



CITY OF HURON
CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

January 5, 2024

Matthew Lasko, City Manager

ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ConAgra: See the "Projects Out to Bid" section for further details.

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, Oster's Mobile Home Park, LLC, or Robert P. Day individually. To date, twenty-two (22) mobile homes have been demolished and the two-family house on site has also been demolished and in process of being cleared now that the asbestos abatement is completed. Based on this status, the City and the Seller's are looking to schedule a closing and property transfer likely in the next 2-3 weeks.

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.

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 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.

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: See the "Projects Out to Bid" section for further details.

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: See the "Projects Out to Bid" section for further details.

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.

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: 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.

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.

SAFETY SERVICES

K-9 Dog Jax: Our K-9 "Jax" recently passed his state certification in narcotics detection and tracking. Ofc. Ryan Boesch and "Jax" completed their six weeks of training on December 21st and "Jax" started his first shift on December 26th.

Flock Safety Cameras: As part of the 2024 budget, the Huron Police Department included a request for a multi-year agreement with Flock Safety for the installation of cameras throughout the City. The five cameras will be installed at highly trafficked intersections or entrances/exits into and out of town and should be here in early 2024. The cameras are license plate readers (not to be confused with speed cameras) and will be instrumental in tracking down vehicles involved in criminal activities and related issues such as AMBER Alerts. Huron joins a growing list of over 1,000 communities nationwide that will have these camera systems. Chief Graham is always available if additional questions persist about the benefits and uses of these camera systems.

FINANCE

4th Quarter Water Bills: The 4th quarter water bills were sent out over the last few week. Just a reminder to Council in case asked by residents - 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. Property tax bills are being distributed by the County sometime next week. The Finance Department is answering questions from residents as they come up related to this process.

December 2023 Financial Report: The December financial report will be available to Council and the Finance Committee before January 15th.

WATER DEPARTMENT

Recent Activity:

- The Ohio EPA conducted a full chemical laboratory survey at the WFP on 12/19/2023. All staff at the WFP received a full laboratory certification.
- Shari Kreutzfeld has passed her Water Supply 3 examination and has applied for licensure with the Ohio EPA. Congratulations Shari!
- 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.

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.

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.

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.

New Employee Eric Ritter: The Huron Police Department recently hired Eric D. Ritter as a full-time employee. Eric is attending the Police Academy at Owens Technical College, which started on January 2nd, and he should complete his training in May. Once Eric becomes a certified police officer, he will be sworn in sometime in May or June. Although the expenses for sending a candidate to the Police Academy were budgeted in 2024, a grant from Erie County Jobs & Family Services called the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) was secured and will pay for all the training expenses – which is an approximate \$10,000 savings to the City. In addition, a grant was applied for from OhioMeansJobs Erie County which, if awarded, will be a 50% wage reimbursement to the City for the candidate's first six (6) months of employment.

AGREEMENTS

ECLRC MOU: Resolution No. 62-2023 authorized application for and acceptance of grant funds from the Erie County Land Reutilization Corporation (ECLRC) in an amount not to exceed \$100,000 relating to site improvements at the property formerly known as Oster's Mobile Home Park. Back in September, The City Manager executed a Memorandum of Understanding with ECLRC acknowledging their agreement to reimburse the City for all costs up to the amount of \$55,000. A second Memorandum of Understanding was executed early this year for the remaining \$45,000 in grant funds allocated to the City of Huron under the same terms, and brings the total amount allocated to the \$100,000 authorized by Resolution No. 62-2023. We again want to thank ECLRC for their continued investment in the community.

PROJECTS OUT FOR BID

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

Main Street Design and Engineering: The City received 2 responses to our Request for Qualifications which were due on Friday January 5th. Staff will begin reviewing internally in hopes of negotiating a contract with the preferred firm and ultimately presenting a contract to Council in the upcoming weeks.

Huron Waterfront Parks Plan: This project went out to RFQ for Park Planning Services on November 3rd, and proposals were due on November 24, 2023. The City received six (6) responses to the RFQ, which is a tremendous response, and has begun its initial review of the proposals to narrow the field to two (2) or three (3), with interviews to follow.

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. Nine contractors bid on the project, with the apparent low bid being \$22,500 (Marksch Demolition and Excavation out of Sylvania).

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 will close on 1/25/2024.

CONTRACTS

- OHM Advisors (Engineering) – **Expires 12/31/23. Resolution 2-2024 pending.**
- 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.**
- 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

January Meetings:

- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, January 9th at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers.
- Planning Commission Meeting – Wednesday, January 17th at 5:00pm in the Council Chambers.
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, January 23rd at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers.

February Meetings:

- HJRD – Tuesday, February 6th at 6:30pm.
- Utilities Commission – Wednesday, February 7th at 5:00pm in the main conference room.
- BZA Meeting – Monday, February 12th at 5:30pm in the Council Chambers.
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, February 13th at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers.
- Planning Commission Meeting – Wednesday, February 21st at 5:00pm in the Council Chambers.
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, February 27th at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers.

- **MLK Day – Administrative Offices will be CLOSED on Monday, January 15th.**
- **President's Day – Administrative Offices will be CLOSED on Monday, February 12th.**