

Below is the weekly report for the week ending today, May 31, 2024.

Items for Newsletters:

1. **UDon't Need It? Student Move Out Program (Final Sale Day Saturday June 1 at 9am):** The City of Newark and University of Delaware annual student move out program to encourage recycling and reuse as well as keep our City clean during this transition is now underway. Dropoffs are accepted at the STAR Campus near the water tower from UD students and landlords until from 9am-6pm until June 1. The site is CLOSED Saturday May 25 (Graduation) and Monday May 27 (Memorial Day). Items will be available for sale during two special sale days on Friday May 25 and Saturday June 1, both at 9am. There are some great deals to be had and the sales are very popular events. Goodwill and Food Bank of Delaware also benefit from this program. More details can be found on our website: <https://newarkde.gov/836/UDont-Need-It-Student-Move-Out-Program>
2. **Free Water for a Year initiative:** There is 1 more chance to win \$1000 worth of free water for anyone who completes a survey before June 2024. Newark Water customers are encouraged to complete the online survey at this link: <https://newarkde.gov/lead> to enter a sweepstakes for free water for a year, up to \$1000 value! The data we collect will help complete a required inventory of service lines and reduce operating costs for the water utility.
3. **Credit Card Fees:** The City is working with our credit card processors to begin charging customers a fee for the use of credit cards. As discussed with City Council, we have a tentative effective date of implementation in mid-July for all Parks and Recreation fees, property taxes, business licenses, permits and general billing. Costs borne from payments made by echeck will be absorbed by the City. Public notification will be going out shortly. Credit card surcharges for utility payments will go into effect later this year following the roll out of our upgraded customer service web portal.
4. **City newsletter:** To sign up for the City's email newsletter, [click here](#).

Public Works and Water Resources

1. **UD Water Main Work – Academy Street Closure:** The University of Delaware's contractor is scheduled to perform improvements on the City's water main located in Academy Street as part of the Building X (McKinly Lab) project. The work will require a 2–3 day closure and detour of Academy Street between Delaware Avenue and Lovett Avenue. Work is scheduled to begin on Wednesday, June 5 and should be complete by the end of the day on Friday June 7 (weather depending). The road will be reopened at the end of each day and the contractor has been directed to maintain a clear route for emergency vehicles should they need access through or to the area. The parking stalls on the east side of Academy Street will be empty and will allow for access around the immediate work area.
2. **Street Patching – West Park Place:** Road detours will be in place along West Park Place for patching between Indian Road and Orchard Road from June 3 to June 6. Please use caution in the area and follow signs and flaggers on site.

3. **Water Main Replacement – Hanover Place and Dallam Road:** Our contractor, Mumford and Miller, continues work on Hanover Place and Dallam Road. Residents have been notified of the work and will be notified of any service disruptions as the project moves forward.
4. **Water Tank Painting – Arbour Park Tank:** The City's contractor, World Wide Industries, continued lead paint removal this week and lead removal is expected to be complete by next week. Additional work will continue for several weeks.

Parks and Recreation

1. **Recreation Staff:**
 - a. Preparing for the start of summer camps, booking field trips, sending and compiling staff background checks and contracts.
 - b. Summer Camp staff orientation is scheduled for June 5.
 - c. Spoke with representatives from French Creek Racing to update the waiver for the reservoir swims; waiver has been update as per the City Solicitor's recommendations. Special event applications are being processed and reviewed internally for final approval prior to any permits being issued.
 - d. Working with online registration software and credit card processing company regarding charging a percentage fee for the use of credit/debit cards.
2. **Maintenance Staff:** Preparing for the opening of the community pools scheduled to open June 15 at Dickey Park and the George Wilson Center.
3. **Community Gardens:** Fairfield Community Garden is full with 57 gardeners & Dickey Community Garden is full with 20 gardeners.
4. **Capital Projects:**
 - a. Met with Public Works staff to discuss stormwater improvements for Fairfield Crest Park.
 - b. Met with JMT & DelDOT representative regarding Elkton Road Landscaping and set up another meeting.
 - c. Met with Councilwoman Ford regarding the proposed improvements to George Read Park.
5. **Reservoir Swimming:** Spoke with representatives from French Creek Racing to update the waiver for the reservoir swims; waiver has been update as per the City Solicitor's recommendations. Special event applications are being processed and reviewed internally for final approval prior to any permits being issued.
6. **Development Activity:** Landscape Inspections have been completed at several locations for the two year warranty follow up.

Planning and Development

1. **Land Use**

- a. Staff posted the [June 4 Planning Commission agenda and packet](#), which will include the following items:
 - i. Comprehensive Plan amendment, rezoning, minor subdivision, and special use permit for 515 Capitol Trail.
 - ii. Rezoning and special use permit for 750 Library Avenue.
 - iii. Minor subdivision for 643 Creek View Road.
- b. Staff received the following development plan submission:
 - i. Rezoning, minor subdivision, and special use permits for [1110 South College Avenue](#) on May 28. This plan is tentatively scheduled for the July 2 Planning Commission meeting.
- c. Staff issued the following Subdivision Advisory Committee comment letters:
 - i. Minor subdivision with site plan approval for [643 Creek View Road](#) on May 28.
 - ii. Comprehensive Plan amendment, rezoning and minor subdivision by site plan approval for [50-54 Corbit Street](#) on May 29.
- d. Staff are preparing for the close of the fiscal year for the Community Development Block Grant program, which ends on June 30. Of note, all funds allocated to the Home Buyer Incentive Program, which provides downpayment and settlement assistance to home buyers in targeted areas in the City, were expended this fiscal year in advance of the program being sunset for the fiscal year beginning July 1.
- e. The vacant Community Planner I position is open for applications. The [posting](#) will close June 14.

2. Code Enforcement

- a. Work has been completed by the outside contractor for remediation of a hoarding situation at 179 Madison Drive.
- b. The tenant fit-out permit for the new Chapel Street Players theater at 643 Creek View Road was issued.
- c. Property Maintenance staff, in coordination with Public Works and Parking, have been busy with student move out-related issues, including an increase in requests for inspections. For residents who are having issues with their units, it is important to report issues and request an inspection prior to moving out in order for Property Maintenance to be able to gain entrance to the units.
- d. The vacant Code Enforcement Officer position will be [posted](#) on May 31 and will be open for applications until June 28.

3. Parking

- a. The installation of equipment for capital project V2403 Parking Radio System is ongoing. In order to boost the range of the new repeater, it has been installed at the reservoir, which has increased the signal. As previously noted, additional repeater locations are being evaluated to ensure full coverage citywide. Full rollout of the project is expected in the upcoming weeks.
- b. The delivery of the crane for the development project at 132 East Main Street was delayed from the original May 28 expected date, but is anticipated to be in place by the end of the week. City spaces in the lot that are obstructed by the equipment will have lost revenue invoiced to the project developer.
- c. Parking staff have been working with local property owners to minimize the impact on parking availability from dumpsters related to move out and from construction

equipment to ensure that the maximum amount of parking spaces are available for the upcoming Alumni Weekend visitors.

- d. Parking vacancies currently in process include the following:
 - i. The second Parking Coordinator position that was approved in the FY2024 budget with an August 1 start date was [posted](#) on May 24 and will remain open for applications until June 21.
 - ii. One vacancy for part-time Parking Ambassador is still open, so a new pool of applicants is being reviewed to schedule interviews for early June. The [posting](#) is open until filled.

Finance

1. **Utility Billing Customer Portal Upgrade (SilverBlaze):** We were notified by our vendor this week that the last remaining critical issue preventing us from launching our upgraded utility billing customer portal, called SilverBlaze, has been resolved. Staff plans to close PUBs either June 16th or 20th (tbd) to test the system. Assuming everything goes well, we could have SilverBlaze live by August 1. Public notification will go out two weeks prior to the change from Customer Connect. You may recall that credit card surcharges on utility payments were on hold until this project was completed. This change in schedule could dramatically
2. **New Tax payment feature:** Beginning this summer, taxpayers will be able to make payments via phone, similar to how we currently accept pay-by-phone payments for utility bills.

Electric

1. **Outage Report:** On Wednesday, May 29th, we experienced an outage due to a fault on the primary underground cable caused by a squirrel that feeds customers on Creek View Road. This outage affected ten (10) customers and lasted for 2 hours. We isolated the faulted cable and brought ten customers back on. However, the underground cable was damaged and needed to be replaced. The line crew is currently installing a new underground cable.
2. **Development Projects:**
 - a. George Read Village: We've made significant progress on this project. The developer provided electric load information for the proposed buildings, which required design changes. We completed the design and sent our comments to PWWR. Currently, our engineering team is working on the cost estimate.
 - b. 65 S Chapel St—The Continental: The developer has provided electric loads for the proposed building. We have finished the design and are working on our comments for PWWR and cost estimate.

Police

1. **UD Graduation:** This past weekend, NPD assisted with the University of Delaware commencement ceremonies. The events were orderly with no significant issues reported.

2. **Community Engagement:** On Tuesday, members of the Department participated in a Law Enforcement Appreciation Day at Downes Elementary School. Several interactive displays were presented by NPD including our Crime Scene Unit, Police Motorcycles and Command Post. The event was very well attended by Downes students and staff.
3. **Police Intern:** On Wednesday, May 29, a student intern from the University of Delaware began an eight-week internship with the Department. The student, a Junior criminal justice major, will work with each of the operating units within the department along with police ride-alongs to gain an awareness and understanding of municipal law enforcement in the City of Newark.