



CITY OF HURON
CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

December 8, 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. To date twenty-six (26) households have physically relocated. In total, there is only one (1) occupied unit 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-one (21) mobile homes have been demolished.

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.

Based on this status, the City and the Seller's are looking to schedule a closing and property transfer likely in the next 4-6 weeks.

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.

The City has received plan sets and legal descriptions for this project. Additionally, the City and property owner will need to terminate an existing access agreement allowing the City to utilize the site for certain events. Additionally, the property owner needs an easement from the City for ingress/egress purposes on the southern portion of the property – essentially allowing the project to utilize and existing City curb cut as the means of exiting the planned residential development. That agreement is currently being drafted.

INFRASTRUCTURE/STREETS/UTILITIES/IT

Rt 6 Phase II: Staff received a letter of intent from the Ohio Department of Transportation to allow a 100ft LA Break adjacent to Liberty Ave on Rt6. This break will allow the City to move ahead with planning and resident engagement for a proposed roundabout on Rt6 at Liberty Ave. This project would also close Jim Campbell Blvd at Center St, remove the unwarranted light at Center and Rt6 and add a multi-modal pathway on Jim Campbell. The roundabout will take Rt6 from a two-lane road down to single lane road east of the walk-bridge, slowing traffic coming into town.

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: This project is ready to bid and has an estimated construction window from April through the end of June 2024, weather cooperating. Staff will reach out to the relevant HOA's to provide an update.

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, we have three fiber internet providers installing 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. 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.

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.

Fall Leaf Pickup Program: This program will finish on Friday the 8th of December. Staff will monitor the City for leaf piles and will dispatch the leaf truck as needed and if the weather permits. Residents are encouraged to utilize the Republic yard waste pick up by bagging their leaves in yard waste bag and setting out on pickup day as an alternative and safeguard.

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 was presented to Council on November 28th and formally adopted unanimously by Council. A huge thank you to the planning staff, steering committee, planning commission, City Council, OHM and hundreds of participants for their feedback and input. Staff have also released the Request for Qualifications to select a design and engineering firm to design the first phase of the project. Responses are due to the City in early January of 2024.

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.

Demolition of 531 Belin Road: A request for proposals was issued to demolish the condemned structure at 531 Berlin Road. A well-attended pre-bid walk through was carried out this past Wednesday, with proposals due next week. The intent is to assess the cost of the demolition against the property.

Sidewalk and Tree Assessments: After some initial confusion when the initial letters were mailed, Staff have revamped this initial courtesy letter to be more explanatory. We apologize for any confusion this initial courtesy letter caused. In 2023, Oklahoma neighborhood was inspected, and initial letters were sent out. It is intended to mail out final notification letters in the spring of 2024, and any trees or sidewalks not addressed in compliance with these notices will be remediated by the City and the cost will be assessed on property owners' taxes. In 2024, the intent is to start this process over in the Old Platt neighborhood with initial inspections in the fall, final notices in the spring of 2025 and remediation the fall of 2025.

PARKS AND RECREATION

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 with responses due to them on December 12th.

Winterfest 2023: A huge thank you to Doug Steinwart and his team at Parks and Recreation for organizing another hugely successful Winterfest. We would also like to thank all the other participating departments and countless volunteers who helped organize the event. The newly instituted tree lighting ceremony was spectacular and well attended, capped off with a great fireworks show.

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.

HJRD: Huron Township appointed Edward Wimmer as the elected official to be HJRD Board, replacing Gordon Hahn starting in 2024.

Safety Town: Staff are working with the Huron Lions Cub on a partnership to replace all the safety town houses and equipment. EHOVE is going to build a prototype and we will update everyone on the progress. The goal is to have all the new houses and equipment in place by the Spring and ready for summer 2024.

SAFETY SERVICES

K-9 Dog Jax: The police department purchased a K-9 for \$13,500 which includes six weeks of training. Our new police K-9 is a male, German Wirehaired Pointer, that was born in Poland in March of 2022 and will be living with his handler, Officer Boesch. The Police Department is extremely grateful to the community for their support.

Jax will be sworn in at the regular council meeting on December 12th. He has already been extremely busy and even made a guest appearance at Winterfest.

FINANCE

4th Quarter Water Bills: The 4th quarter water bills will be sent out over the next week. The bill will not include garbage fees, except for delinquent garbage payments. The City will begin receiving garbage fees through property tax payments in 2024.

2024 Budget Recommended to Council: The 2024 Budget Book was sent to Council on November 30th. 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.

[Link to Online 2024 Budget Book](#)

Monthly Financial Report: The November financial report will be available and presented at the 4th quarter Finance Committee meeting on December 12th prior to the Council meeting. The council will receive an email with the November financial report prior to the meeting.

WATER DEPARTMENT

Recent Activity:

- The city has received chemical bids for 2024 and will be awarded on 12/12/2023. Chemical prices were an average of 17% lower this year after several years of increased pricing.
- 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 December of this year which will also include the complete resurfacing and select curb replacement of Forest Hills Drive, Hickory Road, and Valleyview Drive.

PERSONNEL/ADMINISTRATION

Communications/Admin. Position: The City has offered the newly created administrative assistant / communications position to Jen Kilbury – who is currently employed by the City in the Parks and Recreation Department. We have decided to retain her services via contract – which is currently being drafted. We hope to present this contract for consideration at our first Council meeting in January.

AGREEMENTS

HPP Power Purchase: The City approved an agreement with AMP to purchase required power for Mucci Farms for the calendar year 2024 in the amount of \$3,590,705. This is a passthrough sale and Mucci is committed to purchasing this load. The existing power contract for this load expires at the end of December. There is no financial impact on the City.

PROJECTS OUT FOR BID

2023 Repaving Program: This project will be advertised December 14th and bids will be due January 25th, 2024.

Main Street Design and Engineering: The City released the Request for Qualifications during the week of December 4th. Statements of qualifications are due to the City on January 5th. Upon receiving submissions, and internal team will review and negotiate a proposal for Council consideration in either late January or early February.

Huron Waterfront Parks Plan: This project went out to RFQ for Park Planning Services on November 3rd, and proposals were due by 2:00pm yesterday. The City received six (6) responses to the RFQ which is a tremendous response and will begin the firm interview process over the upcoming weeks.

ConAgra: The solicitation for a conceptual proposal and developer was made public on November 8th, 2023. Concept proposals are due to the City no later than January 12th, 2024.

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. During the pre-bid walkthrough, ten (10) demolition contractors attended.

CONTRACTS

- OHM Advisors (Engineering) – **Expires 12/31/23.**
- HJRD Annual Agreement (Recreation) - **Expires 12/31/23.**
- City Prosecutor Employment Agreement – expires **12/31/23.**
 - **Negotiated – on Council agenda on 12/12 for consideration.**
- Personnel Officer Employment Agreement – expires **12/31/23.**
 - **Negotiated – on Council agenda on 12/12 for consideration.**
- Erie Soil and Water Conservation District (Engineering) – **Expires 1/31/24.**
- Seeley, Savidge, Ebert & Gourash Co., LLP (Law) – **Expires 6/3/24.**
- **Dispatch Agreement – Erie County Sheriff – Expires 12/31/24**
- 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

December Meetings:

- 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.