge Lagoon: Boring samples were completed at the tower site on 5/13, and the river intake site was completed on 5/14. Electrical engineers have also been onsite to assess utility needs and availability for both sites. Due to timing constraints, it is being advised that a low-interest loan from OWDA will be the best option for funding the balance of the water tower project.

West Side Water Tower: The City accepted a proposal from Kleinfelder on January 12, 2024, in the amount of \$132,250 for design and bidding services. 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. Surveying has been completed for the water tower site. Boring samples have been taken and the Ardagh site has been deemed as a good site. Staff are working with Ardagh on site access and acquisition. Kleinfelder has provided renderings of the new water tower.

Plant Re-Rating: Kleinfelder has applied to the EPA on behalf of the City for a plant rerating of 5.5 MGD; Approval from the EPA is still pending, and the Water Superintendent has notified the Ohio EPA of this urgency. The EPA indicated on 5/3/24 that the city should receive a response in the coming weeks. No further correspondence from EPA Plan Review has been received at this time. The Northwest District office indicated that the city will not receive violation at this time for producing beyond 3.4 MGD. This is because the rerating application is in review. The WFP did exceed our current rating on 6/17/24 as 3.455 MG of water was produced that day. The EPA was notified.

STREETS DEPARTMENT

Radar Speed Signs: The radar speed signs have been moved from Strowbridge Drive to Adams Avenue.

Street Signs: Staff have updated all street name signs in the Rye Beach neighborhood.

Crosswalk/Stop Bar Painting: Staff have completed painting of stop bars and crosswalks in the Rye Beach, Wexford, and Village Green areas.

GIS Mapping: The Streets Department continues with GIS mapping/updating of catch basin, manholes and storm lines. The east side of town has been completed.

PERSONNEL

Union Negotiations: The City has commenced bargaining unit negotiations. Initial meetings have been held with all four (4) bargaining units and will continue over the next several weeks.

Police Department Update: The advertisement and hiring process for a new officer has commenced. This is to fill the vacancy created with the departure of Det. Ian Foos.

Planning Director: The city has put a hold on hiring a full-time planning director. We do believe strongly that additional manpower is still needed in that department, but we are evaluating the best method to staff that department moving forward. I do want to recognize and comment Christine Gibboney and Alec Romick for their remarkable work while down a staff person.

AGREEMENTS/CITY MANAGER APPROVALS

N/A

PROJECTS OUT FOR BID

N/A

CONTRACTS

- Emergency Services Agreement with Huron Township (Res 68-2021) – Expires **12/31/24** The City is in conversations with Huron Township to do a simple 1-year extension of the existing agreement with all terms remaining the same. Our Law Department has drafted a first amendment which has now been sent to Huron Township for review and consideration.

- HJRD Annual Agreement (Res 51-2024) – **Expires 12/31/24.**
- Dispatch Agreement – Erie County Sheriff (Res 71-2023) – **Expires 12/31/24.**
- City Prosecutor Employment Agreement (Res 86-2024)– expires **12/31/24. The administration wishes to continue with Mrs. Andrea Rocco in this position. We have drafted an amendment to this agreement for two (2) years (2025-2026) and have sent the draft amendment to Mrs. Rocco for review.**
- Personnel Officer Employment Agreement (Res 85-2023) – expires **12/31/24. The administration wishes to continue with Mrs. Andrea Rocco in this position. We have drafted an amendment to this agreement for two (2) years (2025-2026) and have sent the draft amendment to Mrs. Rocco for review.**
- OHM Advisors (Res 2-2024 Engineering) – **Expires 12/31/24.**
- IAFF Collective Bargaining Agreement (Res 47-2021) – **Expires 12/31/24.**
- FOP-Sergeants Collective Bargaining Agreement (Res 2020-79) – **Expires 12/31/24.**
- FOP – Patrol Officers Collective Bargaining Agreement (Res 2020-79) – **Expires 12/31/24.**
- AFSCME Collective Bargaining Agreement (Res 48-2024) – **Expires 12/31/24.**
- Erie Soil and Water Conservation District (Res 3-2023 Engineering) – **Expires 1/31/25.**
- Seeley, Savidge, Ebert & Gourash Co., LLP (Res 47-2024) – **Expires 6/3/25**
- Dynegy Electric Aggregation Agreement (Res 29-2023) – **Expires 7/30/25.**
- Dynegy Electric Standard Large Stable Service Agreement (Res 54-2023) – **Expires 08/2025.**
- Building Official – Service Agreement (Res 43-2021) - **Expires 7/25/2026**
- School Resource Officer (Res 32–2024 & Res 33-2024) – **Expires 8/31/26.**
- Republic Services (Res 44-2023) – **Expires 12/31/26.**

UPCOMING MEETINGS

October Meetings:

- Safety Committee Meeting – Wednesday, October 23rd, at 4:15 PM in the large Conference Room
- Income Tax Public Meeting – Wednesday, October 23rd, at 6 PM at the Huron Boat Basin
- Huron Joint Port Authority – Wednesday, October 23rd at 6 PM at the Huron Township Hall
- Finance Committee – Monday, October 28th, at 4 PM in Council Chambers
- Scott Cemetery Board – Monday, October 28th at 5:00 PM
- Income Tax Public Meeting – Tuesday, October 29th, at 6:30 PM at the Huron Library
- Trick or Treat – Thursday, October 31st, at 5 PM

November Meetings:

- Day Light Savings Time – Ends, Sunday, November 3rd
- Finance Committee Meeting - Monday, November 4th, at 4 PM in Council Chambers
- Election Day – Tuesday, November 5th
- Huron Joint Rec District Meeting – Tuesday, November 5th at 6:30 PM in Council Chambers
- Utilities Committee Meeting – Wednesday, November 6th at 5 PM in Council Chambers
- Veterans Day – Monday, November 11
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, November 12th at 6:30 in Council Chambers
- Finance Committee Meeting – Monday, November 18th at 4PM in Council Chambers
- Planning Commission and DRB Meeting – Wednesday, November 20th at 5PM in Council Chambers
- City Council Meeting - Tuesday, November 26th at 6:30 PM in Council Chambers
- Thanksgiving Day – Thursday, November 28th