

**Infrastructure/Streets**

**US 6:**

- **Striping:** Crews permanently removed the remnants of the initial white paint that was errantly installed prior to including the center turn lane at River Road. This completes all striping as part of the road-diet temporary traffic pattern.
- **Lighting:** The City has authorized proposals from OHM/EPS to design and prepare bid documents for pole procurement and installation of new harbor style streetlights along the US 6 corridor. The pole bases were installed as part of the paving project. We are targeting an early spring advertisement date and early summer project kick-off. The Street Light Assessment is being utilized to fund the project.
- **Signage/Traffic Lights:** OHM is working with ODOT to discuss temporary options for bagging the light for eastbound traffic on US 6 at Main St. Also, all signs reflecting the new traffic pattern as part of the road diet are being installed. Replacement and installation began on Thursday January 7<sup>th</sup>.
- **Route 6 Feedback:** Reminder to all residents and interested parties that the City has established a dedicated telephone line for folks to leave feedback and thoughts on the temporary bike lanes and striping plan. Individuals can call and leave feedback on this dedicated line at anytime and staff will be documenting the feedback. A reminder of this line was included in the most recent water bill mailings. The phone number again is (419) 433-5000 (extension 1105).

**Christmas Tree Disposal/Pickup:** Reminder to all residents and property owners. Christmas tree pickup will occur on Monday January 11<sup>th</sup>. Please be sure to have your Christmas trees out by the curb no later than 7:00 a.m. to ensure pickup. Trees should be placed close to the curb and should not be wrapped in plastic.

**Radar Speed Monitor Signs:** The mobile radar signs have now been received by the City. During the week of January 4<sup>th</sup>, two (2) signs were installed along Laguna Drive. These signs are intended to both slow down traffic to adhere to the currently posted speed limit but also to gather data to determine if any alterations to the existing posted speed are warranted. These signs have the ability to be moved throughout the City as needed or requested.

**Sawmill Parkway:** The City was unsuccessful in its application request to EDA-CARES funding for \$2 million in grant funds to help reconstruct Sawmill Parkway. However, the City is in ongoing discussion with EDA about potential funding via a different grant program. Staff also is planning to provide an update to Council on the current status of the project and potential sources and uses of both options (partial reconstruction and full reconstruction) at the January 26<sup>th</sup> Council meeting.

### **Economic Development**

**USGS/Harbor North:** At the end of October, the Harbor North Marina was sold. The City has held several discussions with the new owners and their contractors – as the new ownership group is looking to make significant investments into the property. Conversations centered around the plan review and building permit process. It is also anticipated that the USGS facility will also be located at Harbor North with construction hopefully commencing soon on this facility as well. The planned renovations for the project were approved by the Planning Commission on November 18, however other elements of the project, namely aesthetic ones related to fencing and landscaping still need reviewed and considered by the Design Review Board – which will occur at a later date. Crews have started installing new portions of sheet piling throughout the site.

**IAC:** Ownership of the IAC facility has now officially changed hands. The property, and related acreage, located at 1608 Sawmill Parkway sold on December 2<sup>nd</sup>. The City is currently in conversations with the new owners regarding plans for the existing facility and expansion possibilities. The new owners, Ardagh Group, are immediately moving forward with new signage installation which will be considered at the January 2021 BZA meeting. Ardagh has committed to minimally hire an additional two hundred (200) employees and is already advertising these positions for hire through their website.

#### **ConAgra:**

- **Utility Construction:** The City recently discussed easement options with Norfolk Southern for utility installation at ConAgra. There are still some significant unknowns, specifically timing and cost, that will likely make this option no-longer the preferred one. Staff is working with OHM to move forward with exploration of the utility installation solely in City right-of-way. Staff will likely need to approach Council in the upcoming weeks for consideration of a contract amendment with OHM to complete construction documents and bid books for eventual bidding out of eventual utility work.
- **Tax Increment Financing:** The City adopted a TIF by ordinance in 2011 that incorporated the ConAgra parcel as well as the bulk of the downtown area north of US 6. The ordinance established a 30-year TIF with proceeds to be utilized to reconstruct specific projects. To-date, this TIF has not been active. The City has engaged Bricker and Eckler, LLP (with the blessing of SSE&G) for a legal review of the existing TIF and potential modifications. Based on the review, I would anticipate legislation forthcoming in the early part of 2021. Prior to moving forward with the infrastructure at ConAgra, the TIF needs to be firmly in place to ensure reimbursement of City funds/expenses.

## Housing/Real Estate Development

**Two Rivers:** The City had several conversations with a revamped development team who are exploring developing the remainder of the Two Rivers Planned Unit Development (PUD). The previous PUD has since expired. The development team will be working to partially redesign the development and related infrastructure and will hopefully be submitting a new PUD application to the City for review in the upcoming weeks/months. The City is also working with the proposed developers to investigate the condition of the existing infrastructure to determine what if any improvements or repairs are needed.

## Zoning/Code

**Transient Rental:** Staff and members of Council (along with great input and recommendations from the public and transient rental operators) continue to explore modifications to the existing transient rental program. In addition to modifications to the existing program, staff and Council are also exploring the creation of transient rental overlay districts that will allow customizable differences between neighborhoods based on their unique characteristics. Future work sessions will be held, beginning near the end of January, to review the most updated draft modifications and to review preliminary overlay district legislation.

## Parks and Recreation

**Fabens Park Award:** SportsEvents Media Group is the leading national publication aimed at helping sport event planners produce athletic competitions within the United States. On December 22, 2020, they recognized Fabens Park as a 2021 Reader's Choice Award Winner – receiving 3<sup>rd</sup> place nationally in the “All-Star Outdoor Sports Venues” category. As an award winner, Fabens Park and Huron will be honored in the February 2021 issue of SportsEvents magazine. As some background, sport event professionals were asked to nominate destinations and sports venues that they believe display exemplary creativity and professionalism toward the youth and amateur sports groups they host. Almost 4,000 votes were cast to name the winners in each category, including an emerging industry leader and all-star virtual and live events. SportsEvents executive editor, Sherri Middleton said of Fabens Park and Huron, “it is my honor to recognize Fabens Park as a 2021 winner. During a difficult year in sports, you overcame obstacles and creatively led the way for others.” I want to acknowledge the tremendous work of our Recreation Department staff under the leadership of Doug Steinwart and also the collective effort of the Huron Joint Recreation District for this honor – which is so well deserved.

**ODNR Public Fish Cleaning Station:** Staff had a follow-up discussion with ODNR regarding a public fish cleaning station. ODNR confirmed that they have a budgetary green light to move forward with at least one, if not two, facilities on Lake Erie (preferably Erie/Ottawa Counties)

with Huron and Port Clinton being the two primary locations based on anticipated utilization. Staff is currently reviewing potential plans for locations of a fish station along with potential operational costs annually to maintain such a facility. It is anticipated that the costs for construction would entirely be borne by the State, but maintenance would occur locally.

### Utilities

**Sale of Transmission Assets:** The City continues to put the finishing touches on the Purchase Agreement with AMP-T. Staff is planning to present final legislation to Council in January of 2021 for finalization. It should be noted that the Board of AMP has approved the Purchase and Sale Agreement contingent on finalization of an interim Operations and Maintenance plan/agreement.

**Tube Settlers:** The City is currently reviewing a proposal from Poggemeyer Design Group to update engineering/construction drawings, bid document preparation and provide construction observation/inspection services for the Tube Settler and Structure project. This project will allow the plant to produce up to 5.8 million gallons of water daily – and increase from the current 3.3-3.5 million gallons daily. The City hopes to approach Council in upcoming weeks for consideration of a contract to move forward with this important project.

**County Water Rate Reconciliation (2020/2021):** The City of Huron recently completed the annual water rate reconciliation with Erie County. The wholesale water agreement with Erie County was executed in late 2014 and has an expiration date of December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2054. In the agreement the water rate is variable on an annual basis as determined by the previous years' average daily use. The contract has 30 Tiers that cover an average daily water use of 500,000 gallons per day up to 1,500,000 gallons per day and a water rate of \$2.18 per ccf to \$1.18 per ccf. A short example is below:

- Tier 1 (low consumption) represents an average daily water use of 500,000 gpd to 524,999 gpd and has a rate of \$2.18 per ccf
- Tier 15 (medium consumption) represents an average daily water use of 850,000 gpd to 874,999 gpd and has a rate of \$1.33 per ccf
- Tier 30 (high consumption) represents an average daily water use of 1,225,000 gpd to 1,500,000 gpd and has a rate of \$1.18 per ccf

Each January we calculate the effective rate for that calendar year based on the Tiers in the contract. The total gallons purchased by the county in 2020 divided by the number of days in the year yields the average daily water use which is utilized to determine the contract Tier. If the county remains in the same Tier as the prior year then the rate has not changed and there is neither a credit nor debit to be issued. If the county drops to a lower Tier (less consumption) then the rate for that Tier will be the utilized for the current calendar year and the county would owe a balance to the city. If the county increased to a higher Tier (greater consumption) then the rate for that Tier will be utilized for the current calendar year and the city would owe a credit to the county. The county remains in the top tier of the contract as they had been in 2020, therefore there is neither a credit nor debit to be issued.

**Ohio EPA Inspection:** On January 5, the Huron Filtration Plant Laboratory was surveyed by the Ohio EPA. This certification process takes place every three (3) years as that is the longevity of staff licenses. We are pleased to announce that all employees passed certification and further, that operators Brandon Brown and Mark Jacobs have been promoted to full chemistry certification. I want to acknowledge the great work of Jason Gibboney at the staff at the filtration plant and a special congratulations to Mr. Brown and Mr. Jacobs for their advanced certifications.

### Finance/Budget

**End of Year Financial Update:** After closing out 2020, the City is in a good financial position for 2021. Actions immediately taken by City leadership and departments at the beginning of the pandemic resulted in 2020 ending fund balances of essential operational funds remaining or exceeding 2020 beginning fund balances. After transferring \$100,000 each from the General Fund to the Capital Improvement Fund and Economic Fund, and receipt of BWC's dividend, the City's General Fund balance at 12/31/2021 was approximately \$1.25 million, or 25% of total expenditures. Other essential services' fund balances, such as the Water and Fire Levy funds, ended the year 2% to 3% higher than 2020 beginning balances.

### Personnel:

**Water:** In 2021, the Water Plant is anticipated to move towards 24/7 operation, which has long been a goal of the City. To do so, this will require the addition of one more employee. It is anticipated that the hiring process will occur in the first half of 2021 with the goal of having the new employee trained and on board around May of 2021.

**Police:** The City is working with the National Testing Network to administer the testing process for potential candidates to be considered for officers of the Huron Police Department. Staff hopes to begin this process in upcoming weeks in hopes of making hiring decisions in early 2021.

**Zoning/Planning:** The City is anticipating hiring a full-time planning/zoning administrator in Q1/Q2 of 2021. This position will be responsible for zoning permit review, zoning inspections, liaison to BZA, DRB and PC and will assist in other planning and development activities. This position will undertake traditional zoning duties that were historically carried out by OHM Advisors. The City has begun advertising for this position with applications and resumes due to the City no later than January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

### Agreements

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