



CITY OF HURON
CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

April 18, 2025

Stuart Hamilton, Interim City Manager

ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ConAgra: As required by ORC, the City sent the required notice to Erie County with our intent to ultimately approve an Incentive District TIF on the site to pay for the costs of the seawall. The County did not formally object to the TIF.

Finally, the permit for the seawall enhancements has been submitted by KS & Associates. The City will be awaiting the outcome of whether our permit will be considered maintenance or reconstruction as this has a major bearing on how quickly the permit will be issued.

The City is finalizing the process with ODNR to formally dedicate a portion of the ODNR boat launch property as public right of way – the preliminary dedication plat has been sent to Erie County for review and will be legislated by Council and signed in the next few weeks. As part of the plat, the City is providing a temporary name for the new roadway for purposes of getting the plat recorded as possible – which will be simply “Access Street.” Ultimately the new public roadway will need a permanent name, and the staff is proposing calling it River Road as a continuation of the existing River Road – south of Rt. 6 – similarly to how we treat Berlin Road.

The City is putting the finishing touches on a joint easement agreement with ODNR which will permit the City temporary construction easements outside of the formal roadway while also providing ODNR an access easement for the property that is being dedicated as public right of way to ensure people have perpetual access to the boat launch.

River Rd. Land: At the last Council meeting in February, Council approved a purchase and sale agreement with Triban Investment for \$700,000. The development team is anticipating constructing between 170-220 single-family homes. The City is still awaiting the purchase agreement back from the development team to officially start the 6-month due diligence process. We anticipate receipt of the agreement any day now.

As a condition of the sale, the property also must be rezoned to R-1. A public hearing at the planning commission has been scheduled for March 26th on this request.

INFRASTRUCTURE/STREETS/UTILITIES/IT

East Side Sidewalks: Staff have recommended contracting with RMH Concrete and will be presenting a contract to Council for consideration at the April 8th, 2025, meeting. If approved, the project is expected to be substantially completed in 2025.

It should be noted; the bid came in roughly 50% lower than projected – meaning the City has excess grant funds from ODOT and Erie County Regional Planning. Staff will soon be engaging each entity about the possibility of moving these funds to other relevant and eligible projects versus returning the funds to each entity.

Route 13 Crosswalks: Staff have recommended contracting with DL Smith and will be presenting a contract to Council for consideration at the April 8th, 2025 meeting. If approved, the project is expected to be substantially completed in 2025.

South Main Street Streetscape Design and Engineering: The City has received updated cost estimates from OHM and is reviewing internally. Once reviewed by staff, Council will be briefed and a work session scheduled to determine if we desire to move forward with the project and if so, whether the proposed scope of work should be amended.

Rt 6 Phase II: The City has received updated cost estimates from OHM and is reviewing internally. Once reviewed by staff, Council will be briefed and a work session scheduled to determine if we desire to move forward with the project and if so, whether the proposed scope of work should be amended.

ZONING/CODE/PLANNING

ConAgra Development: Staff received the site plan for the former ConAgra site. The first step will be to schedule an internal departmental review of the plans to identify/verify compliance with the Mixed Use/Granary District (MU-GD) code requirements and regulations, departmental reviews for Building, Engineering, Safety Services. We anticipate coordinating a meeting next week. Following this review, and upon receipt of the detailed plans and elevations, this will go to the Planning Commission/DRB (next regular meeting) for review and recommendation(s) to Council.

Preliminary Reviews: Staff has met with several residential property owners in recent weeks contemplating substantial additions and/or rebuilds. These meetings provide an overview of the code regulations, and an opportunity to discuss potential options for plan revisions to reduce and/or eliminate the need for variances. We will have four residential cases for the upcoming May BZA meeting – all properties being pre-existing/non-conforming with regard to one or more setbacks.

Public Hearing to Rezone River Road Property: Planning Commission recommended the rezoning of the property to R-1 and Council has set a public hearing on the rezoning for Tuesday, May 13th at 6:30pm.

Firelands Scientific Temporary Greenhouse Structures: Firelands Scientific has submitted applications and plans for four (4) temporary greenhouse structures, which were approved previously by the Planning Commission/Design Review Board. The application and plans are currently in Zoning Review and have been distributed to OHM Advisors and Erie Soil and Water for SWPPP evaluation and plan review deposit determination. Following approval by Zoning and approval of the SWPPP, the applications and plans will be submitted to the Building Department.

Zoning Map Revisions: Staff have found the current Zoning Map requires revisions to reflect legislative action taken within the last few years. The map had been updated internally in recent

years, however, prior to that, the County was provided with information, and they would revise the city map as well as their information. Staff found a property that had a court-ordered action which reverted the undeveloped areas of an R-2 PUD (Two Rivers original R-2 PUD) to R-1 Single Family Residential Zoning. A portion of the same property was approved as an R-1 PUD along Sheltered Brook, which will also need to be reflected. These changes are being presented to Council on March 25th for final consideration.

Coastal Management Assistance Grants: The final Lakefront Parks Plan was adopted by Council on March 25th. Staff will be working over the next few weeks to close out this project and the related grant. A major thanks to ODNR for their funding assistance with this project.

Long John Silvers: The former Burger King building on Cleveland Road W. was purchased and the new use is intended to be a Long John Silver restaurant. All Zoning and Building permits have been issued. Demolition completed and construction underway.

Investigation- Lodging Tax Registration for Transient Rentals: The Zoning Inspector conducted a review of current Transient Rental properties and review of registrations through Erie County for Lodging Tax. As a result, 19 properties were found not to be registered with the County. This could be due to the owners not renting the property or operating but not reporting/collecting taxes. Notices have been issued to these property owners with response required. Staff will continue to review; taking steps pursuant to the code as needed.

Ohio House and Senate Bills: Staff and the SSEG team are keeping tabs on several Ohio State Legislatives bills that are marking their way through the statehouse. As these bills progress, we will continue to keep Council apprised. Relevant bills include:

- Senate Bill 104 – relating to transient rentals. The proposed bill would erode home rule authority on a jurisdiction's ability to limit the number of transient rentals and manage certain elements of their operations.
- House Bill 160 – related to recreation marijuana. The bill would make alterations to the newly enacted recreation marijuana program. Of most interest to Huron is whether the existing 3.6% local tax that was permitted in the original law will remain in any potential amendments.
- House Bill 113 – related to annexation. The bill would create limitations to a jurisdiction's ability to proceed with annexations as they have historically – namely, providing more power the County Commissioners or County bodies to determine ultimately if an annexation between City/Village and Township is "in the best interest" of the County.

PARKS AND RECREATION:

Summer Program Registration: Summer program registration opened a few weeks ago with over 250 youth registered for summer camps so far this year. This is an increase from previous years, with more signing up every week.

Fish Sculpture at Huron River Boating Access Facility: The Parks & Recreation Department has been working with the Fish Huron Ohio group as they would like to donate a hanging fish sculpture to be located at the Huron River Boating Access Facility. This public art piece will provide fishermen with the ability to show off their catch and take pictures while promoting Huron as a fishing destination. The donation will be made to ODNR and through the terms of the existing MOU, the City will be responsible for managing and maintaining the donation. The art installation would be a stainless steel sculpture with a concrete base to be located north of the existing fish cleaning station.

City-Wide Clean-Up: The City-Wide Clean-Up is scheduled for Saturday, May 3rd from 9am-11am. Please join us at the Wall Street Parks Office as we clean up our parks and public green spaces! Cleaning supplies are being provided by the Erie County Solid Waste District.

Restroom Demolition: The City has issued a contract to Ed Burdue & Co. for the demolition and removal of the old restroom building on the south side of the Boat Basin Marina. These restrooms were built in the early 1970's and were last cosmetically updated in 1996. These restrooms are being demolished as part of the plan that included construction of the "new" marina in 2021 due to increasing operational maintenance costs.

State Capital Budget: The city has informally been told that we will be receiving \$200,000 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.

Berlin Road Property: At the final Council meeting in January, it was decided the greenspace on Berlin Road would be renamed Dancing Waters Park – as a bit of an acknowledgement to the family that was responsible for developing the man-made lake on-site. Staff are moving forward with ordering the signage for installation sometime in the Spring of this year.

SAFETY SERVICES

Ryan Boesch Promoted to Sergeant: Ryan L. Boesch, a 17-year veteran of the Huron Police Department, will be sworn in as Sergeant at the May 13, 2025, Council meeting. Ryan has a Master's degree in Public Administration and currently serves as the K-9 Officer and Field Training Officer for the Department. Sergeant Boesch will be in charge of Squad 4, which is the night shift on the back half of the week.

FLOCK License Plate Readers - UPDATE: The first of three new FLOCK cameras included in the 2025 budget were installed on Rt. 6 at By-the-Shores west bound. The eventual addition of these three cameras in 2025 will bring our total to eight cameras. The program continues to be a tremendous

asset for the police department with investigations and the solvability rate of our hit/skip accidents and thefts has increased exponentially.

Training Update: Some of our officers received training on liquor permits and active shooter response.

FINANCE

Income Tax: Through April, income tax receipts still are trending positively and are 8% higher than this time in 2024. Through April, receipts total \$932,500 and are \$75,000 higher than this time last year. We will continue to monitor receipts as it is difficult to get a clear picture of performance until around June of each year, but it has been a positive start to 2025.

Real Estate Taxes: The City's first half tax settlement was approximately \$112,000 higher than 2024 receipts. Assuming the second half settlement is similar, the City would anticipate receiving approximately \$225,000 in increased real estate tax receipts due to the re-evaluation process. This would represent an 8% increase compared to last year (City budgeted for a 3% increase).

Monthly Financials (March): <https://stories.opengov.com/huronoh/published/PKvecGPw->

WATER DEPARTMENT

Recent Activity:

- New raw wet well screens have been installed by staff. These screens prevent large debris found in the lake water from entering the wet well which can cause damage to raw water pumps.
- The filter-to-waste Rotork actuators are onsite and are in the process of being installed. The main line filter-to-waste valve was replaced by staff and a significant increase in flow has been observed.
- Staff is currently working with BissNuss, Inc. to install the new chemical pumps. Several pumps have already been installed and are operational. This project should be completed in the coming weeks.
- The East Side Water Tower painting project is slated to begin 4/21/25. The water tower will be drained, cleaned (interior and exterior), and receive 2 overcoats of paint. The Tower will be painted white and the new city logo will be displayed on 2 sides of the tank. The tower will be out of service for approximately 3 weeks while this work is performed. The Fire Department and Erie County have been notified.

Active Project Updates:

Alternate Intake/Sludge Lagoon: The emergency intake and sludge lagoon rehab drawings have been completed. Minor changes were recommended by the Water Superintendent. The design and engineering for this project have been sent to the Ohio EPA for approval. Once approved by the OEPA, the project may go out to bid. This project was also nominated for interest-free funding through WSRLA. A response from the OEPA was received on 4/4/25 with numerous questions and comments. The largest concern is that the OEPA is requesting 12-months of water quality data from the Huron River. The Water Superintendent inquired with Kleinfelder numerous times over the past 2 years if the city should be collecting water samples for analysis. The city was assured that this was not necessary as this intake is to only be used in an emergency and will not be a permanent source. The Water Superintendent is awaiting a response from Kleinfelder.

West Side Water Tower: Designs for the water tower were sent to the Ohio EPA for review on 1/14/25. Comments and questions were received back from the OEPA on 3/21/25 and these were answered and promptly returned. An additional seven questions were sent by the OEPA on 4/2/25 and these were answered and promptly returned. This project is currently under review and will be sent out to bid once approved by the Ohio EPA. The water tower project is prepared for advertisement as soon as approval is granted.

The Water Superintendent worked with Kleinfelder to nominate the tower project for interest-free WSRLA funding. An extension was granted to commit funds for the \$5M grant from the Department of Development. The project must be awarded by 6/30/25 and construction must be completed by 8/1/26. Kleinfelder estimated the project will be completed by 5/31/26. Staff met with Kleinfelder on 2/20 to discuss all projects and meet the new Project Manager, Janet Spahich. Kleinfelder contacted the OEPA regarding the project review and was assured the design would be approved in time to meet funding deadlines. A stern email was sent to Kleinfelder on 4/16/25 as this project is once again several weeks behind. The response indicated that the project would be approved by 4/18 and the project is ready to be advertised for bid.

Plant Re-Rating: The EPA issued a response on 10/11/24 that included requests for additional information. This will be reviewed by the Water Superintendent and Kleinfelder. The Water Superintendent provided answers to questions from the EPA and returned this document to Kleinfelder on 10/30/24. The rerating application was submitted to the Ohio EPA on 3/3/2025 and we are awaiting approval. A response from the OEPA was received on 4/11/25. The city is extremely displeased with Kleinfelder in their handling of the plant rerating. The Water Superintendent informed the EPA that correspondence is to go through the city and we will no longer be including Kleinfelder in this process. The Water Superintendent sent a response to the remaining questions on 4/17/25 and also left a telephone message with the Ohio EPA. Neither has received a response.

STREETS DEPARTMENT

N/A

HURON PUBLIC POWER (HPP)

Distribution Rate Study: This has been progressing for several months. With the increasing costs of maintenance, and the additional debt being borne from the purchase and installation of the new third transformer, a rate increase is required. This went before the Utilities Committee on February 5th and will be presented to the Utilities Committee one final time on April 23rd for consideration. If recommended, legislation will be drafted and sent to Council for consideration during three readings in May and June. If approved, new rates would go into effect as early as July 1st of this year.

3rd Transformer: The City participated in a bond ratings call with Moody's during the week of March 31st as a lead up to the bond issuance for the 3rd transformer. A follow up call will be held on April 9th to understand our current bond rating (which we anticipate remaining the same – which is a good thing) prior to us going out to the market for bids. We do know unfortunately that, given the limited number of customers on HPP and the fact that they are all private entities, the bonds are expected to be taxable versus tax-exempt, meaning higher interest rates.

These bonds were sold on April 17th 2025 at a rate of 5.55% over a 15-year period. Our excellent Moody's rating helped keep this rate down.

Expansion Under the Tracks: This project is progressing well. Electrical cable is still to be pulled, along with dome final restoration work to be completed. This will allow us to provide electric service to Sawmill Parkway, with our first new customer expected to join HPP in May of this year.

PERSONNEL

Finance Director: The City continues to accept applications for this position and has interviewed 2 candidates thus far. Interviews will continue during the month of March.

Police Officers: The City continues to pursue all avenues to hire Police Officers for our open position and upcoming retirements.

Part Time/Seasonal Staff: The City is still accepting applications for part-time/seasonal staff to work at the Boat Basin.

AGREEMENTS/CITY MANAGER APPROVALS

Huron Garden Club Sign Request: The City Manager approved a request from the Huron Garden Club to place signage (1'6" x 2'8") in the median to advertise their annual plant sale, which will be held on May 17th at Lake Front Park. The sign will be put up on May 11th and will be taken down at 12:00pm on May 17th. The funds raised by the sale help to raise funds for the purchase of decorations for the Huron Public Library Christmas tree, gardening books and magazines, and flowers for Lake Front Park. In addition, the Garden Club makes an annual contribution of \$100 to the McBride Arboretum.

PROJECTS OUT FOR BID

N/A

CONTRACTS

- Seeley, Savidge, Ebert & Gourash Co., LLP (Res 47-2024) – **Expires 6/3/25. New contract on agenda for Council's consideration 4/22/25.**
- Dynegy Electric Aggregation Agreement (Res 29-2023) – **Expires 7/30/25.**
- Dynegy Electric Standard Large Stable Service Agreement (Res 54-2023) – **Expires 08/31/25.**
- Emergency Services Agreement with Huron Township (Res 85-2024) – **Expires 12/31/25.**
- OHM Advisors (Res 95-2024 Engineering) – **Expires 12/31/25.**
- HJRD Annual Agreement (Res 9-2025) – **Expires 12/31/25.**
- Erie Soil and Water Conservation District (Res 8-2025) – **Expires 1/31/26.**
- Building Official – Service Agreement (Res 43-2021) - **Expires 7/25/26.**
- School Resource Officer (Res 32-2024 & Res 33-2024) – **Expires 8/31/26.**
- Republic Services (Res 44-2023) – **Expires 12/31/26.**
- City Prosecutor Employment Agreement (Res 79-2024)– expires **12/31/26.**
- Personnel Officer Employment Agreement (Res 78-2024) – expires **12/31/26.**
- Dispatch Agreement – Erie County Sheriff (Res 101-2024) – **Expires 12/31/26.**
- FOP-Sergeants Collective Bargaining Agreement (Res 100-2024) – **Expires 12/31/27.**
- FOP – Patrol Officers Collective Bargaining Agreement (Res 99-2024) – **Expires 12/31/27.**
- AFSCME Collective Bargaining Agreement (Res 102-2024) – **Expires 12/31/27.**
- IAFF Collective Bargaining Agreement (Res 7-2025) – **Expires 12/31/27.**
- Charles E. Harris & Associates GAPP Conversion (Res 10-2025) – **Expires 12/31/27.**

UPCOMING MEETINGS

April Meetings:

- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, April 22nd at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.
- BZA – Meeting Cancelled (Monday, April 14th)

May Meetings:

- HJRD – Tuesday, May 6th at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.
- Utilities Committee – Wednesday, May 7th at 5pm in the main conference room.
- BZA – Monday, May 12th at 5:30pm in Council Chambers.
- Finance Committee – Tuesday, May 13th at 5:30pm in Council Chambers.

- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, May 13th at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.
- Planning Commission – Wednesday, May 21st at 5pm in Council Chambers.
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, May 27th at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.