

## DEPARTMENTAL WEEKLY REPORTS

February 8, 2013

### Planning & Development

#### Planning

On Thursday morning, Development Supervisor Mike Fortner and I met with Herb Inden of the State Planning Office to discuss our Comprehensive Development Plan process.

On Friday morning, I joined the Subdivision Advisory Committee in a meeting with the developers of the Newark Shopping Center to discuss the development plan and its readiness for Planning Commission review. Revised plans will need to be submitted.

Subdivision Advisory Committee comments were submitted to the developers of 63 W. Cleveland Avenue this week. Revised plans will need to be submitted.

Revised plans were submitted this week for Campus Walk and the Cottages at the Plaza and distributed to staff for comment.

On Monday morning, Mike and I met with a potential developer of another Main Street property to discuss the subdivision and parking waiver processes.

On Monday afternoon, I met with Ms. Pamela Bobbs of the Washington House Association to discuss the Newark Shopping Center and 132 Delaware Avenue developments.

On Tuesday I joined Carol Houck, Mayor Funk and other City staffers in a tour of the facility and discussion with The Dow Chemical Company representatives at their Bellevue Road location.

Last night Planning Commission took the following actions:

1. Approved 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. [Motion passed 4-2]
2. Approved 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. [Motion passed 6-0]

On Tuesday evening at Planning Commission, Mike presented a progress report on the update to the Comprehensive Development Plan. The Planning Commission scheduled three workshops for the Comprehensive Development Plan. The first **Planning Commission Workshop** will be held on **Tuesday, February 26<sup>th</sup>**, at **7 PM** to cover the

**“Housing”** element of the Comprehensive Development Plan. Members of the Planning Commission will hear a presentation on housing characteristics, conditions, and needs from staff, as well as hear from developers, landlords, housing officials, local homeowners and renters. Planning Commission Workshops were also scheduled for Tuesday, March 26<sup>th</sup>, for **“Economic Development”**, and Tuesday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> for **“Transportation”**.

Today, Mike met with a representative from DNREC for a “Community Assistance Visit” to review compliance with FEMA’s National Flood Insurance Program.

Considerable time was spent this week on the Planning and Development Department’s 2012 Annual Report.

### Economic Development

On Thursday, I attended the quarterly meeting of the New Castle County Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Council.

On Tuesday, DNP Administrator Ricky Nietubicz and Mike staffed the Design Committee meeting and Code Enforcement Supervisor Steve Wilson attended the meeting.

This morning, Ricky staffed the Merchants’ Committee meeting. The committee reviewed several upcoming and ongoing promotions, particularly the current Facebook promotions for the month of February. The committee is pleased with the progress so far. In discussing a number of recurring events such as Wine & Dine and Newark Day, the committee expressed a need for more broad-based input, in order to bring new ideas and further improve the events. The committee is looking into hosting a “block party” type meet and greet/open forum, similar to Open Forums that were held in the past to gather input from the downtown merchant community on the direction that the DNP should take moving forward, as well as to increase awareness of the DNP, and to cultivate new committee members.

### Community Development

Code Enforcement Officer Brian Daring and Ricky inspected 710 S. College Avenue after a few citations were issued in response to property maintenance complaints. Ricky completed a work write-up based on the inspection and sent it to the property owner with all application forms for CDBG Home Improvement Program. Ricky will follow up with the property owner and make sure that the process moves along and necessary repairs are completed.

### Parking

This morning Parking Administrator Marv Howard, Steve and Brian Daring had a meeting with Sue Yong, the owner of 44-46 E. Main Street, to evaluate parking, access, and dumpster needs.

### Code Enforcement

On Thursday, Brian Daring and Steve met with members of the Finance Department to discuss Citywide and it’s applications in Code Enforcement.

The demolition permit for Kate's Place has been issued. Demo should start next week.

The new Verizon Store in Suburban Plaza should open next week.

This week, Steve met with Bill Pressley on more security for the building.

The Curtis Mill Park Smoke Stack asbestos and fly ash removal should be completed this week, weather permitting.

This week, Steve attended a meeting on the Bloom Energy fire suppression system.

### **Public Works & Water Resources**

Water main breaks continue to be the word for the day in the department. We seem to have one every day or so. In between times we are engaged in system maintenance and equipment maintenance activities.

We have identified multiple volunteers that are interested in working on the storm water retrofit projects that we are considering. We have met to discuss the public meeting and will have at one more meeting prior to the Community meeting on February 19.

Kelley, working with City staff and State and County agencies, has been able to identify grants to deal with invasive bamboo plots that exist on City property. Between the two grants we hope to cover the majority of the projects without city funds.

Kelley has also responded to two illicit discharge complaints and was able to resolve the issues with the responsible parties.

Engineering staff continues to work on the street, curb, and sidewalk program.

Initial planning for the Honeywell project continues to move ahead. We are currently working on making contact with all of the large industrial/commercial users who might have the most difficulty scheduling an outage should one be necessary to change out the water meter.

I would be interested in feedback on our response to the winter weather events that we have had so far this year. Dave, Tom and I have been massaging the system and will continue to do so as we work to improve the overall level of service and control costs at the same time.

The mechanics have been busy again at the transfer station. The equipment continues to be a source of problems. Tom, Dave, and I are evaluating all of our options in relation to the continued operation of the transfer station.

We have had the first of our SCADA controls installed between the concrete tanks and the Louviers water tower. The controls will allow us to operate the pumps at the concrete tank based on the water level directly from the tower. All of our past efforts to do this, including when the pump station was first built, have tried to use system pressure as the operational indicator. The hydraulics of the system are such that there is not enough

variation in the system pressure for us to reliably operate the pumps. We will continue to integrate similar SCADA controls throughout the system.

Mike S., Tom, Phil, and I have spent significant time lately working on development reviews.

## **Electric**

The line crews worked replacing rotten cross arms and installed guy wires on a railroad crossing at the end of Chapel Street. The line crews also worked on the failed underground primary cable in the Fountainview complex, using fault finding equipment leading them to a faulty elbow connection. The line crews and engineering worked together to switch circuits in order to test and commission parts of the SCADA system.

Engineering teleconferenced with DEMEC, the Delaware Sustainable Energy Utility, and other municipal engineers on developing a process to acquire more LED lighting for all the cities. Engineering also worked on meter programs for the smart meter project, SCADA issues with the developer and relay technical support, and acquiring a directional bore contractor to start several projects replacing defective cable and installing new cable.

The electricians have been busy with general maintenance issues for the parking division, parks and public works and water departments. They also worked on SCADA and relay wiring.

## **Parks & Recreation**

### **Administration & Planning**

I prepared and submitted pre-applications to the Delaware Land and Water Conservation Trust Fund Grants program for the following 2013 projects. If the submittals are accepted I'll follow up with full-fledged grant applications.

1. Kells Park Multi-purpose court rehab
2. LeRoy Hill Park baseball field outfield drainage project
3. Curtis Mill Park development

I reviewed and commented on draft contract documents for these projects:

1. Main Street tree pit rehab
2. Concrete pads under park shelters (Wilson and Dickey Parks)

I received the agreement from the State for the Bond Bill funds (\$160,000) that have been awarded to help pay for entrance and street improvements for the Curtis Mill Park development project.

I received the preliminary plans for the Curtis Mill Park project from our consultant. They will be distributed to appropriate departments for review and comment. Also, Joe and I met with the consultant to discuss design concepts for the Plaza aspect of the project.

Each year the National League of American Bicyclists, in conjunction with each State's DOT and state bicycle advocates, conducts a comprehensive survey consisting of 50 questions across five categories (legislation and enforcement, policies and programs, infrastructure and funding, education and encouragement and evaluation and planning) to determine that state's "bicycle friendliness".

In 2012 Delaware was ranked 10<sup>th</sup> (see attached) up from 18<sup>th</sup> in 2011. The completion and opening of the Pomeroy and Newark Rail Trail, the trail rehab work we're doing in Redd Park and the efforts of the Newark Bicycle Committee are good examples of what we're doing in Newark to help make Delaware a Bicycle Friendly State.

Tom and Rich continued working on the contracts to install concrete pads under shelters at Dickey and Wilson Center Parks, the Tree Pit renovations on Main Street, and the purchase of a replacement mower.

Tom conducted park inspections and prepared related work orders.

Tom and Joe attended the Anti Idling "Kick Off" event at Newark High School.

### Parks Maintenance

With the assistance of the Electric Department, we removed the Christmas tree from the Academy Building lawn.

The crew checked and cleaned all roof drains at City Hall, Police Station, Wilson Center, and both pool buildings.

We are continuing to install Traffic Median Sponsor signs on South Main Street and Elkton Road following the completion of DeIDOT's work.

We continued to do tree and shrub pruning throughout park system.

We conducted snow and ice control tasks during the week as needed.

### Recreation Services

Paula worked on finalizing information for the summer newsletter and camps guide and started working on facility requests for summer programming.

Paula worked on the renewal packet for the Before and After Care license at Downes Elementary School. An inspection will be held in March for the renewal of the annual license. She also started to review staff personnel folders and advise them of training hours needed to comply with the Office of Child Care licensing requirements.

Paula worked with Larissa Jones (Customer Service) on learning how to use the Emergency Notification System. This is a possible way we will be able to notify After

Care parents in case of early school closings. A few changes will still need to be made prior to this system being used and she is working with John to see if the changes can be made.

Sharon has been marketing the US Air Force Heritage Brass Quintet concert, which will be held on Tuesday, February 19 at 7:00 p.m. in the auditorium of Newark High School. The concert is free and open to the public. Posters were delivered to many downtown businesses and information has been posted on parks and recreation social media sites.

Sharon has been preparing the 2013 Events Sponsorship package as well as preparing marketing for the Memorial Day Parade. She also attended a Memorial Day Parade Committee meeting this week and participated in a conference call for the Delaware Recreation and Parks Society's Annual Conference.

Tyler held staff interviews for the next session of the CATCH Afterschool Homework Club at Downes Elementary scheduled to start February 11.

Tyler, Paula and Sharon met to discuss summer camp planning in preparation for developing the Summer Camp guide.

Hoopes Fire Prevention completed the annual check of the Wilson Center's kitchen fire suppression system and inspected the fire extinguishers.

Joe completed and submitted a grant proposal to the Tony Hawk Foundation for the Skate Spot project.

Joe is working on the 2012 end of year report.

Joe is working with Grindline to develop a campaign to solicit material and supply donations and other contributions to the Skate Spot project.

### **Police**

On Thursday, January 31<sup>st</sup>, the Police Department issued a crime alert in reference to thefts from unsecured vehicles, garages and thefts from yards. On the morning of January 30<sup>th</sup>, officers responded to approximately a dozen reports in the central portion of the city including Kells Avenue, South Chapel Street and the Devon/Binns neighborhoods. During the overnight hours of January 29<sup>th</sup> into the 30<sup>th</sup>, an unknown suspect(s) entered multiple vehicles and removed property including loose change, prescription narcotics and an antique handgun. The majority of these vehicles were left unsecured. During the same time frame, an unsecured bicycle was stolen from the rear deck of a home on Swarthmore Drive. This bicycle was recovered in the yard of a home on Apple Road where it was discovered that a suspect(s) had entered an unsecured garage and rummaged through a vehicle at that location. In the alert, the Newark Police reminded residents to keep their vehicles and garages locked at all times. Valuables should be removed from vehicles while parked and firearms and narcotics should be secured within the home. Also as a reminder, residents were encouraged to report all suspicious vehicles and persons to the police right away by dialing 911.

During the month of January, the Street Crimes Unit responsible for plain clothed proactive police patrols throughout the city, made a total of 220 arrests. Most notably was a graffiti arrest in which 123 charges were lodged against an individual who was vandalizing property throughout the city and on UD campus. Multiple charges were also filed by UDPD on this graffiti vandal. In addition, the Street Crimes Unit made 28 order maintenance arrests, 22 fugitive arrests, 18 traffic arrests, 14 drug arrests, 13 criminal arrests and 2 DUI arrests.

On Monday, January 11<sup>th</sup>, the three new police recruits will begin training prior to starting the Delaware State Police Academy on Monday, March 4<sup>th</sup>.

CSH/mp