



CITY OF HURON
CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

December 24, 2021

Matthew Lasko, City Manager

ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Firelands Scientific: The City has received final site plans from Firelands Scientific related to a substantial expansion of their facility in the Huron Corporate Park. The site plan was presented to the planning commission on 12/15/21 and received unanimous approval. The project does need to get additional approvals on lighting plans, however. This is truly an exciting project, and we are appreciative of the Company's willingness to expand operations in the City. The expansion includes, but is not limited to additional growing space, offices, warehousing and parking along with landscaping enhancements.

USGS/Harbor Point Marina: At the planning commission meeting on 12/15, the next phase of the Harbor Point Marine project was presented. The second phase (the first being the construction of the USGS facility which is underway) includes a new storage facility and the construction of an approximate 2,500 square foot Harbormaster House. The site plan received approval, however, the developers will need to still secure approval of their landscaping plan and undergo design review of the exterior materials for the facility. We are excited that the owners/developers continue to move forward with additional phases of this transformational project. Developers are still determining what, if anything, will happen to the larger blue storage building on site.

Buckeye Sports: The City has received plans from Buckeye Sports for the construction of their water/marine craft facility in Lake Erie Parkway. This will be a wonderful addition to the City and the corporate park and will result in development on the last remaining parcel within the Corporate Park. We are hoping to see construction commence soon and want to wish them a big welcome to the community.

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.

OHM continues to progress with final design and construction drawings in hopes of bidding out the construction in early 2022.

Staff plans to introduce a CRA Tax Abatement to Council on January 11, 2022, for the project. The Company will be seeking a 15-year abatement. However, it should be noted, the Company has agreed to ensure the abatement is such that both Huron Schools and EHOVE will receive the same amount of taxes they otherwise would have received without the abatement. This structure will be memorialized via two separate school compensation agreements with each entity that will also need to be considered by Council. EHOVE approved the School Compensation agreements in early December and Huron Schools approved the School Compensation

agreement at their December 21, 2022, Board meeting. We appreciate the collaboration from all entities involved and truly appreciate Ardagh's ability to reduce their abatement request to the benefit of the school districts.

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.

Council referred the application for rezoning of the ConAgra property from I-2 General Industrial to MU-GD Mixed Use Granary District to the Planning Commission at its last meeting on November 9, 2021. Planning Commission held a public hearing on the request at its December meeting on December 15, 2021, and approved the rezoning application which will now be presented to Council sometime in likely January of 2022. In addition to approving the rezoning, there are a few items Planning Commission needs addressed in the zoning classification – which is now many years old since its inception. Items to be discussed at an upcoming planning commission meeting include but are not limited to whether to permit transient rental uses within the district and greater clarity on what retail/commercial signage and uses.

Finally, the City has made a request of both Huron Schools and EHOVE to consider school compensations agreements related to the development as part of a Tax Increment Financing package to aid in the financing of the public infrastructure on the site – which includes roadways, utilities, and seawall restoration/construction. These are critical requests in order for the public improvements to be financed to support the development. We are happy to report, Huron Schools unanimously approved the request at its December 21, 2021, Board meeting and EHOVE will be considering the request at their next Board meeting in early January.

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 and 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

Most recently, Cedar Fair is in the process of executing the deed sets and will be sending to the City in the very near future. Once this step is accomplished, the City will be able to move forward immediately with consideration of both School Compensation Agreements and consideration of the final TIF Ordinance.

Additionally, Cedar Fair agreed verbally to an annual service payment of \$450,000 on top of what is currently being collected from the property. Based on the agreed upon School Compensation Agreements, this will equate to a new \$112,500 annually for Huron Schools and \$6,750 for EHOVE. The remainder, \$330,750 a year (or nearly \$10M over the life of the TIF) will be utilized to retire the debt to renovate the project and to undertake public infrastructure investments around the property.

INFRASTRUCTURE/STREETS/UTILITIES

Rye Beach Road/Cleveland Road Corridor: Based on the continued redevelopment of Sawmill Creek Resort and all the existing and growing investments along Rye Beach Road and industrial parks, the City has begun conversation with the Ohio Department of Transportation about safety and traffic control upgrades along Rye Beach Road – with major emphasis on the intersection of Rye Beach and Cleveland Road. Additionally, the City will be meeting with staff from the Erie Regional Planning Commission and Huron Township who may have additional interest in upgrades on the Cleveland Road corridor heading west from town – primarily at Camp Road and Perkins Avenue. Based on the previous traffic study that was done a few years ago, coupled with all the major investments in the area, the corridor may be a good candidate for a Transportation Review Advisory Council application to fund a significant portion of the needed traffic and safety upgrades from Rye Beach to Perkins Avenue which total well more than \$10M. Applications would be due to the state in May of 2022.

Sidewalks: Steve Didelot has been in contact with Lonnie Bullis, Erie County ODOT, Dist. 3 about the Rye Beach Rd./Rte. 6 overpass asphalt repairs for both northbound and southbound lanes. The northbound lanes are in the City limits, while the southbound lanes are located in the Township. ODOT advised that if we provide the material, they will (as weather permits) mill and fill both ends of the structure. The City's expense for the material (Perma-Patch) would be \$3,000 which is budgeted for. ODOT plans to perform the work between the hours of 4pm and 12am. The administration will advise Council as soon as the work is scheduled.

Leaf Pickup: Crews are now officially done with leaf pickup throughout the City. The crews completed eight (8) passes through the City which is a tremendous amount, but also needed due to the delay in leaves falling from the trees this season. To those folks that still have leaves to discard, please take advantage of the yard waste program which is ongoing.

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 has completed their proposal for design which is approximately \$40,000. If Council and the Trustees desire to move forward, 2022 would be used a planning design year with construction to occur in 2023. It should be noted, the 2022 budget does include the City covering half of the design costs for the project.

Additionally, staff plans to seek Council approval at an upcoming meeting to make application to the Erie Regional Planning Commission – Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for supplemental funding for this project. The MPO recently released a request for proposals, due February 25th, 2022, seeking transportation alternative projects (bike and pedestrian) based on having additional Coronavirus Relief and Response dollars. The MPO has approximately \$280,000 available with project maximums set at \$93,414.

Rt. 6 Streetlights: Installation of the new streetlights as part of Route 6 Phase I is substantially complete. There are several of the new lamp heads that malfunctioned during testing which have since been removed. Once new heads are received, those will be installed as quickly as possible. Additionally, all wooden poles have since been removed. Ohio Edison crews still need to remove steel poles on the west side of the bridge. Finally, Ohio Edison has reinstalled the streetlamps across the bridge. As mentioned before, the City will continue ongoing conversations with Ohio Edison to ultimately have the poles abandoned to permit the City to install similar heads that exists throughout the corridor.

Rt. 6 Striping/Signage: Crews have finalized new signage installation to account for the slightly revised traffic pattern for Rt. 6 – resulting from significant public feedback. A final punchlist walkthrough is still planned with the City, construction crews and ODOT. The City anticipates presenting legislation to Council on January 11, 2022 adopting the final striping plan and amending our traffic code to permit our safety forces to begin enforcing the final striping plan.

Finally, staff anticipates finalizing the Rt. 6 Safety and User guide by the end of the month. Once completed, this will be available online, in hard copy form and we will send out links via social media as well. A big thank you to our planning and engineering staff for their efforts on this helpful piece.

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 received a proposal from OHM to undertake an update to our pavement condition report and is currently reviewing in hopes of approving in early 2022. We hope to undertake this work in early 2022 to develop a plan for resurfacing some roads in 2022 which may be aided by end of year transfers into the Capital Improvement account, but more importantly, undertaking a more aggressive road resurfacing program in 2023/2024 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.

Huron Public Power: Staff recently presented to the Utilities Committee related to the expansion efforts of Huron Public Power. The Action Plan update undertaken in mid-2021, prioritized the thoughtful expansion of the utility to reach additional potential customers, but more importantly, to increase the competitiveness of Huron electrical utility as an economic development tool. Based on this meeting, staff will be presenting several proposals to Council in early January to begin utility expansion including design work for: (1) boring under the N/S railroad on Rye Beach to extend the utility northward to Sawmill Parkway, (2) extending the utility down Sawmill Parkway as part of the street reconstruction project, (3) extending the utility across Route 2 and (4) adding a third transformer to the substation in order to both create redundancy in the system in the event of a bad transformer and to add additional customers.

Stormwater Management: The City and OHM staff recently met to review a proposal to undertake a stormwater management plan for the City. The City continuously is engaged by residents related to stormwater issues they are facing across the City. The ultimate plan would be to undertake an exhaustive process to map the existing stormwater system throughout the City, undertake hydraulic modeling to determine capacities of the system, and then put together a capital improvements plan to systematically make upgrades to the system which will denote cost and priority. Staff, in consultation with the utilities committee and finance department hopes to undertake at least part of this plan/process in 2022.

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.

Signage Code: The City is also undertaking a comprehensive review of our signage code – related to both permanent and temporary signage. This review is aimed at simplifying our code for greater clarity while also taking into consideration some recent court rulings at the state level regarding enforcement capabilities. We hope to have a draft for consideration in early Spring of 2022.

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.

Staff has officially submitted both proposals and will be awaiting decisions from the grant funding applications at some point in 2022. We will keep Council aware of any news related to these applications throughout 2022.

Ice Skating Rink: The new ice-skating rink for Fabens Park has been received and City crews have begun installation. It is placed on top of the existing tennis courts. Staff will continue installation efforts over the next few weeks in anticipation of colder temperatures come January/February. Once the rink is ready, the City will ensure the community is aware through multiple channels of

notification. A big thank you again to all the donors to the project and staff who is working on installation and eventual maintenance and prepping through the upcoming winter months.

FIRE

2022 Ambulance Purchase: The fire department has been contacting potential vendors for the purchase of an Ambulance, budgeted for 2022. The preferred vendor (Lifeline – same as the ambulance purchased in 2020) expects a delivery date of late spring/early summer 2023. No payment will be due until that time. However, the price is expected to increase after January 1, 2022. To lock-in a price not to exceed the budget amount of \$300,000, the vendor is asking for a letter of intent from the City. The Fire Department believes the purchases prices could be as low as \$280,000. We plan to send a letter of intent by the end of December and bring formal legislation to Council in early 2022, as more details need to be sorted out and formal quotes obtained.

This ambulance is expected to replace the 2013 ambulance, which will be sold on Govdeals.

FINANCE

2022 Budget Preparation: The finance committee unanimously approved the budget and recommended its consideration to City Council, with a few additional considerations. The budget was sent to Council at the end of November and approved at the public hearing on Tuesday, December 14th. A link to the approved budget book is provided below:

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

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA): Staff presented a preliminary spending plan to the Finance Committee at the December 13th Finance Committee Meeting. The following link will direct you to the ARPA spending plan, as well. Staff will request a work session in January to review this plan more in detail.

<https://stories.opengov.com/huronoh/published/YTvWGM0YO>

WATER DEPARTMENT

Service Issues: The Mucci 12" water meter is dead and not recording. This is our largest internal user and thus we are trying to get this back in service ASAP. Neptune meter was the provider of this 4-year-old meter and is working on getting warranty parts and in the event, parts are unavailable then a new meter will be ordered. Water usage during this time will be estimated / averaged based on usage before and after the meter reporting head died. It appears that a faulty gasket by the manufacturer allowed moisture to enter the circuit board which ultimately caused a complete failure of the unit.

AFSCME Negotiations: The union voted on the proposed collective bargaining agreement last which – which was approved. This agreement will be presented to Council on 1/11/22 for ratification. A big thank you to Gary Ebert, Cory Swaisgood, Jason Gibboney, and representatives of AFCSME and the City's AFCSME bargaining unit for the smooth process.

PERSONNEL

Annual Report: The City plans to reinstitute the production of an annual report. Hopefully to be published and available in February, the report is meant to provide the public with a summary of department outcomes and accomplishments for 2021 and a snapshot of the City's financial position. We feel it is very important to both celebrate the accomplishments and hard work of our various departments and staff while also increasing the avenues that we can communicate to the public about the work of the City.

Service Director/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 completed interviews for this position. We have several qualified candidates that would make wonderful hires for the positions – as staff is proposing to combine the above two positions into one singular position. Prior to making an offer to a candidate, staff will be requesting Council authorization to increase the allowable salary for the service director position as well creating and acknowledging the Director of Operations positions.

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) – **Agreed to in principle. Staff will be executing the agreement prior to the end of the year and seeking Council ratification of the agreement at the next Council meeting on 1/11/22.**
- AFCSME – **Agreed to in principle. Staff will be executing the agreement prior to the end of the year and seeking Council ratification of the agreement at the next Council meeting on 1/11/22.**

The Garbage contract with Republic is set to expire in the summer of 2022. The City met with representatives of Republic a few weeks ago to begin laying out a calendar and plan for ongoing discussions in 2022. The City anticipates integrating the Utilities Committee and Finance Committee in these discussions as they progress prior to presenting a proposal to Council for trash hauling services.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

December

City Council Meeting: The originally scheduled Council meeting for Tuesday December 28, 2021, at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers is CANCELLED.

City Offices Closed for New Year's Holiday: City offices will close at 12:00pm on Thursday, December 30, 2021 and will reopen on Monday, January 3, 2021.

January

HJRD Meeting: Tuesday January 4, 2022 at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers.

Utilities Committee Meeting: Wednesday, January 5, 2022 at 5:00pm in the main conference room.

BZA: Monday, January 10, 2022 at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers

City Council Meeting: Tuesday January 11, 2022 at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers.

City Council Meeting: Tuesday January 25, 2022 at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers.

Planning Commission Meeting: Wednesday, January 26, 2022 at 5:00pm in the Council Chambers.

Safety Committee Meeting: Friday, January 28, 2022 at 5:00pm in the main conference room.