



CITY OF HURON
CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

March 24, 2023

Matthew Lasko, City Manager

ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Firelands Scientific: Due to pending legislative changes in Columbus, expansion activities are currently on hold until any changes are finalized.

USGS/Harbor Point Marina: The next phase of the Harbor North revitalization is underway. Crews are currently hard and fast at work constructing the approximate 2,500 square foot Harbor Master Building. The entire framing of the facility is completed at this point.

ConAgra: The development team presented to the Planning Commission on Wednesday December 14th for consideration of their conceptual site plan. There was good conversation and the developer left with some suggestions and will return with updated conceptual soon – in March of 2023.

At the March Planning Commission meeting, developers presented revised conceptual drawings taking into consideration feedback received in December from the Commission and City staff. Revised drawings included slight increases to the total residential unit count, increased off-street parking, larger outdoor space for restaurant dining, and the inclusion of taller and smaller townhouse units on the interior of the site to create unit diversification. There was great discussion and some minor changes were requested by the commission to the developer. We are hoping to present a final conceptual plan for consideration no later than the April Planning Commission meeting.

Additionally, the City is in the process of securing a design proposal from OHM Advisors for design of the interior loop road and related public utilities throughout the site. We hope to receive and begin reviewing the proposal in the upcoming weeks.

Warren Slag Property: As of March 10, 2023, the City has officially closed on the purchase of the property and has accepted title. The City will now move to the next step in the process of layout out potential designs for the site along with getting more detailed utility and infrastructure cost estimates for improvements.

A kickoff call with EDA was held during the week of March 13th to talk through the grant award and next steps with completion of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Erie and Huron Counties. Next steps will include issuing an RFP in April to select a consulting firm to complete the CEDS study and report.

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: Developers and architects presented their Phase I PUD to Planning Commission on February 15th. The request was conditionally approved. Phase I plans call for the buildout of the remaining single family lots on Sheltered Brook – which total 27 houses in all. Later phase plans will be submitted near the completion of Phase I.

Related, we anticipate presenting a development agreement to Council in the upcoming weeks related to the development. Moving forward, the City would like to start requiring developers to enter into development agreements which include assurances for construction and completion of roadways, utilities, sidewalks, streetlights, etc....and creates the ability for the City to intervene through bonding to complete the work if needed. It also will create safeguards to ensure any public infrastructure eventually being dedicated to the City is designed to our specification and subject to our inspections.

Lemmy's: During the week of March 20th, the City met with the new owners of Lemmy's restaurant who also purchased the residential structure just west of the restaurant. The owners are looking to make a significant re-investment into the property and potential exists to construct a new commercial baking facility in Huron to serve all their bakeries throughout Erie County. As part of the process, the owner will be seeking a lot consolidation and rezoning of the site from residential to business. We look forward to this process and their planned investment in Huron.

Norfolk Southern Holdings: The City hosted Solomon Jackson during the week of March 20th who leads Norfolk Southern's real estate division. We reviewed and talked through future plans with all of their Huron Holdings. Long-term the company desires to decommission the N/S rail line along River Road leading into the Carmuese property in order to partner with the City in converting this to a recreation amenity. Additionally, Norfolk Southern will be meeting with representatives of Carmuese in April/May to determine their long-term plans on the site. Any and all details from this meeting will be shared with Council as soon as communicated to us.

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 contractor has remobilized. We are installing a temporary road just to the south of the Parkway to keep traffic flowing and minimizing congestion. Once this is complete, traffic will be routed over this temporary road allowing us to reconstruct the roadway at the intersection of Sawmill Parkway and Rye Beach Road. Constructing this portion of the roadway all at once will really minimize congestion on both roads as we will not have to be reduced to single lane traffic at the intersection. The contract is simultaneously starting reconstruction at the east end of the Parkway.

Sidewalks: The City has executed the design contract with OHM Advisors to commence design work on the new sidewalk installation project which will travel from Gateway Boulevard inside the City limits to Huron Green subdivision in Huron Township. Design will take several months, and both the city and the Township will continue to explore funding opportunities to construct the approximate \$600,000 project. To date, the project has secured \$25,000 from Huron Township and just over \$120,000 from Erie County Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Staff has sent easement documents for review to the four (4) property owners positioned between Anchorage and Gateway. Easements are needed to install and maintain this sidewalk connection. The City is also awaiting the results of a \$650,000 funding application made to ODOT Central office for the project. Results of that funding request are slated for April or May of this year.

Pavement Condition and 2023+ Resurfacing: OHM are currently in the design phase of this project. Core samples have been taken in multiple problem areas to discover any possible base issues and are currently being reviewed by staff and OHM.

Stormwater Management: The stormwater management plan phase 1 kickoff meeting was held with internal staff and the OHM Stormwater team. Everyone is excited to get this project rolling. The discovery phase will be very manual as staff will need to digitize old as built plans etc. This digitization needs done regardless, so this is a good means to prioritize this task. This project is expected to last eight (8) months to a year and will deliver a visual stormwater inventory to take us in to the future. During the time this project is active, you will see OHM staff around the city collecting data. If anyone has any questions or concerns, please contact Stuart Hamilton at 419-433-5000 x 1104 or email at stuart.hamilton@huronohio.us.

Body Worn Cameras: The body worn cameras and tasers have now been ordered. We are anticipating receipt in the next few weeks.

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 two companies are OmniFiber 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.

Quiet Zone: The City requested a work session at the second Council meeting in January of 2023 to be updated and educated on the idea of establishing a quiet zone. I know some council members are familiar, but we wanted to take time to ensure all members understand what they are, the benefits of them, and what potential timelines and costs would be to consider such a zone in the City. The City, in order to continue the exploration of the project, has received a

proposal from Alfred Benesch and Co., out of Fort Worth, Texas to update the quiet zone study and related costs estimates. The City is currently reviewing the proposal.

Huron Public Power Third Transformer: On January 17th, 2023, an RFP was released to purchase, deliver, ramp up and test this third 69kV transformer. Bids will close February 28th at 2PM EST. We do not expect to be in possession of this unit until the Fall of 2024. This RFP will only cover the purchase, install and ramp-up of the transformer itself. Once we have a good delivery date, we will issue a second RFP for services to bring it online and provide new controls and switching equipment.

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 to Council in the near future.

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.

Republic Trash Collection Contract: Our current agreement expires on June 30th, 2023, after exercising a one-year extension on the original contract. Staff attempted to negotiate within the current contract to manage costs but could not come to an agreement. This means we will issue a new Request for Proposals. This RFP will take a tiered and options approach allowing the city to compare pricing options and service levels to contain escalating costs. Staff do believe we will see higher pricing than we currently have.

Huron Port/West Pier: The City was recently notified that the U.S. Army Corp. of Engineers was recently approved to undertake \$11.5 million worth of work in the Huron River and on the West Pier. \$1.5 million is dedicated to dredging and \$10.0 million has been dedicated to West Pier maintenance. The City is still in talk with the USACE to understand the final scope of work for the West Pier. As soon as this is detailed, we will alert Council and the public. This award was one of the largest awards to any port in the great lakes region. A very big thank you to U.S. Representative Marcy Kaptur for all her advocacy in helping secure this critical funding.

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. Final notification will be made in May or June.

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 fall of 2022.

Main Street Corridor Plan: On March 22nd, the Steering Committee had its 4th meeting to review final land use recommendations and to review initial recommendations for street scape design and public space enhancements. Next, the Planning Commission and Council will hold a joint session on April 19th to review a presentation by OHM on these similar items. We are hoping for good turnout and spirited discussion to move towards finalizing the plan in May or June of this year. Once adopted, the City will begin the process of seeking proposals to undertake detailed design and engineering for Main St.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Fish Cleaning Station: The tables have been installed, with the electrical work to follow soon, and testing to take place in April once the water has been turned on. ODNR is looking toward an official ribbon cutting in mid to late May, but a soft opening will take place prior to this and after testing is complete to make the station accessible to the public prior to the state ribbon cutting. Final electrical work will be completed this week, with the final step being a delivery acceptance test once the water can be turned on again.

Tennis Courts: The City is reviewing final design documents prior to bidding the project. We anticipate bidding to occur by April 5th with bids due April 28th. During the bidding process, the City will also be issuing a community survey to determine which type of sport is more desired and most likely to further activate Faben's. Results of this survey and bid will be presented at a work session to make a final decision on final design selection.

624 Berlin Road: Ed Burdue and Co. have demolished the single-family home and removed debris from the site. Crews will return to the site in the Spring of 2023 to complete final grading and seeding. After soliciting multiple proposals, the City has decided to select City Architecture out of Cleveland. An agreement has been signed with the firm to guide staff and the community through the reimagining of this space. Deliverables will include multiple stakeholder meetings, community survey, structural analysis of the barn, aerial renderings, multiple site renderings and cost estimates.

A decision has been taken to have the barn structure removed. There were more structural issues discovered as we carried out exploratory demolition. This, coupled with insect damage, and water damage, made rehabbing this structure cost prohibitive.

Huron Joint Recreation District: Staff recently met with both Huron Township and the Huron School District regarding contributions to the district for 2023. We are happy to report, proposed contributions by the partners are proposed to decrease ever so slightly. The Township viewed the proposed budget very favorably and will hopefully act on the HJRD Agreement at an upcoming meeting. The School District met on February 21 and did not take action on the HJRD Agreement, nor did they vote on a revised financial contribution plan set forth by the School Administration. Based on the results of that meeting, the City will not be seeking School Board approval of any agreement in which they will be a party to moving forward.

Fieldhouse: A second fieldhouse exploratory meeting was held on January 9th at the Boat Basin. Attendees included the City, Township, School District, Boosters, and HJRD. Enthusiasm remains high. Action steps include securing operations expense comparisons from other like facilities and developing a community survey to determine what amenities initially are most desired by the community and student athletes. Initial conversations occurred regarding potential facility locations which include Fabens Park or spaces around Woodlands and McCormick. The group hopes to meet in the next month to review progress.

FINANCE

House Bill 1: HB1 is a House priority bill to overhaul state taxes, flattening the income tax and reducing the percentage of property values to which tax rates are applied. HB1 will result in a negative impact on the City's property tax revenue and local government fund revenue (all General Fund revenue). The total net impact to the City is still unknown. The impact on property taxes is estimated to be a loss of approximately \$49,000 in 2024, if the bill passes as written. Most of this impact will be on General Fund property tax revenue. The fire levy is expected to be unaffected by this bill. We will keep Council updated on HB1.

1st Quarter Water Bills: Residents will be receiving their first quarter water bills within the next few days, if they haven't already. This will be the first bill with the new water rate, approved by Council last fall. Customers should expect a 5% increase from the previous water bill. Notification of this rate change was included with the prior water bills.

2021 and 2022 Financial Audits: The City should receive a draft audit report for 2021 in the coming weeks. Council will receive the audit report before it is released. There has been no indication of any reportable findings for 2021. The Finance Department expects to get back on schedule with the 2022 audit, which will result in the audit being released by July/August.

Link to February Monthly Financial Report:

<https://stories.opengov.com/huronoh/published/Ku0SDY6hN>

(email sent to Council on 3/10/2023)

WATER DEPARTMENT

Recent Activity:

- January average plant capacity 72.5%
- Neptune AMR Transmitters. Actively installing Neptune AMR Transmitters on round 2.
- Neptune East gateway operable.
- Submitted documentation to the State of Ohio for a second round of consideration for the \$5 Million water tower H2Ohio grant opportunity.
- Completed annual water rate reconciliation with Erie County – no change in tier.
- Consumer Confidence Report draft in the hands of OEPA for review.
- Alex Hoyt passed his Class 1 Operator examination.
- Brandon Dupont passed his Class 1 Distribution examination.

Active Project Updates:

- Sludge Lagoon – Ohio EPA NPDES. Poggemeyer completing study of comprehensive options and alternatives, report presented to Utilities Committee with preference found to be routing decant to plant recycle. Current plan is to merge this project with the Alternate Intake (below).
- Primary Intake. The annual intake crib inspection was completed on August 10th. During inspection, the diving crew noted that just inside the intake and past the riser, the intake was ½ full of debris. A full-length cleaning is required, which was last conducted in 1991. Funds will be budgeted in 2023 and the project will be bid in Spring 2023.
- Plant Re-Rating – Post-construction, it is now the goal to have the filtration plant rerated at 5.87 million gallons per day. The documentation for this process falls under the original contract with Poggemeyer for the expansion. PDG has submitted one application to the State for this rerating, but it has been returned for additional information with a notation that cited tables were missing. Jason Gibboney has emailed PDG on this and will continue to call and email until resolved. Poggemeyer has submitted a second application to the OEPA to rerate at 4.9 MGD which will remain a Class III facility. When and if we have a Water Superintendent certified at that level, we can then reapply to rerate to the full capacity of 5.87 MGD.

Sewer Shutoff's: The City has received final comments from Erie County on a potential agreement. We are currently reviewing these comments. This agreement, if approved, would be combined with a water rate increase agreement with Erie County. Related to that agreement, the City has received final comments back from Erie County and has approved the content. We are now waiting on Erie County to legislate and vote on the agreement.

South Main Street Watermain Replacement: The proposed improvements for this project include:

- Portions of South Main (south of Valleyview) approx. 775'
- Portions of Huron Avery from the Mudbrook to city limits, approximately 1300'
- Portions of Mudbrook Road approx. 650'
- Full replacement on Forest Hills, Valleyview, and Hickory Drive – approximately 2332'
- Full replacement on Mill Street approx. 342'
- Partial replacement on Huron Street approx. 605'

The City will also be exploring whether any road resurfacing should be included in this project as well and under the same contract to secure efficiencies in work and potential cost savings. Staff and OHM personnel have submitted one funding application already and are in process of completing one additional funding application for imminent submittal. OHM are currently in the design phase of this project. A pre-design walk through has been scheduled with City staff and we hope to have this project ready to bid my March 2023.

Secondary Water Intake Project: On January 17th, 2023, an RFQ was issued to choose a partner to design and bid this project. The city received two responses to this RFP. After scoring these responses, Kleinfelder (formerly Poggemeyer) has been selected to negotiate design and bidding services with. Once agreement has been reached, this proposal will return to Council for consideration.

The City successfully applied for grant monies through Congresswomen Kaptur's office totaling \$2M for this project via the FY 2024 Community Project Funding Appropriations Request.

West Side Water Tower: The City was notified on March 22nd that it is continuing on in the process for our \$5M grant request to the Ohio Department of Development. This request is seeking a portion of a recently allocated \$250M statewide for water and wastewater infrastructure projects. The City has been given until March 31 to submit additional information to the department.

PERSONNEL/ADMINISTRATION

Police Department: The Police Department has posted both the promotional process for consideration of a new Sgt. To replace Chief Graham and has also posted the employment opportunity for a new patrol officer to replace the promoted Sgt. We hope to wrap up these hirings in the next 2-3 months.

School Resource Officer: Huron City School have approved a new multi-year agreement for the SRO program. Based on this result, staff anticipates presenting this agreement to Council for consideration at an upcoming meeting.

AGREEMENTS

Agreement for Beach Cleaning Services: The City has executed an Agreement with Cooner Enterprises Ltd. to provide routine beach cleaning services at Nickel Plate Beach and/or Lake Front Beach and/or Huron Pier Beach for a period of two (2) years at a cost not to exceed \$8,800 per year.

CONTRACTS

- OHM Advisors (Engineering) – Expires **12/31/23**
- Erie Soil and Water Conservation District (Engineering) – Expires **1/31/24**
- Republic Services – Expires **06/30/23**
- HJRD Annual Agreement (Recreation) –**expired** 12/31/22
 - See above in Parks and Recreation section.
- Dispatch Agreement – Erie County Sheriff – Expires **12/31/23**
- Seeley, Savidge, Ebert & Gourash Co., LLP (Law) – Expires **6/3/23**
- School Resource Officer – Expires **8/31/23**
- Bricker & Eckler – HPP Legal Services (Law) – Expires **9/30/23**
- City Prosecutor Employment Agreement – expires **12/31/23**
- Personnel Officer Employment Agreement – expires **12/31/23**
- Dynegy Electric Aggregation Agreement – expires **7/30/25**

UPCOMING MEETINGS

March Meetings:

- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, March 28th at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers;
- Records Commission Meeting – Thursday, March 30th at 9:00am in the Main Conference Room.

April Meetings:

- HJRD Meeting – Tuesday April 4th at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers
- Utilities Committee Meeting – Wednesday, April 5th at 5:00pm in the main conference room;
- BZA – Monday, April 10th at 5:30pm in the Council Chambers;
- City Council Work Session – Tuesday, April 11th at 6:00pm in the Council Chambers;
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, April 11th at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers;
- Joint Planning Commission/Council Work Session – Wednesday, April 19th at 5:00pm in Council Chambers;
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, April 25th at 6:30 in the Council Chambers.

- **Reminder as well that City hall will be closed at noon on Friday April 7th in observance of Easter.**