

Below is the weekly report for the two weeks ending today, June 14, 2024.

Items for Newsletters:

1. **Payment Card fees:** This week, residents and customers were advised that beginning on July 15th there will be fees added to services paid by credit and debit card. Also, we will be adding the feature of pay by phone for tax payments as part of this change. All payments by echeck, cash and check will not have a fee associated with it. However, if a tax payment is paid by phone, regardless of how it's paid, there will be a fee of 50 cents added to the traditional fees. Parks and recreation fees will absolutely begin on 7/15. However, we're waiting on the vendor for a definitive date for the governmental services.

Fee breakdown:

Parks and Recreation fees: 4% on credit and debit cards. Cash, check, ach transfer: no fee

Taxes, permits, business licenses and general billing: 3.95% on credit and debit cards, or \$2.50 whichever is greater. Cash, check, echeck: no fee. Tax payments paid by phone will have a 50-cent transaction fee on top of the aforementioned fee.

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. **Summer Parking Rates:** Reduced parking rates go into effect on June 16 and will remain until August 15. During this time, on-street parking will be \$1.25/hour and off-street parking will be \$1.00/hour.
4. **City newsletter:** To sign up for the City's email newsletter, [click here](#).

Public Works and Water Resources

5. **UDon't Need It? Student Move Out Program:**
We had another successful year conducting our City of Newark and University of Delaware student move out program. Last Friday and Saturday sales brought in over \$10,000, accomplishing the goal of encouraging recycling/reuse as well as keeping our City clean following student move out.
6. **UD Water Main Work – Academy Street Closure:** The University of Delaware's contractor for Building X successfully completed the necessary water main improvements on Academy Street this week. The work area has been temporarily patched and final road restoration will be completed after the new entrance on Academy is completed. City crews took advantage of the closure and detour to address a problematic water service to UD's Pearson Hall. We will need to

return to Academy Street to address a separate water issue that was identified while repairing the Pearson Hall water service. We plan to return to Academy Street in the coming weeks to make final the water main repairs under a separate planned closure of Academy that will be required for Delmarva Power to complete their Delaware Avenue gas main replacement. Additional information regarding Delaware Avenue work is provided below.

7. **Street Patching – West Park Place:** West Park patching between Indian Road and Orchard Road is complete.
8. **Water Main Replacement – Hanover Place and Dallam Road:** Our contractor, Mumford and Miller, continues work on Hanover Place. The mobilization to Dallam Road has been delayed so that our contractor's crews can finalize permanent paving restoration of the out-of-town locations (Dillwyn Road, Darwin Drive, and McCann Road) where water main replacements were previously completed. Residents and customers have been notified of the planned work and will be notified in advance of any service disruptions as the project moves forward.
9. **Water Tank Painting – Arbour Park Tank:** The City's contractor, World Wide Industries, completed lead paint removal last weekend and have begun interior and exterior coatings of the Arbour Park tank. We anticipate having all coating work, final disinfection and bacteria testing complete in the next week.
10. **American Public Works Association (APWA) Annual Event and Tour:** Last Thursday, Public Works hosted a tour of our South Well Field Treatment Plant as part of the annual American Public Works Association (APWA) Blue Rocks event. APWA is a non-profit organization that supports those who operate, improve, and maintain public infrastructure through advocacy, education, and member engagement. We are very proud of our accomplishments and were very excited to meet with members of other utility companies, state agencies, and local engineering firms to show off our new PFAS treatment system.
11. **Delaware Avenue Right Lane Reconstruction and Delmarva Power Gas Main Replacement:** The Delaware Avenue Right Lane Reconstruction project is scheduled to begin Monday, June 17th and involves the full reconstruction of the right lane of Delaware Avenue. There are two segments of Delaware Ave scheduled to be reconstructed due to premature failure of the subbase and flexible pavement section. The first segment scheduled for reconstruction is between South Main Street and South College Avenue. The second segment extends from Academy Street to South Chapel Street. DelDOT's contractor will begin the first segment while Delmarva Power completes gas improvements in the second segment. Once Delmarva improvements are complete, DelDOT's contractor will follow behind them to complete final road restoration between Academy Street and South Chapel Street.

Planning and Development

1. **Land Use**
 - a. The Planning Commission met on June 4 and took the following actions:
 - i. Voted 6-1 to approve the Comprehensive Plan amendment, rezoning, minor subdivision and special use permit for 515 Capitol Trail.

- ii. Voted 7-0 to approve the rezoning and special use permit for 750 Library Avenue.
 - iii. Voted 7-0 to approve the minor subdivision for 643 Creek View Road.
- b. Staff received the following development plan submission:
 - i. Major subdivision for [124 East Main Street](#) on June 3 to construct two additional floors on the existing Center Square building (first submission).
 - ii. Comprehensive Development Plan amendment, rezoning and minor subdivision by site plan approval for [50 and 54 Corbit Street](#) on June 4 to construct five townhouse-style apartments (Council submission – scheduled for first reading on June 17 and second reading on July 8).
 - iii. Administrative subdivision for [125 and 127 Sandy Drive](#) on June 12 to consolidate two parcels into one (second submission).
- c. Staff issued the following Subdivision Advisory Committee comment letters:
 - i. Administrative subdivision for [125 and 127 Sandy Drive](#) on May 31.
 - ii. Major subdivision with site plan approval for [118, 120, 126 and 129 Lovett Avenue](#) on June 7.
- d. Staff are working to schedule plans that have been reviewed by Planning Commission for Council consideration. The following plans have been scheduled:
 - i. 643 Creek View Road minor subdivision by site plan approval – June 24
 - ii. 750 Library Avenue rezoning and special use permit – July 8
 - iii. 50 and 54 Corbit Street Comprehensive Plan amendment, rezoning and minor subdivision by site plan approval – July 8
 - iv. 30 South Chapel Street Comprehensive Plan amendment, rezoning and major subdivision – July 22
- e. The vacant Community Planner I position is open for applications. The [posting](#) will close June 14.

2. Code Enforcement

- a. Code Enforcement Officers continue to work to close out the legacy permits in Munis in advance of the launch of our new software. Approximately 110 permits have been closed in the last two weeks.
- b. Administrative staff currently are auditing rental registrations in an effort to vet the City's database prior to the transition to new permitting software. Numerous incorrectly classified and unlicensed rentals have been identified. Staff are working to correct the licenses and provide accurate bills to customers.
- c. A Code Enforcement Officer identified a fraudulent electrical inspection sticker placed on a property during a final inspection. The issue has been referred to the State Fire Marshal for investigation.
- d. Fire Protection staff continue to work on the backlog of code-required business inspections. Since it has been approximately 15 years since these fire inspections have been done, a significant number of fire code violations with reinspections being required and unlicensed businesses have been found. Newark Shopping Center, Market East Plaza and Main Street between Library Avenue and Tyre Avenue have been completed. The next phase of inspections will cover Main Street from Tyre Avenue to North Chapel Street.
- e. The vacant Code Enforcement Officer position will be [posted](#) on May 31 and will be open for applications until June 28.

3. **Parking**

- a. Reduced parking rates go into effect on June 16 and will remain until August 15. During this time, on-street parking will be \$1.25/hour and off-street parking will be \$1.00/hour.
- b. The Division welcomed two new part-time Parking Ambassadors who started June 3.
- c. Parking staff have been working with the contractor and property owners regarding pedestrian safety measures and the delivery of the crane for the project located at 132-136 East Main Street. The property owner will be responsible for paying for Lot #4 and on-street parking spaces that are obstructed during the construction period.
- 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. There will be an agenda item on the June 24 Council meeting with an update on the progress made with the first Parking Coordinator hired as requested by Council.
 - 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.

Parks and Recreation

1. **Before/After School Care:** The last day of school was 6/12. Staffing continues to be a challenge, but we made it through. We are grateful to Frosty Paws, the manager at Rita's for donating Italian Ice for end of the year celebrations at both sites on 6/7.
2. **Spring Concert Series:** The final spring concert was held on June 6 on the Academy Building lawn with Abe Ovadia Trio performing. Approximately 40 people attended.
3. **4th of July:** Liberty Day/Fireworks prep continues – vendor registrations, working on getting purchase orders submitted. We are currently up to 13 Food and 14 other vendors for the event.
4. **Recreation Programming:** Recreation staff are working on program and event planning for the fall. Camps are in full swing starting 6/17 with Rittenhouse, Camp GWC and Camp REAL all taking starting/continuing and additional specialty camps. Volunteer training was held after the staff training at the George Wilson Center on 6/5. Our volunteer numbers are rising for both Camp GWC and Rittenhouse. Applications are slowly coming in.
5. **Parks Maintenance:** Parks staff started on setting frames for footers for the swing set at Devon Park. Mowing continues in the parks to the best of their ability with the 2 large mowers currently under repair.

Finance

1. **Payments and Utility Billing** – The student move-out period is reaching its last week for the PUB team. As of June 13, we have completed 1,964 move in, move out, and transfer service orders.

2. **March Financial Report** – The financial report for March is in the final stages of completion. Director Del Grande will be on vacation from 6/17 through 6/24, so we will place it on the Council meeting agenda for 7/8.
3. **Silverblaze** – Payments and Utility Billing will be closed on Monday, June 17th to test the new Silverblaze customer service platform against our utility billing system. Anticipated go-live date is July 23. Silverblaze will provide leak detection notifications and provide more information to our customers with the management of their utility accounts. Once Silverblaze is complete, we will be able to begin work on implementing credit card processing fees for utility payments.
4. **Legislation** – House Bill 127 passed both the Senate and the House as of June 14 and is awaiting signature by the governor. HB127 will allow New Castle County to set a tax rate specifically for the volunteer fire service. Link to the bill:
<https://legis.delaware.gov/BillDetail?LegislationId=130231>

Electric

1. **Outage Report:** On Tuesday, June 4th, we experienced an outage due to a fault on the primary aerial line that feeds Newark High School and the Bus Yard on Wyoming Road that was caused by a bird. This outage affected ten (10) customers and lasted for 2 hours.
2. **North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) Registration:** We are in the final stage of the registration process, with all mandatory documentation prepared and the application duly completed. Newark will facilitate a Reliability First (RF) mock call with ACES, which will take place in the last week of June or the first week of July. Following the completion of the mock call, we will proceed with registering Newark specifically as Under Frequency Load Shedding (UFLS)-Only Distribution Provider (DP).