



CITY OF HURON
CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

February 23, 2024

Matthew Lasko, City Manager

ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ConAgra: The City received three (3) submittals from qualified and interested development companies. Staff is currently reviewing internally for completeness and formal meetings plan to be held in March with each company and a combination of staff and Council members in hopes of making a recommendation to the full Council in late March or early April.

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.

Oster's: As of February 23rd, 2024, the City is working with Columbia Gas and Rural Water to finish utility hookups for final household. Sanitary and electric are completed and operational.

The City is also in the process of securing bids to undertake final grading and seeding.

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 an 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 finally 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.

A scope meeting with our preferred designer, TranSystems was held during the week of February 19th. Staff will be working with the firm over the next few weeks to present a design proposal to Council for consideration.

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.

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.

For the Northside portion, RMH Concrete and Foundations were the lowest and best bidder at a Construction cost of \$52,309.50. Now that Council has approved the contract staff hopes to have a schedule for commencement and completion in the next few weeks.

Pavement Condition and 2023+ Resurfacing: This project is out 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.

Bids closed for this project and DL Smith Concrete LLC were the lowest and best at a construction cost of \$2,148,655.30. Preliminary construction schedule will be from the beginning of April to mid-June and will be firmed up in the next few weeks.

South Main Street Streetscape Design and Engineering: A scope meeting with our preferred designer, OHM Advisors was held during the week of February 12th. Staff will be working with the firm over the next few weeks to present a design proposal to Council for consideration.

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.

Huron Public Power Expansion Phase 1: This is the 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.

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.

ZONING/CODE/PLANNING

Coastal Management Assistance Grants: The City received six (6) proposals for conceptual design work and selected to negotiate a design contract with OHM Advisors after interviewing three (3) finalists. A scope meeting occurred during the week of February 19th, and we hope to present a contract to Council in the next few weeks for consideration. This plan will look to suggest potential upgrades to the former Showboat property along with enhancing connectivity and accessibility between the Showboat property, through Lakefront Park and to the beach behind the water plant.

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. Nine bidders submitted quotes and Marksch Excavating and Demolition were the lowest and best at \$22,500. The contractor has graded and seeded the site. We will be withholding a 10% retainer until the grass has fully grown in.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Pancake Breakfast with the Easter Bunny & Egg Hunt:

SAVE THE DATE! The City is partnering with the Huron Lions Club, Horvath Roofing and AkzoNobel to present the annual Pancake Breakfast with the Easter Bunny & Egg Hunt.

Breakfast will be served at 8:00am at the First Presbyterian Church, and the magic show will start at 10:00.

Following the magic show, the Egg Hunt will take place at the Boat Basin at 1pm.



Fabens Park Dedication:

SAVE THE DATE! The Dedication and Ribbon Cutting for the new tennis/pickleball courts at Fabens Park will be held on **Wednesday, May 8th at 3:00pm**, with details to follow.

Anchor Memorial Public Art Dedication:

SAVE THE DATE! The Anchor Memorial Public Art Dedication & Celebration will be held on **Friday, May 31st at 1:00pm** at the Huron Boat Basin & Amphitheater, details to follow.



State Capital Budget: On December 11th, the City made a formal request to the Greater Sandusky Partnership for prioritization of the Huron Boat Basin rehabilitation to be prioritized locally for state capital funding. Although making GSP's priority list does not limit the City's ability to seek funding on our own, there is significant benefit to being prioritized by GSP from a lobbying and advocacy standpoint at the state level. We will keep Council apprised of any updates as this process moves forward.

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.

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. Huffman plans to mobilize their equipment on February 26th, weather dependent. Huffman has estimated one month for completion, taking into consideration potential weather delays.

SAFETY SERVICES



K-9 Dog Jax:

Jax has recovered from his surgery, and he is back to work with his handler, Officer Ryan Boesch.

Flock Safety Cameras: All of the Flock license plate reader cameras have been installed and there have been over 100,000 license plate reads since the first cameras were installed on February 6th. The Police Department will continue to provide statistics on the feasibility and success of the Flock cameras.

FINANCE

January 2024 Financial Report: The January financial report was sent to Council and the Finance Committee a few weeks ago. A link to the report can be found below. The City's income tax is down 3% in January of 2024 from January of 2023. The unencumbered balance in the General Fund is \$1.1 million, or 17% of annual expenditures. We will continue to closely monitor the income tax collections and General Fund performance for any negative revenue trends or unanticipated increases in expenditures.

January 2024 Financial Report

Income Tax: At the February 13th Finance Committee meeting, staff presented options for increasing revenue to aid in the future stabilization of several funds and departments. This is a follow-up to the Finance Committee's recommendation and Council's approval to explore additional revenue options following 2024 budget meetings. During those meetings, several City funds, such as fire, parks and recreation, street, and stormwater, will require unsustainable levels of general fund subsidy in the next 3-4 years. As such, staff presented the Finance Committee with an option to address the shortfalls through an income tax increase from 1% to 1.75%, while adding a 100% credit for residents paying income tax to other taxing jurisdictions. Staff views this meeting as the beginning of an exhaustive conversation with the public and our residents over the next several months prior to Council having to decide as to what, if anything is proposed. Starting in March, we will be holding regular meetings and work sessions with various groups, agencies and neighborhoods to present options, answer questions and solicit feedback.

WATER DEPARTMENT

Recent Activity:

Pump Drive Installation: Pump drives are being installed at the Water Filtration Plant by Firelands Electric beginning on February 21, 2024. Two drives were fried during a power surge in December. The claim filed with Ohio Edison regarding the damaged drives was recently denied; however, the Finance Director is looking into reimbursement through PEP. The work should be completed and pumps operational by February 23, 2024.

Backflow Tracking Software: The Water Superintendent is currently exploring options for a software program related to backflow tracking and reporting. This is essential to keep customers and the City compliance with OEPA regulations.

Jack Evans Class IV Examination: Water Superintendent Jack Evans met with the Ohio EPA Advisory Council in Columbus on February 15, 2024, to discuss his Class IV examination. Final clarifications are being added and the examination is expected to pass by mid-April.

Active Project Updates:

Alternate Intake/Sludge Lagoon: The City accepted a proposal from Kleinfelder on January 12, 2024, in the amount of \$344,840 for design, bid and administration services. Staff met with Lead Engineer, Tom Borck, on January 17, 2024, to discuss this project in depth. The sludge lagoon rehab scope was identified with Kleinfelder, as well. A grant/loan combination was applied for through OPWC for an amount not to exceed \$262,500. Surveying has been completed.

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 are the next step. Kleinfelder has provided renderings of the new water tower.

South Main Street Water Line Replacement: Along with replacing the water line, this project will also include the complete resurfacing and select curb replacement of Forest Hills Drive, Hickory Road, and Valleyview Drive. Construction bidding closed on February 15, 2024, and bids are currently being reviewed. The pre-award meeting is scheduled for March 1, 2024.

The City has applied to the Ohio Department of Transportation for System Safety Dollars for this project. Specifically, this funding will allow for new crosswalks a flashing beacons to be installed on Main Street at both Forest Hills and Valley View. If awarded, this funding will cover 90% of project costs. Also, if awarded, these crosswalks would not be installed until 2025/2026 – on the main project is completed.

Plant Re-Rating: Kleinfelder has applied to the EPA on behalf of the City for a plant rerating of 4.95 MGD; approval from the EPA is still pending. The carbon feed system at the filtration plant does not meet the EPA requirement of 40ppm. The Water Superintendent is working with a carbon feed equipment representative to upgrade current equipment at the Water Filtration Plant.

Sodium Permanganate: The sodium permanganate pumps required replacement due to obsolete repair parts. These chemical pumps are being sourced and specified by the Water Superintendent to include 2 pumps, 1 replacement head, 1 scale and 1 electronic display. The Water Superintendent is currently awaiting those quotes.

STREETS DEPARTMENT

Sign Replacement: The Streets Department continues to work on replacing, straightening, and updating street signs in the Glenview/Oakhurst area.

Tree/Foliage Clearing: The Streets Department cleared trees and foliage behind the guardrail areas with their new Fecon cutter attachment for the mini-excavator in the Mud Brook/Route 6 areas.

Oklahoma Park: The Streets Department assisted the Parks and Recreation Department with work at Oklahoma Park.

PERSONNEL/ADMINISTRATION

Annual Report: Department heads are in the process of finishing up providing 2023-year end information for the annual report. Once received, this will be summarized and compiled in a formal annual report – which we hope to be completed in late February or early March.

Boat Basin Facility Manager: The Boat Basin Facility Manager position has been advertised in the paper, Indeed and on the City website. We have received 10 applications thus far, and Doug Steinwart and his team have begun interviewing candidates for the position.

New Patrol Officer: The Department is in the final stages of the selection process to identify a candidate for the recent vacancy.

AGREEMENTS

N/A

PROJECTS OUT FOR BID

South Main St Watermain Replacement Project: This project was advertised December 14th and bids were due on February 15th, 2024. At first read, Spear Brothers, Inc were lowest and best at a bid amount of \$2,549,899.00. The pre-award meeting is scheduled for March 1, 2024.

Huron Public Power Expansion: 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 it is currently being reviewed for correctness.

CONTRACTS

- HJRD Annual Agreement (Recreation) - **Expires 12/31/23.**
- 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.**
- City Prosecutor Employment Agreement – expires **12/31/24.**
- Personnel Officer Employment Agreement – expires **12/31/24.**
- OHM Advisors (Engineering) – **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

March Meetings:

- HJRD – Tuesday, March 5th at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.
- Utilities – Wednesday, March 7th at 5:00pm in the main conference room.
- Records Commission – Wednesday, March 13th at 9:00am in the main conference room.
- BZA – Monday, March 22nd at 5:30pm in Council Chambers.
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, March 12th at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.
- Planning Commission – Wednesday, March 20th at 5:00pm in Council Chambers.
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, March 26th at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.
- **Good Friday – Administrative Offices will be CLOSED at noon on Friday, March 29th.**

April Meetings:

- HJRD – Tuesday, April 2nd at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.
- Utilities – Wednesday, April 3rd at 5:00pm in the main conference room.
- BZA – Monday, April 8th at 5:30pm in Council Chambers
(will most likely be rescheduled).
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, April 9th at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.
- Planning Commission – Wednesday, April 17th at 5:00pm in Council Chambers.
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, April 23rd at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.