

Below is the weekly report for the week ending today, July 19th, 2024.

Items for Newsletters:

1. **Parks on Draft:** This year's first Parks on Draft event is tonight at Handloff Park from 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. with Roja & Verde and the Cut Bakes.
2. **Parking:** Reduced parking rates went 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.
3. **City newsletter:** To sign up for the City's email newsletter, [click here](#).

Public Works and Water Resources

1. **Street Improvement Program – East Park Place and Choate Street:** Our contractor has begun work on the recently approved street contract. Curb work along East Park Place has been ongoing this week and the contractor will move to Choate Street within the next week. The curb crew will complete their work before the milling and paving crews come in at a later date. East Park and Choate have been prioritized to complete ahead of student return in the fall. Notices for driveway obstructions are given to residents in advance of the work.
2. **Speed Hump Pilot Study:** Temporary speed humps were deployed to two pilot study areas last week, Madison Drive and Country Club Drive. These locations have a long history of speed related complaints and other traffic calming attempts. We expect to have the humps out for up to 5 weeks while we work with NPD to gather speed and other data on driving habits with and without the humps. We have delivered notices to those residents directly adjacent to these roads to ask for feedback. A link is also provided on our website under 'Newark News' to solicit feedback.
3. **Water Main Replacement – Hanover Place, Tyre Avenue, Dallam Road underway, moving to Briar Lane:** Our contractor, Mumford and Miller, continues restoration work on Hanover Place. Work has begun along Tyre Avenue to take advantage of the reduced traffic while students are gone for the summer. This work will require lane closures along Main Street and full closure of parts of Tyre Ave. Lane closures and detours will be signed accordingly. A second crew is working on Dallam Road. Crews plan to mobilize to Briar Lane as early as Tuesday July 23 to begin preparations for water main replacement. Residents and the pool staff at Nottingham have been notified of the work and will be notified of any service disruptions as the project moves forward.
4. **Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation:** Insituform will continue to install liners in the sewer along the Christina Creek near Barksdale Road. Cleaning and televising of our interceptor (large mains) through the STAR Campus is now underway. The cleaning and televising will guide the next round of repairs if defects are identified. We have coordinated with UD and all residents and businesses have been notified of service disruptions.

5. **Delaware Avenue Right Lane Reconstruction and Delmarva Power Gas Main Replacement**
***Work Underway*:** The Delaware Avenue right lane reconstruction project is currently underway 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.
6. **Water Tank Painting – Louviers Tanks:** Our contractor continues repainting the interior of Louviers Tank.
7. **Free Water for a Year initiative:** Our final \$1000 winner has been selected. While the free water initiative is complete, we still welcome any surveys to update our database. Newark Water customers are encouraged to complete the online survey at this link: <https://newarkde.gov/lead>. The data we collect will help complete a required inventory of service lines and reduce operating costs for the water utility.

Planning and Development

4. Land Use:

- a. The Division welcomed Katya Raskin as the new Planner I on July 1. We are happy to have her on board!
- b. Planning Commission met on [July 2](#) and considered the final proposed zoning regulations for businesses related to adult-use marijuana is on the agenda for final recommendation to Council. This item is scheduled for first reading on July 22 and second reading and public hearing on August 12.
- c. Staff spent extensive time finalizing and submitting to New Castle County the required draws and associated supporting documentation for the 49th Year Community Development Block Grant Program for 2023-2024, which closed on June 30. Processing of initial applications for the Home Improvement Program for the 50th Year CDBG program allocation is underway. Staff also contacted previous applicants with application deadlines for the 51st Year CDBG and Revenue Sharing Programs as that application period currently is open. For more information about grant eligibility and a link to the application form, please visit our website at <https://newarkde.gov/323/CDBG-Revenue-Sharing-Programs>.
- d. Staff presented the following items at the July 8 Council meeting:
 - i. Rezoning and special use permit for 750 Library Avenue, which was approved 7-0.
 - ii. Comprehensive Development Plan amendment, rezoning and minor subdivision by site plan approval for 50 and 54 Corbit Street, which was approved 7-0.
 - iii. Waive bid and CIP budget amendment for the purchase of body worn cameras for the Parking Division, which was approved 7-0.
- e. Staff received the following development plan submission:

- i. Major subdivision to construct a five-story mixed use building at [141 East Main Street](#) on July 9 (third submission).
 - ii. Minor subdivision to subdivide two lots into three and build one new single family house at [261 and 263 South Chapel Street](#) on July 15 (second submission).
- f. Staff issued the following Subdivision Advisory Committee comments:
 - i. Comprehensive Development Plan amendment, rezoning, major subdivision by site plan approval, and parking waiver for [339, 341 and 349 East Main Street](#) on July 17. This project is tentatively scheduled for the September 3 Planning Commission meeting.
- g. A conditional offer has been extended and accepted for the vacant Community Planner I position with a tentative start date of August 5.

5. Code Enforcement:

- a. Certificates of Occupancy were issued for seven townhouse style apartments at 16 Benny Street.
- b. Code Enforcement Officers and the Fire Protection Specialist have closed out an additional 108 legacy permits in Munis in advance of the launch of our new software. Due to the compressed timeframe the Division has available to get this completed before the launch of the new software and the high volume of work due to construction season, staff are reaching out to a contractor to look to get third party assistance to get this completed.
- c. EPL configuration is almost complete with a total of 119 processes built into the "Live" environment. Staff are working to finalize code language to be entered into the system and working with the Tyler Custom Report Team to finalize custom documents in the system. Director and Deputy are working with the Tyler Project Management team on a Go Live date to organize final training sessions with the staff which will be slated for early to mid-September. This training will be detailed and will require long periods from the staff to ensure Go Live.
- d. Code Enforcement vacancies in process include the following:
 - i. Interviews for the vacant Code Enforcement Officer position were held on July 18. Six candidates were interviewed, and the panel currently is reviewing which individuals to move to reference checks.
 - ii. Administrative Professional Stephanie Porter will be retiring effective July 31. We thank her for her over 25 years of service to the City and wish her well in retirement! The posting for this position went out to internal candidates only and will close on July 31.

6. Parking:

- a. Sections of Lot #7 (the lot behind Starbucks, Funtivity, and Helen's Sausage House) will be closed on Monday, July 22 and Tuesday, July 23 for preliminary site work for the 141 East Main Street development project.
- b. The City's paving contractor has informed Public Works that they will not have the capacity to do a supplemental contract for 2024, which is what was going to include the budgeted repaving in portions of Lots #2 and #3. These projects will therefore be rolled into the City's 2025 paving contract and the 2024 funds will be requested to carry over into 2025.
- c. Public Works repaired a sinkhole at the entrance to Lot #7 off Haines Street – the Division greatly appreciates their assistance!

- d. Staff have submitted the signed contract to Axon Enterprises to begin the process for the body worn camera project for the Parking Division. This contract and related budget amendment were approved at the 7/8 Council meeting.
- e. Staff received an estimate for the cost of additional repeaters and related items for the Parking Division radio replacement project and are moving forward with the changes to get the project completed.
- f. Parking vacancies currently in process include the following:
 - iii. The second Parking Coordinator position that was approved in the FY2024 budget with an August 1 start date closed on June 21. Seven applicants were submitted to HR and five have accepted interviews that have been scheduled for July 25.
 - iv. Interviews for part-time Parking Ambassador were held on July 11. Of the five applicants scheduled for interviews, two were no-shows. Out of the three interviews conducted, two candidates were selected to move to reference checks. The [posting](#) is open until filled.

Finance

1. **Accounting:** Staff is working on the 2024/2025 Annual Tax bills. We're in the early-staging portion and plan to have the bills mailed out by the end of the month. Tax bills are mailed to both the mortgage companies and the property owners regardless of whether their tax payments are made by their mortgage company or not. Bills reflect a tax increase of 7.5% (new rate is \$1.0551 per \$100 of assessed value) and are due September 30th. More information can be found on this link: [Real Estate Taxes | Newark, DE - Official Website \(newarkde.gov\)](#)
2. **Audit:** The 2023 financial audit has been completed. We have scheduled the audit for presentation to Council at the August 26th meeting.
3. **Budget:** Internal budget hearings for 2025 commenced on Friday, July 11 and continued through this week. City manager and the finance director will be presenting a budget overview to Council on August 19.
4. **Payments and Utility Billing:** SilverBlaze, the customer portal for our utilities is scheduled to go live on September 17. Existing customers who have an account already registered with Customer Connect will not need to re-register, but will be required to renew their payment information, including autopay and budget billing. As we get closer to our launch date, information will go out to our customers informing them of the switch. One large benefit of SilverBlaze is that customers will once again be able to set leak-detection notifications, which is a feature we lost when we switched from CustomerConnect 2 to CustomerConnect6.
5. **Information Technology:** We have added two new pages to our website for any security researchers or members of the public to report any potential vulnerabilities in our systems (security.txt file). Staff created a new mailing list named vulnerability@newark.de.us that will be used for these scenarios. When something is reported, IT staff will create a security helpdesk ticket to research and potentially mitigate the reported vulnerability. The two pages can be found here:

<https://newarkde.gov/.well-known/security.txt>
<https://newarkde.gov/security.txt>

This suggestion came from one of our CISA reviews. While the pages don't look like much, it is a commonly known location that researchers know. Google, Facebook, Microsoft all had it at the same directory as well. More info here: <https://www.cisa.gov/news-events/news/securitytxt-simple-file-big-value>

Parks and Recreation

1. **2025 Budget:** Director Martinson and Deputy Director DeBruin met with the city manager and finance staff regarding initial 2025 Operating and CIP budget requests
2. **Recreation Staff:**
 - a. We have received 25 applications for the vacant Recreation Supervisor position. Interviews are scheduled for next week.
 - b. Staff are working to develop themes and special guest/trip/project ideas for Safe Kids Camp which is scheduled for August 12th through the 16th.
 - c. Vendor registrations continue to trickle in for upcoming events.
 - i. 64 registrants for Community Day / 13 performer/demonstrations
 - ii. 2 for Turkey Trot
 - iii. 5 (4 craft/1 resale) for Santa's Secret Shoppe
 - d. Summer camps held this week included: Camp GWC, Rittenhouse Camp, Cooking Camp (Breakfast, Brunch and Buns), Basketball Camp, Football Camp, Chess Camp
 - e. Cancelled the second session of Camp REAL at Lader Creek due to low enrollment. Tried to add additional session to Dickey park but after surveying participants with an option to move there were not enough registrants. Session 1 concluded on 7/12 at Dickey Park.
 - f. The pools were open all week except for 7/12 due to the weather, with both being crowded each day due to the heat. Additional lifeguards were hired and we are still accepting applications.
 - g. The George Wilson Center is staying busy with facility reservations both inside and outside at the pavilion
 - h. We are preparing for the start of the school year and before/after school care at Downes and West Park beginning Tuesday, September 3. Parents packet and manuals have been updated and we are going to begin pushing registration and hiring new staff.
3. **Maintenance Staff:**
 - a. Lewis Park tennis court refurbishment begins July 18 and will last approximately 10 days (weather dependent). After that Fairfield Crest tennis court, Lumbrook Park tennis court and the George Wilson Center basketball court will follow for refurbishments.
 - b. Fairfield Crest Park's new play piece is completed and open for all to enjoy.
 - c. One big mower is back up and in action

Electric

1. **Outage Report:** On the evening of July 16th, a storm caused a trip and reclose on the 34kV circuit that supplies power to the East Main substation. Customers served by this substation experienced a brief power blip around 9:33 pm. During the storm, another 34kV circuit that supplies power to the Wyoming substation had a breaker operation due to damage on Delmarva Power's 34kV line, which had fallen onto our 34kV circuit. We had to initiate an outage on our 34kV line until Delmarva Power repairs their 34kV line. However, the Wyoming substation was supplied by another 34kV circuit, so customers served by this substation only experienced a brief power blip.