



CITY OF HURON
CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

April 22, 2022

Matthew Lasko, City Manager

ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Firelands Scientific: The City has received final site plans from Firelands Scientific related to a substantial expansion of their facility in the Huron Corporate Park. The site plan was presented to the planning commission on 12/15/21 and received unanimous approval. The project does need to get additional approvals on lighting plans, however. This is truly an exciting project, and we are appreciative of the Company's willingness to expand operations in the City. The expansion includes, but is not limited to additional growing space, offices, warehousing, and parking along with landscaping enhancements.

USGS/Harbor Point Marina: At the planning commission meeting on 12/15, the next phase of the Harbor Point Marine project was presented. The second phase (the first being the construction of the USGS facility which is underway) includes a new storage facility and the construction of an approximate 2,500 square foot Harbormaster House. The developers have since decided to slightly reduce the size of the originally approved Harbormaster house to eliminate the second story. Based on these revisions, the project is being re-presented to the planning commission at the April meeting. We are excited to see continued development and improvement to this property and look forward to a successful second phase.

Buckeye Sports: The City has received plans from Buckeye Sports for the construction of their water/marine craft facility in Lake Erie Parkway. This will be a wonderful addition to the City and the corporate park and will result in development on the last remaining parcel within the Corporate Park. We are hoping to see construction commence soon and want to wish them a big welcome to the community.

The company has submitted a request for tax abatement to the City. Because this project is not located in a community reinvestment area, it ultimately will need to be considered by the Erie County Commissioners in addition to Council. The County did authorize the City to serve as the negotiating body for the request and has since negotiated a 15-year, 100% abatement – however, each school district (Huron Schools and EHOVE) will remain whole. To date, the Huron Schools have approved a school compensation agreement with the Company as well as EHOVE. The City has also approved the compensation agreements and enterprise zone agreement. The County Commissioners have since approved the tax abatement request as well at their April 13th meeting. The City has secured all necessary signatures and delivered the documents to the Ohio Development Services Agency for hopeful final approval.

South Shore Marine: Staff recently met with representatives from South Shore Marine regarding an upcoming expansion. The company is looking at adding another large indoor storage facility just east of their campus. The currently facility is estimated to represent an additional \$1.5M investment in the community.

The City is in receipt of a Community Reinvestment Area tax abatement request. We anticipate bringing this request to City Council at the second of the April meetings. Both EHOVE and Huron

Schools have approved respective School Compensation Agreements at their April 6th and April 19th School Board Meetings.

Ardagh/Sawmill Pkwy: The City has completed all the necessary title and legal work related to the vacation and dedication of certain portions of Sawmill Creek Parkway. In summary, the City vacated the eastern most 300-400 feet of the Parkway and deeded it over to Ardagh for use as part of their private development footprint. In exchange, Ardagh dedicated portions of their private property as public use in order for the City to install a turnaround at the end of the Parkway to aid in vehicular maneuvering, particularly for emergency vehicles.

Additionally, all title documents and construction drawings have been submitted to the Economic Development Administration. EDA must sign off on the construction documents, bid book and title work prior to the project being placed out to bid for construction. We are not aware of EDA's timeline to complete their review and staff and OHM are anxiously awaiting their approval so as to move forward with construction on this critical project.

ConAgra: The late fall and winter months were critical months for completing several items to continue to move the ConAgra development further. Since the announcement and selection of NAI Harmon Group out of Toledo as the preferred developer, the following has occurred:

- The city completed the rezoning process for the approximate 10-acre parcel from Industrial to mixed-use zoning. This went through the three-reading process. Additionally, 4 amendments were simultaneously made to the zoning code which included: (1) restricting residential uses on the ground floor of only commercial buildings, (2) permitting transient-rental uses, (3) requiring conditional use permits for any outdoor display of goods and permitting places of worship.
- The city, in partnership with Huron Schools and EHOVE, approved a Tax-increment financing package to aid in the City's financing of the public infrastructure of the site.
- Completed an appraisal of the entirety of the site in partnership with Cushman and Wakefield – one of Ohio's premier appraisal and commercial brokerage firms.
- Completed an engineering analysis of the condition of the existing seawalls at the site with the aid of KS & Associates which reviewed the existing condition of the seawalls as well as provided cost estimates and options for improvements to the revetment treatments at the site.
- Completed cost estimates for the installation of a new public loop road throughout the site and extension of utilities through the site.

We therefore held a re-kickoff meeting with the folks from NAI Harmon this week to talk next steps. These steps include among other items:

- Completing detailed engineering drawings for roadway, seawall, and utility improvements.
- Completing detailed site plan for planning commission review.

- Finalizing site control and agreed upon purchase price (if the site control is to be an outright sale of the property) – with of course a claw back to ensure publicly accessible green space in perpetuity.
- Completion of comprehensive development agreement laying out responsibilities and development timelines.
- Beginning the permitting process with Army Corp of Engineers for revetment activities.

On Wednesday April 6th, the City finally received the signed governor's deed from the state of Ohio related to the land swap with ODNR. Deeds are in process of being recorded. The next step will be the City needing to undertake a lot consolidation to combine the former ConAgra parcel with the recently acquired piece from ODNR.

Also, the City in partnership with ODNR also needs to publicly dedicate the new roadway that will lead into the ConAgra site. Planning Commission already approved the dedication plat in 2022. We hope to bring this dedication to Council in the next few meetings to complete this process and then secure signatures from ODNR prior to recording the plat.

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 including but not limited to:

- Service payment agreement
- TIF Ordinance
- Final Annexation Agreement
- Bond issuance for Sawmill Creek redevelopment

On January 11th, 2022, Council approved both school compensation agreements for the project, one with Huron Schools and one with EHOVE.

The City also has since completed the deed swap which is a requirement of the Section 41 TIF structure. Additionally, the City provided final comments to Cedar Fair this week on the Service Payment Agreement – which is the agreement memorializing the \$450,000 annual payment to the City/Schools/EHOVE – and the final annexation petition which ultimately must be presented to the Board of County Commissioners for approval. We are hoping to wrap up this process in the next 30-60 days.

Two Rivers: Staff recently met with the owners and developers of the Two Rivers development by Huron Lagoons Marina. Developers are looking to re-start the housing development – which has since lost its planned-unit development designation. Developers presented conceptual plans for the project which included finishing out the Sheltered Brook roadway with similar housing and then moving forward on additional phases on the undeveloped portions of the property. The site could also include a series of connected walking trails and retention ponds. Developers, to move forward, will need to present updated plans to the planning commission in hopes of securing a new planned-unit development designation prior to moving forward. We will keep council apprised as this project moves forward.

INFRASTRUCTURE/STREETS/UTILITIES/IT

Rye Beach Road/Cleveland Road Corridor: Based on the continued redevelopment of Sawmill Creek Resort and all the existing and growing investments along Rye Beach Road and industrial parks, the city has begun conversation with the Ohio Department of Transportation about safety and traffic control upgrades along Rye Beach Road – with major emphasis on the intersection of Rye Beach and Cleveland Road. These upgrades include roundabouts on Rye Beach Road, and the intersection of Rt. 6 and Camp Street, road widening in front of Sawmill Creek Resort, intersection upgrades at Perkins Avenue and Rt. 6 and the installation of a multi-use bike path connecting Huron to Sandusky. ODOT District 3 and Central Office are so impressed with the amount of investment along the corridor, that ODOT District 3 has been encouraged to submit a TRAC application to Central Office seeking funding for engineering, right of way acquisition and eventual construction. That application will require collaboration with Sandusky, Perkins Township, Huron Township, and the Railroad. A series of weekly meetings has been established to ensure District 3 is poised to submit their TRAC application to Central office by May of this year – with funding to be announced in December.

Additionally, it has come to the City's attention that Central Office thinks so highly of the corridor project that it has been selected as one of two projects in the state to be submitted by ODOT to the U.S. Department of Transportation. These applications are due to the federal government in April of this year with funding decisions to be made in August or September of this year.

Participating jurisdictions will be expected to provide some form of local match which will be requested in late-march or early April.

Safe Routes to Schools: The City submitted two (2) applications to the Ohio Department of Transportation for Safe Routes to Schools funding. These applications will be for Berlin Road – from Shawnee Elementary School southward to the railroad tracks. Additionally, the city will be seeking additional funding for new sidewalks east of Shawnee Elementary from Gateway Boulevard eastward to Huron Green. Based on poor scoring, the city is not going to submit the application for Jim Campbell. A big thank you to OHM and our planning and zoning staff for all their hard work in submitting these grant applications on behalf of the City.

Sidewalks: The City, in partnership with Huron Township is exploring a sidewalk installation project that would link the current eastern sidewalk terminus (Gateway Boulevard) all the way to the entrance of Huron Green. This project is instrumental for enhancing walkability and connectivity between multiple subdivisions and Huron's multiple amenities but will more importantly create a safe connection for those traversing Cleveland Road. OHM has completed their proposal for design which is approximately \$40,000. The Huron Township Trustees have agreed to move forward with 50% of the design expense for 2022. The City has already budgeted for our half of the design expense as part of the 2022 budget. Staff anticipates presenting a design proposal to Council for their consideration in late April or early May. The City will then invoice the Township for their half of the expense. We continue to appreciate our relationship with the Township and look forward to partnering on this project.

Additionally, staff made application for this project through Erie Regional Planning Commission – Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for supplemental funding for this project. The MPO had approximately \$285,000 in available funding. In total, five (5) applications were submitted seeking nearly \$400,000 in total grant funding. The applications were reviewed internally last week and the City of Huron's application has tentatively been awarded approximately \$120,000 in funding. This award is still subject to final MPO approval which we hope to occur in the next few weeks.

Street Resurfacing: The City has received a proposal from OHM to undertake an update to our pavement condition report and is currently reviewing in hopes of approving in early 2022. We hope to undertake this work in early 2022 to develop a plan for resurfacing in future years. We are planning to have approximately \$500,000 available for local street resurfacing and critical repairs in 2022 which is a combination of normal capital budgeting of \$200,000 and year end transfers of \$300,000. Staff has sent a list of roads (or road segments) to Council and plans to move forward with bidding over the next few weeks. Roads for 2022, based on available resources are restricted to asphalt roads and include:

- Gumwood
- Rose
- Vine
- Bruns
- Williams (Cleveland to Rt. 6)
- Williams (Rt. 6 to Standard)

We have also selected two alternatives which may get included based on results of bidding. These roads include:

- Stowe
- Woodside

The above roads are in addition to the normal patching and crack sealing that occurs annually. Additionally, OHM is beginning work on developing cost estimates for some of the larger neighborhoods in need of major road repairs for 2023-2025.

Also, staff plans to seek Council approval to submit an application to Erie County's Metropolitan Planning Organization in late April for their 2026 surface transportation program. Staff is working with OHM to determine what roadways will be included as part of this funding request.

Stormwater Management: The City and OHM staff recently met to review a proposal to undertake a stormwater management plan for the city. The City continuously is engaged by residents related to stormwater issues they are facing across the City. The ultimate plan would be to undertake an exhaustive process to map the existing stormwater system throughout the City, undertake hydraulic modeling to determine capacities of the system, and then put together a capital improvements plan to systematically make upgrades to the system which will denote cost and priority. Staff is in receipt of the proposal and is currently reviewing to determine what portions of work may be able to be accomplished in 2022. We hope to bring this proposal to Council in May or June of 2022 for consideration.

Body Worn Cameras: in 2022, the IT Department and the Police Department will begin exploring funding opportunities to acquire and begin implementation use of body worn cameras. These cameras are becoming prevalent in nearby police departments and our officers and sergeants have expressed interest in them as well. In addition to exploring funding opportunities, we will also begin getting a sense of the cost of purchase and understanding any additional IT upgrades to store the content.

Website: The City has budgeted \$50,000 for a revamp of the City's website in 2022. Although this work may extend into early 2023, the city desires to begin the process in the upcoming months. First, we are recommending issuing a Request for Proposal to IT/web development firms in April with hopes of presenting a preferred firm to Council for consideration shortly thereafter.

ZONING/CODE/PLANNING

Condemnation and Demolition: Staff is currently working with SSEG to explore ways to increase the expediency and efficiency of the City's condemnation and demolition process. Although not needed often, when it is, time is usually of the essence. We hope to have recommendations for Council review within thirty (30) days.

Tree Assessment: Similar to the sidewalk assessment program, the City is exploring a tree assessment program for property owners who need to remove dead, dying or diseased trees from their property. The cost of removing a tree can be very expensive. Through the assessment program, property owners would have the option of, in essence, financing the removal through an assessment on their real estate taxes. Additionally, we are proposing to amend the code to ensure the services of a certified arborist are engaged to determine the health of trees being removed. Additionally, it may be worth considering a requirement be included to replant a new tree in its place to ensure long term health of the City's tree canopy.

Signage Code: The City is also undertaking a comprehensive review of our signage code – related to both permanent and temporary signage. This review is aimed at simplifying our code for greater clarity while also taking into consideration some recent court rulings at the state level regarding enforcement capabilities. We hope to have a draft for consideration in summer of 2022.

Main Street Corridor Plan: Staff and representatives from OHM met on April 21 for a kick-off meeting related to the Main Street/Downtown visioning and conceptual design process. The purpose of the meeting was to begin to discuss high level visions/needs for the corridor, understand project boundaries, and begin conversations regarding steering committee representation and schedule. Over the next 1-2 months, staff will be hard at work providing information to OHM planners and we anticipate holding our first steering committee meeting. Steering committee members will be a cross section of corridor stakeholders and institutional representatives that have a vested interest in Main Street.

Local Preference: Based on the results of a work session held in March of 2022, staff plans to present a local preference ordinance to council at an upcoming meeting in late April or early May. The ordinance will provide a local preference discount of 4% to business bidding on contract or to supplies materials if they are headquartered in Huron or Huron Township. Additionally, companies headquartered in Erie County will receive a 2% bid discount on the same.

Staff plans on also including caps on how large this discount can be. On the proposed legislation we are anticipating permitting a maximum \$10,000 discount for projects or materials up to \$500,000 in total cost and a maximum discount of \$25,000 for projects or materials for expenses more than \$500,000.01.

Permitting: Staff from multiple departments have begun meeting internally regarding the idea of centralizing all permitting from an intake standpoint. The goal is to create one central location for residents and contractors to go for ALL permits regardless of department. Currently, depending on the type of permit, folks may have to go to multiple facilities across the City. For efficiencies, we do envision moving all permitting to City Hall and through the planning and zoning department. We are currently working on the internal structure of this change and will provide press releases and other media messages to ensure the public is aware of this change and when it goes live.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Fish Cleaning Station: The City received three (3) bids for the construction of the fish cleaning station at the public boat launch. Based on the results of those bids and council approval, the City will be partnering with Northstar Contracting out of Cleveland to complete the project. Contract documents/books are finished and are currently in process of being executed. We are anticipating the project to be substantially completed by August of 2022.

Additionally, ODNR has stated that they desire for additional make ready lanes to be constructed as part of the project which increases the overall construction budget to approximately \$515,000. The total cost of the project is closer to \$605,000 when including design, engineering, and construction inspections. It should be noted, the City has secured written approval from ODNR for an additional \$80,000 in grant funding increasing the total state award to \$580,000 which is being presented to Council on April 26th for approval. It should also be noted that the City has been notified that our Destination Development grant made to Shores and Islands Ohio has been funded (formal notice will be forthcoming in early May) for \$14,000. Based on this, the City's anticipated out of pocket contribution (assuming no change orders) has been reduced from \$50,000 to approximately \$10,000-\$15,000. A big thank you and congratulations to our Parks and Recreation staff for submittal of the successful application.

Additionally, ODNR has also provided written confirmation to the City that the state of Ohio will be responsible for regular pumping/emptying of the holding tank at the facility which will create a major operational savings to the City as well. We are so appreciative of ODNR's continued partnership and assistance on this project.

Boat Basin: The City has solicited a proposal from KS and Associates to update the capital needs assessment for the Boat Basin and related facilities/improvements. The previous report was completed in 2015 and in need of updating the project costs and to take into consideration both improvements that have been completed since then and determining if any further deterioration has occurred. The City is hoping to utilize this report as we undertake an aggressive fundraising effort to completely modernize and rehabilitate the facility in addition to making a capital request through the State's next capital budget bill.

FINANCE

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA): The final ruling on APRA fund guidance was issued in January. The guidance provides more flexibility on allowable uses for smaller governments. Staff discussed these updates and the preliminary spending plan with the Finance Committee on February 7th. The following link will direct you to the ARPA spending plan, as well. Staff will request a work session with Council to review this plan more in detail.

<https://stories.opengov.com/huronoh/published/YTvWGM0YO>

Monthly Financial Report: The March, 2022 monthly financial report was email to Council and Finance Committee members on April 14th. Any questions with the report, please always feel free to reach out to Finance Director, Jeff Hall. The City, from an income tax standpoint and general fund balance is in great shape. Our income tax receipts through the first quarter are \$100,000 higher than this time last year and our unencumbered general fund balance is just over \$1.5M which is 30% of expenditures (a general rule of thumb is to be between 20%-25%). A link to the March 2022 financial report is included below:

<https://stories.opengov.com/huronoh/published/LnP6Y5ci5>

WATER DEPARTMENT

Project Updates:

- Sludge Lagoon – Ohio EPA NPDES. Poggemeyer is completing study of comprehensive options and alternatives.
- Alternate Intake. Poggemeyer is completing study of location with engineer's estimated cost for a river intake which will serve as a secondary intake for the plant.
- Water Rate Study. Poggemeyer is also completing a water rate analysis on behalf of the City to explore existing City water rates as compared to future capital needs of the system and plant and cost increases related to items such as chemicals.
- Sedimentation Basin #5. Expansion is nearly complete, with startup late this week.
- Rye Beach Water Tower. The Rye Beach water tower will be out of service for one week beginning on Wednesday, April 27, 2022 (weather dependent) for application of the new Shores & Islands Ohio logo. Reminder that 100% of the cost of the repainting will be born by Shores and Islands Ohio. The repainting will only be in relation to the upper portion of the tower as the stem will remain unchanged.

PERSONNEL

Human Resources: The City has negotiated the terms of a Human Resources Agreement with Mrs. Andrea Rocco for calendar year 2022 who has since commence human resources duties for the City. The position is responsible for items such as updating of the Employee Handbook, workers compensation claims, employee onboarding, disciplinary and grievance issues, and healthcare/benefits needs of our staff. We are very much looking forward to this added capacity for our employees. to start, some of the initial items Mrs. Rocco will undertake will be:

- Comprehensive updating of the City handbook
- Developing a schedule of required and suggested trainings for employees of the City on an annual basis
- Undertaking certain salary analyses to ensure City wages rates remain competitive when compared to other like communities.

State of the Community: I want to once again thank the Huron Chamber of Commerce for coordinating the State of the Community event last Wednesday and to BGSU Firelands for hosting the event. It was a great evening and was really impressive to hear about all of the great work being undertaken by our partners including Huron City Schools, BGSU Firelands, Huron Township, Huron Chamber of Commerce, and the Erie County Economic Development Corporation.

A special thank you to Council and our tremendous staff for all the progress made by the City in 2021 and for supporting a very aggressive and transformative development plan for 2022 and beyond.

Fire Department: HFD's Application to the State of Ohio, Department of Commerce for funding for bunker gear was successful. Their funding request was approximately \$13,000 with the grant award being for \$10,000. We want to thank the State of Ohio for this funding and also appreciate the work of HFD and our captains to seek and apply for this critical funding.

CONTRACTS

Agreements/contracts that will expire in 2022 include:

- OHM Advisors (Engineering)
- Erie Soil and Water Conservation District (Engineering) - **COMPLETED**
- Republic Services
 - Based on feedback from the Utilities Committee and Finance Committee, the City is anticipating exercising a one-year option with Republic Services to extend the current contract for another year – between July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023. As such, customers will not experience and change to their service level or cost. The City does anticipate undertaking a request for proposal process in late 2022 to consider different haulers and scopes of service which will be vetted thoroughly prior to recommending a new contract for Council consideration in 2023.
- HJRD Annual Agreement (Recreation)
- Dispatch Agreement – Erie County Sheriff
- Seeley, Savidge, Ebert & Gourash Co., LLP (Law)
 - The administration is recommending a 1-year renewal with SSEG for legal and law director services for the time period of June 2022 through May of 2023. There will be no cost increases associated with this new contract. Staff plans to present this recommendation and contract to Council in May of 2022.
- Dynegy Energy Services – Electric Aggregation Program
- Bricker & Eckler – HPP Legal Services (Law)
- Police Chief Employment Agreement

UPCOMING MEETINGS

April

City Council Meeting: April 26, 2022 at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers

Planning Commission: April 27, 2022 at 5:00pm in the Council Chambers

May

HJRD: Tuesday, May 3, 2022 at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers

Utilities Committee: Wednesday, May 4, 2022 at 5:00pm in the Main Conference Room

Finance Committee: Monday, May 9, 2022 at 5:00pm in the Council Chambers

Board of Building and Zoning Appeal: Monday, May 9, 2022 at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers

City Council Meeting: May 10, 2022 at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers

City Council Meeting: May 24, 2022 at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers

Planning Commission: May 25, 2022 at 5:00pm in the Council Chambers