

## DEPARTMENTAL WEEKLY REPORTS

**February 19, 2010**

### Police

A street robbery occurred on Saturday, February 13<sup>th</sup> around 2:05 a.m. The two victims were walking along Hillside Road near Apple Road when a car stopped along side of them. The passenger engaged the victims in conversation, but then told them not to move and implied he had a gun. The driver approached the victims and patted down the pockets of both. He removed a cell phone from one victim, got back into the car, and drove off. The victims were able to provide a vehicle description and registration number.

About 20 minutes later, a Newark Police Officer on patrol saw the car, a 2008 Toyota Corolla, on Elkton Road near Amstel Avenue. The officer stopped the car, and the occupants were identified as the suspects in the robbery. Both were taken into custody.

The victims, two 19 year-old University of Delaware students, were not injured.

The Defendants:

Howard B. Johnson, Jr.	12/26/87 (22 years)	299 Seacroft Drive, Dover, DE
Earl Holt	02/27/84 (25 years)	72 Willington Way, Dover, DE

Neither are University of Delaware students, however, both were in town attending a dance at the University of Delaware.

Both were charged with one count of Robbery 1<sup>st</sup> Degree, one count of Attempted Robbery 1<sup>st</sup> Degree, and Conspiracy 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree. Both were released on unsecured bond after making an initial court appearance.

On Wednesday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, at 1:00 a.m., Newark Police Officer James Skinner observed a vehicle exiting the rear parking lot of the Deer Park Tavern. The vehicle appeared to attempt to turn on southbound Elkton Road but instead turned onto the railroad tracks. The vehicle then continued to travel south on the tracks. Officer Skinner activated his emergency lights and siren in an attempt to alert the driver that they were driving on railroad tracks. Officer Skinner also alerted the Police Department of the dangerous situation. At the same time, the train-crossing gate began to close and a train horn could be heard. Officer Skinner ran to the vehicle shouting for the occupants to exit before the train struck. Two people exited the vehicle seconds before the train crashed into it. Officer Skinner could smell alcoholic beverages on both the driver and the passenger. Both parties stated they had been drinking at the Deer Park Tavern. The driver, Jennifer Murphy of Massachusetts, was arrested and charged with driving under the influence and several motor vehicle charges.

## **Planning & Development**

### **Planning:**

Time was spent this week preparing materials for the upcoming March 2, 2010 Planning Commission meeting. The Commission will be considering the following items:

- A. A major subdivision and parking waiver for the proposed University of Delaware Barnes and Noble bookstore.
- B. A request to add Continental Avenue to the list of streets exempt from the Student Home Ordinance.

Time is also being spent gathering materials and working on the proposed New Center Village Report to the Planning Commission.

### **Community Development:**

Planner Mike Fortner reviewed bids for two Home Improvement Program projects this week.

### **Parking:**

Of course, this week was mainly occupied with follow-up and related activities regarding snow removal at our parking facilities.

### **Code Enforcement:**

The Department investigated a kitchen fire in a unit at O'Daniel Avenue. The tenant was placed in another apartment until repairs to the unit can be made.

Footings are being poured at the 108 E. Main Street site.

Tenant fit out for Formal Affairs is ongoing at 257 E. Main Street.

## **Public Works**

### **Survey Crew**

- Updated Page 48 of the Detail Standards regarding pipe trenching and replacing pavement crossing trench, and revised the digital copy of the Detail Standards to incorporate the new drawing.

### **Field Operations**

### **Refuse:**

- Worked with Street crews on snow removal.

## Streets:

- Street crews worked on snow removal from recent storms.
- Street crews loaded and hauled snow from Main Street.
- Street crews assisted Parks Department with snow removal.

## Electric

The contractor for the utility pole relocation for DelDOT's Elkton Road Project is back after a week off because of the blizzard. They will be using heavy equipment to move the snow covering the work areas. This is a necessary expense to keep the project on schedule which will be passed on to the state.

Engineering met with the University and various project managers to work out the final details of pole and circuit locations for the chiller plant and Science Center project on Lovett Avenue. Construction is to start January 2011. The City needs to relocate a pole line which feeds the existing chiller plant before groundbreaking can commence. The new feeds to the buildings are scheduled to be built by April 2011.

Engineering also met with University and City Police about camera systems to be installed. The University Police have several locations where they want to use City owned utility poles. The City Police are implementing a camera system also, so overlaps are to be avoided and details about sharing the cameras are being discussed.

Kershaw Substation had an issue on Tuesday. The battery bank started drawing excessive current which means at least one battery out of sixty had gone bad. After replacing a cell, the issue remained. The other batteries are not testing bad. The batteries were taken offline and the power for the relays was switched to another battery bank. A contractor is being scheduled to use sophisticated equipment to identify the bad cells.

The line crews continued to work on the aftermath of the snow storm last week. There are still lots of calls about tree limbs on services and many customers are repairing attachments to houses after which crews restring the service wires.

## Water & Wastewater

This week I met with staff from the DNREC SIRB Office to discuss options regarding Well 16 and the affects of the Syntec fire many years ago. We are focusing on additional treatment at the south well field as the preferred option to allow us to continue using the well.

I also met with the City review team for the Curtis Paper Mill Road Park Master Plan. I asked the Water Plant Operators that were available to meet with us so that they could give input to the project and see what we are up to. It was a good meeting.

I have been in contact with the DNREC Sub Aqueous branch to discuss the permit for the Sewer Line Creek Crossing project. I am working with an individual that I have had previous occasions to work with so I expect that the process will progress smoothly and that we can move the project along towards construction. I also met with one of the residents along whose property line the sewer line easement runs. I was able to answer his questions and gather his concerns so that I can address them to the best of our ability during the construction phase.

## **Parks & Recreation**

### **Administration – Charlie Emerson:**

The Curtis Mill/Old Paper Mill Road Park Master Plan committee met to review three (3) concept plans that will be presented to the public for comment at a public workshop scheduled for Thursday, March 4 from 7 – 9 p.m. in the Council Chamber.

The recent snow storms have kept our parks personnel busy with nothing but snow removal for the better part of two weeks. Please, no more!!

I spent time this week preparing for a presentation I will give on Newark's Trails at next week's Delaware Recreation and Park Society's annual conference. The second day of the conference will focus on trail networks and connectivity on a local, regional and statewide basis.

Last Tuesday's Conservation Advisory Commission meeting was cancelled due to bad weather conditions.

### **Recreation – Joe Spadafino:**

We spent considerable time cancelling and rescheduling activities due to inclement weather.

We coordinated the Whee Wanna Play Day at George Wilson Center.

We are working on marketing for upcoming programs and events. We have designed summer camp, Nefosky Walk, and spring program posters and have been working on a new logo for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Fireworks.

Staff is working on summer programs and camp ideas and meeting with Joe about upcoming programs.

We are working on designing new event sponsorship and vendor packages for 2010 events. This includes new sponsorship levels as well as increases in vendor fees.

The George Wilson Center was closed on Wednesday, February 10 and Thursday, February 11 due to the snow. We were able to reopen on Friday, February 12 thanks to the efforts of the parks staff.

We're happy to welcome Arthur Wicks, a University of Delaware intern student. He will be with us for approximately fifty hours assisting with the Pomeroy Newark Railroad kiosk design project.

Parks & Horticulture:

Snow removal all week!!

Kudos go to Tom Zaleski for arranging with our City Hall neighbor to allow us to park City vehicles in their garage in the overnight hours during the recent snow storms. This enabled us to plow the City Hall parking lots much more efficiently and be ready for the business days to follow.

KRS/mp