

DEPARTMENTAL WEEKLY REPORTS

February 1, 2013

City Manager's Office

Community Affairs Officer

I led the Wine and Dine planning meeting on Tuesday, January 22 at 2 p.m. at the Mayor's law office and have since distributed registration materials for the restaurants, committed to ad space for the event and developed the advertising schedule, secured design services, secured street decorations, and fielding phone inquiries about sponsorships. I continue to work on the event.

At Carol Houck's request and with the assistance of Mark Farrall, I have put together a postcard from the Police Department's Special Operations Unit to be mailed to residents and landlords in the Haines and Lovett Streets area regarding behavior in the area and the consequences associated with that behavior. The paper arrived and those have been printed and are awaiting address labels in order to be mailed out.

I attended the Conservation Advisory Commission's Anti-Idling media event and assisted in some last minute needs requested by DNREC's Public Affairs team.

I assisted in the development of the smart meter installation notices to be distributed to residents during the installation process.

I have been preparing press releases for Jefferson Awards, Air Force Heritage Brass concert, and Presidents' Day trash collection.

I have been updating the downtown Newark website's events and creating graphics for upcoming events, as well as preparing the February DNP events e-newsletter.

I reviewed the Before and After Care monthly newsletters and the Parks and Recreation 2013 sponsorship opportunities packet.

Planning & Development

Planning

On Thursday morning, Code Enforcement Supervisor Steve Wilson, Parking Administrator Marvin Howard and I attended the GPS meeting.

On Thursday, Development Supervisor Mike Fortner staffed the Newark Bicycle Committee meeting, during which the development of an updated Newark Bicycle Plan was discussed.

On Friday, Planning and Development Secretary Elizabeth Dowell and I attend the records management meeting with representatives of the State Archives.

On Friday afternoon, I met with Aetna Fire Chief John Rudd to discuss plan reviews and the Delaware State Fire Prevention Regulations.

This week additional staff comments were submitted to Atlantic Realty for the Newark Shopping Center project, and a meeting to discuss the comments and the second plan submittal has been set up for this Friday morning.

On Monday morning, I met with an East Main Street property owner to discuss potential development scenarios with him.

On Monday evening, I attended the City Council meeting. At the meeting, Council approved a minor subdivision on Prospect Avenue.

Work continued in preparation for the February 5, 2013 Planning Commission meeting. Agenda items being discussed are:

- A rezoning at 221A, 221B, 221C Murray Road from the existing BLR (business limited residential) to RM (multi-family dwellings – garden apartments) zoning and major subdivision in order to demolish the existing three apartment buildings containing 16 units on the site and replace them with 13 townhouse style apartment units.
- A rezoning from RD (one-family, semi-detached residential) to RM (multi-family-garden apartments), and major subdivision in order to construct eight new townhouse style apartments in place of the four single family rental homes currently at 30, 34, 38 and 42 Chambers Street.
- Discussion on the City's "Plan for Planning" regarding the update of the Comprehensive Development Plan.

On Tuesday morning, Mike and I met with a potential property owner to discuss annexing the property into the City and our subdivision and development processes.

Some work was also performed on projects for the March Planning Commission. Tentatively scheduled for review at this meeting are:

- A rezoning, major subdivision, special use permits and a parking waiver for the property located at 230 E. Main Street (Newark Shopping Center). The applicants are requesting development approval to renovate the existing shopping center, and build a bank with a drive-through and 250 two-bedroom apartments and associated parking garage.
- A rezoning, major subdivision and site plan approval for 24.39 acres on either side of Suburban Plaza to construct 168 lodge and cottage style apartment units. The property is currently zoned MI and BC and the applicants are requesting RM (garden apartments) zoning.
- A major subdivision plan to construct 12 townhouse apartments at 107-131 New London Road. The property is currently zoned RM (garden apartments) and contains 5 single family residential rental units.

This week, Mike reviewed documentation for a proposed parking waiver at 44-46 E. Main Street.

On Wednesday morning, Mike attended the Anti-Idling event at Newark High School.

Economic Development

Planner/DNP Administrator Ricky Nietubicz began the February Advertising Campaign, dubbed “Fantastic Facebook Fridays in February” (FFFF). In response to the Merchants’ Committee’s desire to build a larger following of “likes” on the DNP facebook page, several merchants contributed items for giveaways. Each Friday in February, one of the DNP’s “facebook fans” will be randomly selected to receive a prize. For the last week of the contest, people will enter by posting a photo of themselves on Main Street to the DNP’s facebook page for random selection.

Work continued this week advertising promotional opportunities through the NCAA Women’s Basketball Tournament to downtown businesses, and organizing materials for inclusion in Tournament documents.

Parking

Ricky continued efforts to work with the Merchants’ and Parking Committees to revamp free parking offerings during downtown events to avoid abuse by those who are not shopping or dining downtown. Different concepts for special validations have been proposed and are being explored for their costs and benefits in advance of the Wine and Dine Downtown event in March.

Marvin has been working on the entrance to Lot #3 from Center Street. This week removal of the big tree at the Lot #3 entrance began, but due to the proximity of one of the trees to high voltage wires and concern for interference with the tree, the project was delayed; and is now scheduled to be completed by Friday.

Code Enforcement

Code enforcement staff removed more “Rudy the lost dog” signs around town.

The last C/O was issued for The Green at Twin Lakes.

Footing and foundation are now complete at the Bloom site, and steel is starting to go up.

This week Steve attended a meeting with Krato’s for door locks in our ongoing effort for security.

Bill Street and Steve attended training on the NFPA 101 Life Safety Code yesterday in Dover.

Public Works & Water Resources

We have been preparing year end reports and developing plans to streamline the process in the future. Year-end reports include curb ramp accomplishment, fuel pump/tank monitoring, transfer station operations, DNREC Erosion and Sediment reviews, and State Funding of the Street Program, NPDES program, etc.

We have had a water main break every other day or so for the past week.

I have met with the University to discuss road repairs associated with the ISEB building along Lovett and Academy. We are coordinating multiple University projects along Academy Street so that we can wisely handle the resurfacing of Academy Street without damaging the new work with subsequent truck traffic associated with the other construction projects.

We have advertised the water line project for Brook Hill Drive. This project has been a long time in the works and will be good to get in the ground.

I am working with facilities managers on Bellevue Road to determine why water pressure dropped during a recent power outage and subsequently we have learned it will happen when they simulate a power outage and operate their cooling system on once through domestic water use. It is probably a combination of internal usage patterns and perhaps a system issue that we can resolve.

I met with other City staff to discuss the new CityView system. There are several capabilities that we will be looking to take advantage of to help with billing activities, citations, and perhaps scheduling special collections.

After working with the Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday bulk collection schedule we realized that we can modify it yet again without affecting the total number of collections and at the same time give us more flexibility to use our labor force. We will focus on bulk collection on Wednesday and Thursday. This will give us another person on our heaviest trash days (Monday and Tuesday). If we get a heavy week for bulk collections we will make arrangements to increase our collections the following week to respond to the demand.

We met this week to discuss the project to modify the detention basin in the Hunt of Louviers development. We are identifying agencies interested in helping us with the plantings.

Electric

Tuesday afternoon a termination on an underground cable coming from one of the City's main transformers blew up causing an outage to several substations. The problem was quickly identified and the circuits switched to another transformer. A contractor is currently testing the transformer checking for any internal damage. Engineering and electricians scanned the entire substation with infrared and ultrasound instruments looking for hot spots and leaking current. A hot spot was found on a connection to a 34kV breaker which was immediately fixed.

The line crews were also called out on Tuesday night to restore power to the Fountainview complex after an underground primary cable failed. The faulted cable was isolated and the fault will be located and repaired soon.

The electricians have been working various projects concerning building maintenance, transfer station issues, and SCADA equipment, while the meter technician finished building the special primary metering point to be used at the Bloom site.

Engineering has been reviewing Bloom Energy's service design and equipment, working on SCADA issues, and developing the meter programs for the new smart meters.

Parks & Recreation

Administration & Planning

I spent considerable time this week on matters relating to the Redd Park Trails project.

The Skate Spot Committee met last Tuesday to discuss moving forward with the project following Council award of the design/build contract to Grindline Skateparks.

On Tuesday Carol, Councilman Markham and I visited to City owned access ways, one in the Hunt at Louviers and one at the Woods at Louviers, to be signed and used as official neighborhood entry points to the trails at Redd Park. I spoke to several area residents about the same.

I attended a vehicle GPS presentation last Wednesday.

I received warranty information/documentation for items associated to the Pomeroy Trail.

I'm gathering materials in preparation to submit a second Delaware Land and Water Conservation Trust Fund grant application for the Curtis Mill Park development project.

We continued preparing contracts for the park shelter concrete pads, the Main Street tree pits and the purchase a replacement mower.

Tom committed time working with the Delaware Recreation and Park Society Conference Committee finalizing plans for its annual conference schedule for February.

Tom reviewed three landscape plans and conducted site inspections as their two year surety bonds for maintenance will soon expire. All three sites need plants replaced to some extent in the spring. We will re-inspect then.

Tom conducted park inspections and wrote up work orders as needed.

Rich supervised snow removal operations from storm on Friday night.

Parks Maintenance

Parks staff completed painting the lower hallway at the Wilson Center, did trash removal throughout park system, repaired a toilet on the second floor at the Police Station, continued tree/shrub pruning at various parks, salted and plowed downtown parking lots, City Hall lot and park parking lots as needed and completed other various maintenance work orders.

Recreation Services

Paula sent out email blasts to previous participants to promote upcoming winter programs.

Paula and Tyler continued to finalize details for a new summer camp "Rittenhouse Rocks". The camp will be a spin-off of our very popular Rittenhouse Day Camp and will focus on active outdoor and nature related activities.

Paula went to the Prothonatary's Office to complete background checks on new employees.

Sharon has been preparing the 2013 Sponsorship Package for community events.

Sharon worked on promotional materials and working on logistics for the USAF Heritage Brass Concert, which will be held on Tuesday, February 19th at 7:00 p.m. in the Newark High School auditorium.

Tyler held staff interviews for the next session of the CATCH Afterschool Homework Club at Downes Elementary scheduled to start in February.

Despite the snow, the winter session of theater classes began on Friday, January 25 at the George Wilson Center.

The recreation staff worked on camp program planning for the upcoming Summer Camp Guide.

Joe conducted a Skate Spot Committee meeting to review where we currently stand with the project.

Joe is finalizing the Tony Hawk Grant application from the Skate Spot project.

Joe committed time working on the 2013 recreation equipment and supplies and apparel requests for quotations.

Police

On Sunday, January 27th at approximately 1:30 a.m., Cpl. Marconi was on patrol on Haines Street when he observed a male jump out into the roadway as a vehicle was passing. Cpl. Marconi is a member of the Special Operations Unit which was created in 2012 to respond to specific patrol needs of the city. The SOU was in this area in response to numerous neighborhood complaints of noise and disorderly behavior. Cpl. Marconi observed the male jump in a manner of a half crouched position with both hands above his head making claw like gestures. The male was then observed jumping onto parked cars and running on top of them causing damage to two vehicles. The male was taken into custody and identified as Adam T. Blaszczyk a 20-year old UD student from Millersville, MD. He was charged with Underage Consumption, Disorderly Conduct and two counts of Criminal Mischief.

On Monday, January 28th, the Newark Police Department underwent a significant amount of interdepartmental transfers across the entire agency. In all, 31 officers were transferred to new patrol platoons or specialized units. These transfers will improve the overall efficiency of the agency and strengthen the ongoing commitment to providing outstanding police services to the city. In their new positions, senior officers and others with specialized training will impart their vast job knowledge unto others. On February 11th, three new police recruits will start their careers at NPD and will be sent to the Delaware State Police Academy for six months of training.

On Wednesday, January 30th, the Criminal Investigations Division held a goodbye party for Linda Burns, the division Secretary, after 42 years of service with the city. The department wishes her well in retirement and will miss her wide array of knowledge and skills.

CSH/mp