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A MESSAGE TO THE CITIZENS OF URBANA

From Mayor Bill Bean

Fellow Urbana residents,

Many of you have asked me and City Council for more information about the proposal from Thor Equities regarding the proposed "Urbana Technology Hub". I know the silence has been frustrating, and I want to explain why we were not able to share details sooner and then walk you through what has been proposed.

Why We Could Not Share Details Sooner

This case was sent to court-ordered mediation before a federal magistrate judge. Mediation of this kind is governed by federal law and court rules that require everything discussed, including any settlement proposals, to remain strictly confidential. That confidentiality exists for a good reason: it allows both sides to negotiate candidly, test options, and work toward the best possible outcome without each new idea becoming a bargaining chip. Had we released partial details during that process, we risked undermining the City's negotiating position and the integrity of the mediation itself. Additionally, premature disclosure would have exposed the City to contempt-of-court proceedings and judicial sanctions.

It was also important to me that City Council receive the full proposal, together and in context, before any of it reached the public, so that your elected representatives could ask hard questions and fully understand what was on the table before anyone formed an opinion based on an incomplete picture.

Mediation has now concluded, both parties have agreed that the terms of the proposal can be shared, and Council is beginning its formal review. That is why I am able to share these details with you today.

Where Things Stand Today

I want to be clear: what we have is a **proposed** settlement, not a final deal OR agreement. The terms below are memorialized in a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU"), and before anything is final, City Council must review, discuss, and vote to approve a settlement agreement and consent decree, and the federal court must also sign off. Council will be reviewing in executive session at the next council meeting, and I encourage residents to follow that process closely.

What the Proposal Would Mean for Urbana

After reviewing this proposal closely, I believe it represents a good deal for our community, for three main reasons: it ends a costly legal fight on favorable terms, it builds in real protections for our residents, and it provides the City and the Urbana City School District with substantial funding.

1. It resolves the lawsuit and brings real money to our City

- Thor has agreed to waive and release all of its damages claims against the City, claims that were estimated to exceed $115 million. Settling now ends that risk and the expense of continued litigation.
- In exchange, Thor would make direct payments to the City totaling up to **$50 million** over the life of the project: an initial payment upon the Phase One building permit, followed by payments tied to each certificate of occupancy as the project is built out in phases.
- City Council, not Thor, decides how that money is spent, on community improvement projects, emergency services, and other City needs.
- Thor has agreed not to seek a Community Reinvestment Area tax abatement, meaning the development would be fully taxed like any other property in Urbana. This would result in several more million additional dollars to the Urbana City School District for our children's benefit.

2. It builds in protections for residents

- Before construction can begin, Thor must pay for an independent environmental study, performed by a firm both the City and Thor agree on, examining the project's impact on our local environment, including the Cedar Bog, and on our water and sewer capacity. That study will be made available for the public to review.
- Thor must subsidize any water and wastewater infrastructure upgrades needed to accommodate the project's actual usage, so existing ratepayers are not left to cover those costs.
- Thor must put in place an emergency management plan addressing facility-specific response protocols, and a decommissioning plan, including a future environmental study, with any necessary cleanup paid for by Thor, not the City.
- Thor must maintain a public website about the project and provide residents a direct way to raise questions or concerns.
- Thor has committed to making a good-faith effort to hire local residents and local companies for both construction and permanent positions.
- The project must still comply with the City's zoning, subdivision, and building standards, and go through site plan review. Any future increase in the size of the development beyond what has been proposed requires the written agreement of both Thor and City Council, so Council retains an ongoing voice in how this project grows.

What Happens Next

City Council will review this proposal on October 6th in executive session, ask questions, and decide whether to move forward. I want every resident to have the chance to understand what is being proposed and why I believe it is a responsible path forward for Urbana, one that ends a costly legal dispute while putting real resources and real protections in place for our community.

I appreciate your patience as this process has unfolded, and I remain committed to keeping you informed as it moves toward a final resolution.

Sincerely,

Bill Bean
Mayor, City of Urbana, Ohio