

DEPARTMENTAL WEEKLY REPORTS

January 18, 2013

Parks & Recreation

Administration & Planning

Last Tuesday we held a meeting with our Redd Park Trail improvements project group to continue planning for Phase V.

We had the bid opening for the Curtis Mill Park Smoke Stack Demolition last Tuesday. Five (5) bids were received. A recommendation to award will be forwarded to the City Manager this week.

Last Wednesday Tom, Rich, Joe and I met with Roy and Tom (Public Works and Water Resources) to discuss the past relationship and cooperative environment between the Parks and Public Works Departments so that we can realize a smooth transition with the merger of the Public Works and Water Departments.

I attended a Subdivision Advisory Committee meeting last Thursday to discuss two new subdivision plans.

I attended Monday's City Council meeting to present a recommendation to award the Skate Spot Design/Build contract and the 2013 Tree Removal, Pruning and Creek Clearance Contract. Both contracts were approved.

Tom conducted park inspections and prepared related maintenance work orders.

Tom and Rich continued working on 2013 parks material and supply orders.

We started preparing a contract document and specs for the installation of concrete pads at the small shelter at Dickey Park and the shelter at Wilson Park. The project is being funded through the CDBG program.

Rich began researching a replacement mower for one of our 16' cut mowers and preparing contract documents. Funding to do so is in the 2013 CIP.

We completed a review of 2012 purchase orders and let the Finance Department know which should remain open and which can be closed.

Parks Maintenance

We are making good progress mulching park and horticulture areas.

We completed these maintenance work orders: replaced two parking blocks at Dickey Park, did tree and shrub pruning at various sites, added wood carpet (safety surfacing) to play equipment at various locations, replaced a backboard on the horseshoe pit at Dickey

Park, installed a traffic island sponsor sign at island #2 on South Main Street, and tightened loose fittings on a play unit at Fairfield Park.

The crew cleaned off several tennis court and parking lot areas of leaves and Sweet Gum seed balls throughout park system.

The crew and recreation staff committed time in our equipment and supply storage area cleaning, purging and reorganizing.

Recreation Services

Paula continued to interview and hire new staff for the Before and After Care program to replace two (2) leaders. She has a training and orientation session scheduled in early February.

Paula and Joe met with a representative of Delaware Special Olympics to discuss the possibility of partnering for a Challenger football game.

Paula sent out letters to last year's Adult Softball and Summer Volleyball league coaches pertaining to our 2013 programs. She also corresponded with last summer's camp counselors inquiring about their return for the upcoming seasons.

Sharon has been cleaning and reorganizing the loft of the parks maintenance building. She has been writing PSA's and Channel 22 requests for upcoming programs and events. She also attended a Memorial Day Parade Committee meeting. Several changes are in the works for the event, but the result of the changes should make for a smoother flow of activities the day of the parade.

Tyler is recruiting staff and finalizing plans for the next session of the CATCH Afterschool Homework Club at Downes Elementary scheduled to start in February.

Tyler worked on finalizing summer camp programs for 2013.

The recreation staff has been working on bid specifications for apparel, equipment and supplies for 2013.

Joe has been working on a Tony Hawk Foundation Grant proposal for the Skate Spot project.

Joe is working on information for the Community Connection meeting for Redd Park Trail project and attended a meeting about the project.

Police

Burglary Arrests

Newark Police have arrested 19-year-old Mikeal J. Stone of Newark and 18-year-old Kalin Jackson of New Castle for two residential burglaries occurring in late October.

On October 22nd, 2012 between the hours of 1 p.m. and 10:50 p.m. an unoccupied home in the unit block of South Fawn Drive in Newark was burglarized. During this burglary the suspects forced open a rear door to the home and once inside removed a computer and jewelry from the home.

On October 23rd, 2012 between the hours of 6 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. an unoccupied home in the unit block of Sue Lane in Newark was burglarized. During this burglary the suspects gained entry to the home via an unsecured rear window. Once inside they removed a computer and other electronic devices.

NPD detectives located pawn records indicating that Stone sold jewelry stolen from the South Fawn residence to a local jewelry store. NPD Crime Scene Technicians located fingerprints at the South Fawn residence tying Jackson to the crime. A witness reported seeing two subjects matching the description of Stone and Jackson in the area of Sue Lane immediately before the burglary. Detectives also learned that Stone was arrested in 2009 for burglarizing the same home. Neither Stone nor Jackson was known to either homeowner.

Graffiti Arrests

Ongoing graffiti investigations by the Newark Police Department Street Crimes Unit have led to the identification and arrest of Felix J. Smith of Newark for his role in graffiti vandalism throughout the City of Newark and University of Delaware Campus resulting in thousands of dollars of vandalism. The investigation resulted in a January 2nd search warrant of Smith's home where evidence was located linking him to the crimes.

As a result of the investigation, Smith has been linked to graffiti vandalism in 58 locations throughout the City of Newark and an additional 13 locations on the University of Delaware Campus, resulting in over \$8,100 in damaged property. Smith was arrested on January 10th, 2013 by members of the Newark Police Department and University of Delaware Police Department on 162 criminal charges. He was released from custody pending his appearance in Alderman Court #40 in late January. The arrest of Smith is the latest in the Newark Police Departments ongoing investigation into the identification and arrest of graffiti vandals. In the past two years NPD have arrested 34 such vandals.

Copper Thefts

On January 7th a victim reported that an unknown suspect removed \$200 worth of copper wire and a \$400 vacuum pump from his unsecured work vehicle while it was parked on Interchange Boulevard sometime between January 5th and January 7th.

On January 10th the Newark Country Club reported that an unknown suspect cut copper from four air conditioning units on the property sometime between January 5th and January 7th. The damage to the AC units is estimated at \$2,000 and the stolen copper is estimated at \$400. No suspects have been identified.

On January 12th at approximately 1:20 a.m. an unknown suspect broke out a window at Tecot Electric located on Interchange Boulevard and removed copper and Romex wire valued at \$550. No suspects have been identified and the investigation has been turned over to the Criminal Investigation Division.

AC Unit Thefts

On January 9th four AC units were stolen during the evening hours from a renovation site located at 82 E. Cleveland Avenue. A suspect has been identified and the investigation is ongoing.

City Manager's Office

Community Affairs Officer

I spent a considerable amount of time preparing for the Wine and Dine planning meeting, which is scheduled for Tuesday, January 22 at 2 p.m. at the Mayor's law office.

I have been assisting the Conservation Advisory Commission and DNREC with their Anti-Idling campaign event scheduled for Wednesday, January 30 at 10:00 a.m. at Newark high School. DNREC is leading the event. Invitations were e-mailed this week.

At Carol Houck's request and with the assistance of Mark Farrall, I have put together a postcard from the Police Department's Special Operations Unit to be mailed to residents and landlords in the Haines and Lovett Streets area regarding behavior in the area and the consequences associated with that behavior. I am waiting for the appropriate paper to arrive and those will be printed and ready to be mailed.

I wrote and distributed the press release regarding City Council's resolution for Rich Lapointe. It has been posted to the website.

I placed an ad in the Newark Post in this Friday's issue for the two remaining Comprehensive Development Neighborhood Workshops scheduled for next week.

I continue to receive updates from the departments regarding changing Elkton Road to South Main Street and have spent time updating city web pages with the South Main Street address.

I followed up with a phone call to Rob Kallasse at Spark Magazine regarding Restaurant Week. He was not available, so I left a message.

I spent time looking in to advertising on Facebook for DNP events. It looks like an inexpensive and effective way to advertise. I think we will try it out for Wine and Dine and see if I can't squeeze some advertising in for Restaurant Week.

I spent some time getting posters together to be posted around the work place regarding fighting the flu and sign that you may have the flu. The information has been posted in the restrooms.

Planning & Development

Planning

On Wednesday afternoon I joined Carol, Electric Director Rick Vitelli and Assistant Electric Director Sam Sneeringer in a meeting with the principals of The Data Centers to discuss details of the development on the STAR Campus.

This week considerable time was spent preparing for the upcoming Planning Commission meeting (February 5, 2013). Agenda items include:

- 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 on the site and replace them with 13 townhouse style apartment units.
- 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.
- A rezoning, major subdivision, special use permits and a parking waiver for the property located at 230 E. Main Street (Newark Shopping Center) requesting development approval to renovate the existing shopping center, and build a bank with a drive-through, and 250 two-bedroom apartments and associated parking garage.
- Discussion on the City's "Plan for Planning" regarding the update of the Comprehensive Development Plan.

On Thursday morning, I hosted and Development Supervisor Mike Fortner attended the Subdivision Advisory Committee meeting to discuss the Campus Walk and the Cottages at Suburban Plaza developments proposed for the March Planning Commission. Follow up letters were sent to the developers summarizing the comments from the meeting.

On Friday morning, Parking Administrator Marvin Howard and I joined Public Works and Water Resources Director Roy Simonson, Code Enforcement Supervisor Steve Wilson, Code Enforcement Officer Brian Sargeni, and Engineering Assistant Mike Sitek in a meeting with the developer and engineer for Kate's Place to discuss the Lot #4 entrance off Main Street.

On Friday, Mike and I met with Hal Prettyman to discuss a potential future development proposal for a downtown property.

On Monday, I met with Carol, Acting Finance Director Wilma Garriz and Customer Service Supervisor Larissa Jones to discuss the City's utility deposits policy.

On Monday night, City Council acted on the following Planning and Development Department items:

- Approved the award of Contract #12-07 Center Street entrance to Lot #3 with 8 parking spaces to be re-evaluated in January 2016; and,
- Defeated the proposal to add a new zoning district for Adult Community 80/20 (The motion to consider it failed for lack of a second).

The Department notes, as Mr. Markham mentioned at the January 14th Council meeting, that New Castle County Council will consider the rezoning of the Stopyra Tract (Kirkwood Highway and Possum Park Road) for “Newark Town Center” at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, February 12th on the first floor of the City/County Building, 500 North French Street.

Time was spent this week creating promotional materials, including posters, flyers, and an e-newsletter, for the upcoming Comprehensive Development Plan Neighborhood Workshops to be held on:

- January 17th (Northern Neighborhoods – All parts of Newark north of West Main Street/Nottingham Road and north of the CSX Railroad) at the George Wilson Center.
- January 22nd (Southern Neighborhoods – All parts of Newark south of the Amtrak/SEPTA Railroad) at the Newark Senior Center.
- January 23rd (Central Neighborhoods – All parts in between the CSX and Amtrak Railroads) at the Newark Free Library.

All workshops are scheduled from 4-7 p.m.

This week Mike helped collect before and after photos of developments along East and South Main Streets for a video produced by the UD’s Institute for Public Administration “Complete Communities” featuring the City of Newark’s best practices for downtown development.

On Wednesday afternoon, Mike will attend an American Planning Association webinar at WILMAPCO on “Zoning for Small Businesses.”

Economic Development

On Wednesday evening, DNP Administrator Ricky Nietubicz staffed and I attended the Downtown Newark Partnership Board meeting. The new entrance to Lot #3 from Center Street with eight additional parking spaces, new committee members for the Merchants Committee and Design Committee, the Newark Twilight Criterion Bike Race scheduled for August 10th, and upcoming events and utility deposits were among the items discussed.

Several meetings were held this week regarding downtown involvement in the upcoming NCAA Women’s Basketball Tournament games scheduled for March 24 and 26, 2013. On Thursday afternoon, Ricky and I participated in a teleconference with the Delaware Sports Commission regarding collateral for the event. On Tuesday morning, Ricky and I joined Mayor Funk in a meeting with UD officials to discuss the tournament logistics.

Ricky also performed follow-up work this week on ways to promote downtown during and through the NCAA Women’s Basketball Tournament by offering participants, officials and fans discounts and specials at local businesses. The goal is to “ring registers” at the same time that we ensure tournament participants have a good time, support our merchants, and want to come back in the future.

Parking

Ricky and Marvin staffed the Parking Committee meeting. Items discussed included:

- Free parking promotion during holiday shopping season and determined that there was a need to restructure next year's promotion to avoid the issue of University of Delaware staff (who would otherwise have to park in remote lots) taking up spaces intended for customers in order to have free parking closer to their work buildings. Suggestions included special validations for municipal lots, time limits, and restricted hours for the free parking. The committee agreed to revisit the issue this summer in preparation for the next holiday season. The DNP Merchants' Committee will also discuss the matter and work with the Parking Committee so that a recommendation can be made to the City Manager in early fall.
- The Committee also endorsed "Option 1" for the Lot #3 entrance contract which provides an additional 8 spaces.

On Tuesday afternoon, Marvin attended the Traffic Committee meeting.

Code Enforcement

This week Code Enforcement Supervisor Steve Wilson met with Bill Pressley concerning building security for the court and City Hall lobby.

Time was spent reviewing bid proposals for demolition of the Curtis Paper Mill Smoke Stack. A recommendation was made to Parks.

Steve attended a meeting on the old Chrysler administration building concerning its current use and questions on building codes.

The Bloom footing and foundation is almost complete. They should start setting steel later this week.

Public Works & Water Resources

Bids were opened for the lagoon dredging project. The apparent low bidder is Merit Construction. I am in discussion with them to make certain that they are capable of doing the work.

I have been working with staff on the street program and the handicap curb access project. We are working on several issues that I believe will streamline the process and could result in cost savings/ability to complete more projects.

I have finished my final review of the condominium trash and recycling collection contract. Tom, Dave, and I are investigating other options in our operations that we believe will result in improved efficiencies, more on those later.

We received numerous proposals for our engineering services contract. We will be reviewing them to allow Council to make a selection at a February Council meeting.

We have been working on several projects with the Parks Department to address issues on trails and other park facilities.

Mike Sistik, Tom and I have been working on development reviews. We are working out the kinks of a combined department review process.

Tom and Ed have been discussing activities in the garage. I am encouraged that they will be able to come up with some proposals on how to more effectively address our vehicle maintenance needs.

Tom and I are working with Kelley on storm water related issues including the mowing of detention basins. In that regard we are working with the Parks Department to develop a consolidated citywide mowing contract.

Electric

The line crews are working on the pole line construction for the permanent service to the Bloom site which involves installing five poles, primary metering, and four gang operated switches on two 34kV circuits. They have installed the poles and two switches, but muddy conditions have slowed progress. The crews have also started exchanging the Christmas banners on Main Street for non-seasonal banners.

Engineering met with University representatives on the STAR Campus substation project and the University rate agreement. Engineering also met with Elster project managers to go over all the meter programs and parameters necessary to implement the smart metering project.

The electricians are working with the line crews to bring a service, lights, and receptacles to a new pole shed at the Maintenance Complex.

CSH/mp