



CITY OF HURON
CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

August 6, 2021

Matthew Lasko, City Manager

ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Ardagh/Sawmill Pkwy: Staff is currently reviewing what is the last phase of the redevelopment plans. Phase 1, which is the initial addition on the western portion of the building, is nearing completion. Ardagh will be submitting a petition to the city requesting a vacation of last 300-400 feet of Sawmill Parkway to make way for the major phase of construction. OHM has been working with Ardagh's engineering group to coordinate both the Sawmill Pkwy reconstruction and acquisition of right-of-way to make way for a turnaround at the end of the road. Staff also envisions approaching council in the next meeting or two for consideration of a CRA tax abatement request from the company – following recommendation from the Tax Incentive Review Council.

ConAgra: By June 21, the City received five (5) proposals from firms looking to undertake development activities at the former ConAgra property. Since receipt, the City has reviewed in detail the development proposals to better understand each firms' qualifications and financial capacity as well as their broad visions for the site. Staff, along with a representative from Council and Planning Commission and our consultants, the Montrose Group, met during the week of July 5th to vet the proposals. In that meeting, the group compared each submittal to the stated evaluation criteria in the RFP to develop a short list of three (3) developers still under consideration. This list includes NAI Harmon Group from Toledo, Hoty Enterprises from Sandusky, and The Rose Company from Medina. Interviews are beginning this week and plan to be completed by August 24th. Teams are hoping to have a recommendation for Council in late August or early September.

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.

INFRASTRUCTURE/STREETS/UTILITIES

Sawmill Parkway: The City continues to finalize the financing and funding plans for Sawmill Parkway prior to finalizing construction drawings and ultimate bid documents. Based on all the funding streams involved and ultimately seasonality of the roadwork construction season, the project is anticipated to occur in Spring of 2022. A summary of the funding thus far for the approximate \$3.4-\$3.5M project include:

- \$412,500 from OPWC which has already been awarded (just waiting on final agreement with OPWC)
- \$1,000,000 from Jobs Ohio – on April 19th, the Controlling Board of the State of Ohio approved a \$1,000,000 grant through Jobs Ohio and the Development Services Agency – 629 Roadwork program. The City executed grant paperwork on May 17, 2021 and submitted the same to the State of Ohio Development Services Agency for final approval.
- The city has executed a \$250,000 grant agreement with ODOT Jobs and Commerce for grant funding as of April 23, 2021.
- The City has formally responded to EDA's Letter of Further Clarification and provided all required/requested additional documentation to date. The city hopes to hear back on potential final funding determination in the upcoming weeks. As of July 26, the application was still being reviewed by their architectural and engineering teams.

Huron Public Power: The City, along with AMP-T and First Energy, are coordinating a major meter change out and the City's main transmission point to acknowledge the increased load from new and anticipated customer base. Our partnership with AMPT has been instrumental in getting this project done quickly and cost effectively. Work is anticipated to start Sept. 6th.

Railroad Closures: NS has provided an update on anticipated work in the area. The following is a tentative closure schedule:

- Wednesday 8/11: SR 61
- Thursday 8/12: Berlin Road
- Monday 8/16: River Road and Main St. (SR 13)
- Tuesday 8/17: Rye Beach Road

An update will be posted on our social media channels, sent to media, and texted out to subscribers.

ZONING/CODE/PLANNING

Masterplan Update and Visioning: Staff and the teams from City Architecture have been hard at work putting the finishing touches on the Vision 2020 action plan update. Based on feedback received throughout the process, most recently at a work session in July, City Architecture should be in a position to present the final draft for consideration in August with hopes for adoption in early September.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Fish Cleaning Station: The City received initial draft of a grant agreement between the City and ODNR for the installation of a fish cleaning station at the Public Boat Launch. We will continue review of the document and provide an update for Council, along with a Resolution seeking authorization of the application, in the coming weeks. An article about the project was posted to Cleveland.com: https://www.cleveland.com/outdoors/2021/08/new-fish-cleaning-stations-are-a-bonus-for-lake-erie-anglers-ne-ohio-fishing-report-for-the-weekend-of-aug-6-8.html?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=rockthelake&fbclid=IwAR2c0L7CbiRpdraYayz71BJpV9NinFBuE1MfNZRRChDKuQ0TgPaoKQhrYno.

FINANCE

Monthly Financial Report: The monthly financial report for July was emailed to City Council and the Finance Committee with the Finance Committee meeting packet on August 5th. You can find the report here: <https://stories.opengov.com/huronoh/published/OBMXupUND>

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA): On July 22, the City received the first tranche of the ARPA funds, totaling \$359,767.52. The second and final distribution will be received 12 months from now for the same amount. Here is what we know as of August 6th:

- A recent proposed amendment to the State's allocation legislation for NEUs may result in the City receiving more ARPA funds in 2023 and 2024. That is, if the State has any ARPA funds left over after 2022, the proposed legislation will require the State to reallocate those funds to NEUs. If you recall, the City's initial allocation of \$1.3 million was nearly cut in half. The State approved to reduce allocations to municipalities and disburse ARPA funds to all townships in Ohio.
- The City will have until December 2024 to commit these funds to a purchase/project, and December 2026 to expend the funds.
- The Auditor of State's Office released accounting guidance on proper recording of the funds. The Office recommends creating a separate special revenue fund, like the accounting used for the CARES ACT funds. The new ARPA Fund (Fund 227) was approved by Council for separate accounting of these funds.

- Staff is preparing plans and analysis using the most recent guidance from the U.S. Treasury.
- A STAR Ohio investment account was opened to deposit the funds and earn interest in the short-term. Any interest earned on these funds may be deposited into the City's General Fund and is not required to be used on ARPA eligible uses. The 1st disbursement was transferred into the STAR Ohio account upon receipt.

Staff is planning to provide an update to the Finance Committee at the August 9th meeting and will keep the finance committee and council apprised of the recent proposed legislation, along with a strategic plan to effectively utilize the funds.

WATER DEPARTMENT

Active Projects:

- Berlin Road Water Main Replacement – new main installed on all roads. Final water service was installed on August 3rd. Milling of the road surface began on August 4th. Crews are currently slightly ahead of schedule which will bode well with the start of school in the near future.
- Annual pump inspection of Low Service #4 and Backwash #1. Both required new impeller coating – coating completed and reinstalled.
- Five (5) new filter drain actuators ordered to replace aging units.
- Painted raw water wet well.
- New media for Filter #1 has been delivered – scheduling demo vac work with Franklin Sanitation.

STREETS DEPARTMENT

- Street crews painted the curbing on the newly installed Route 6 islands – including the one at Berlin Road and also the larger one in front of the Huron Senior Residences. This will help out tremendously with visibility of these islands to vehicular traffic.
- Street crews are currently focused on curb and street painting throughout the City – where needed.
- Street crews have measured the new delineated parking spaces and have ordered signs for the Standard Street parking area – just west of Main Street. This lot will be striped and signed shortly.
- Crews have also been talking to several contractors regarding the ability to spray Maple Avenue to keep dust mitigated. We will hopefully have a solution in the near future.

PERSONNEL

FT Firefighter Kegan Lobsinger – After interviewing several qualified and motivated candidates, the Huron Fire Department has hired Kegan Lobsinger for the position of full-time Firefighter/Paramedic, with an anticipated start date of August 22, 2021. We look forward to him joining HFD and wish him all the luck as he starts with the City in the next few weeks. Mr. Lobsinger will be filling the vacancy created by the departure of Zachary Stauder, who has joined another department. We wish Mr. Stauder all the best in his new role and thank him for his past service for HFD and the City.

Assistant City Manager – Longtime Assistant City Manager, Mike Spafford, will be leaving his post in September – we are still talking internally about when his last day with the City of Huron will be. Mr. Spafford has a tremendous professional opportunity, and we wish him well in his next professional chapter. His knowledge, passion and competence will be truly missed.

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 (Fire)
 - Staff has met with Huron Township regarding renewal of the above agreement. It was a very fruitful conversation with both jurisdictions verbally coming to agreement on multiple mutually beneficial changes to the new agreement – which will be either a two- or four-year agreement to not have this contracts expiration coincide with the expiration date of the fire bargaining unit contracts. Staff and legal counsel have completed a redline update to the existing agreement and have sent said agreement to Huron Township for review and consideration. We will update Council as that agreement moves along.
- Seeley, Savidge, Ebert & Gourash Co., LLP (Law) - **Completed.**
- FOP – Patrol Officers (Police) **Formal Negotiations in Progress.**
- FOP – Sergeants (Police) **Formal Negotiations in Progress.**
- IAFF (Fire) – **Informal Meeting Scheduled for August 16th.**
- AFCSME

UPCOMING MEETINGS

August

Finance Committee: Monday, August 9, 2021, at 5:00pm in the Main Conference Room.

Board of Zoning Appeals: Monday, August 9, 2021, at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.

Council Meeting: Tuesday, August 10, 2021, at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers.

Council Meeting: Tuesday, August 24, 2021, at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers.

Planning Commission/Design Review Board: Wednesday, August 25, 2021, at 5:00pm in Council Chambers.