

DEPARTMENTAL WEEKLY REPORTS

February 22, 2013

Electric

The line crews have been fixing any hot spots found by infrared scans and replacing stolen ground wires on poles. They have also started installing fault indicators on circuits in underground neighborhoods which will decrease restoration times when cables fail.

The electricians have been working on running power and communication cables to the new security station in City Hall while the engineering and meter technicians are getting accurate phase identification in apartment complexes to enhance the outage management part of the smart metering system.

Engineering has been working on the smart meter project and also reprogrammed all of the University's primary meters to comply with the new energy agreement.

Parks & Recreation

Administration & Planning

Delaware State Parks is updating their regional trails map which includes Newark's nearly 17 miles of trails. I committed time reviewing the map and provided suggestions and updates relating to our trails.

I committed time this week preparing materials for reimbursements of grant funds for the Curtis Mill Park project. We are currently reviewing the Preliminary Plans to provide comments back to our consultant for preparation of the final design plans.

Next Monday, February 25, we will hold a pre-demolition meeting with the contractor who will take down the Curtis smoke stack.

I began reviewing materials previously collected pertaining to Community Gardens. Additional research will be completed and a report submitted to the City Manager sometime in March.

We have scheduled a public workshop on Wednesday, March 13 at 7 p.m., at the Wilson Center to gather input on the design of the two skate spots we will construct later this year.

Tom conducted park inspections and generated related work orders.

Tom continued working on the upcoming DRPS Conference, planning for the 2013 National Trails Day event, and working on the Main Street Tree Pit project.

Rich finalized the contract for the purchase of a replacement 16'cut mowing unit.

Rich attended computer training classes last week.

Tom started coordinating for tree work to be done as part of the 2013 Christina River Clean Up within Newark.

In a state-wide effort to monitor trail use at key locations, Delaware State Parks placed Trail Counters on the Hall, Pomeroy and Redd Park Trails. The attached report shows the monthly totals, hourly and daily averages and total for 2012. Interesting and exciting to note that the Hall Trail was the most heavily used and the Pomeroy South (section in the City), while only open 113 days, had the third highest daily use average. See attached report. The fruits of our efforts are paying off. It's great to see so many people out and being active!

Parks Maintenance

We continued stump grinding operations throughout the park system.

The crew continued tree pruning operations at several sites.

The crew worked on or completed these maintenance tasks: adjusted and added wood carpet (safety surface) at several play units, picking up downed limbs/branches throughout park system, repaired a section of post and rail fence at the reservoir and checked and cleaned the grease traps at the Wilson Center.

Recreation Services

Paula designed a new monthly payment tracking system for the Before and After School programs to assist with payments received, letters for non-payment and late fees.

Paula completed certificates and evaluation packets for the participants in the Pint Size Basketball and Socceros programs.

Paula added four new registrants into the After School programs at Downes and West Park. One spot was filled from the waiting list at Downes bringing the total enrolled to 70 and West Park's enrollment is now at 34.

Sharon has been preparing for the USAF Brass Quintet Concert, scheduled for Tuesday evening at 7 p.m. at Newark High School.

Sharon prepared for and attended a meeting regarding parking for the 2013 events, which included representatives from the U of D and Planning Department. Parking for all 2013 parks and recreation events have been coordinated.

Sharon also attended the Newark City Council meeting where she was honored to receive a Jefferson Award. She would like to thank the City Council and staff for nominating her for such an honor.

We had a good start to the CATCH Afterschool Homework Club at Downes Elementary. We have 18 students registered for the program.

Tyler and Paula met with Joe to discuss summer program planning.

Tyler completed the GWC attendants schedule for March. The center continues to stay busy with rentals scheduled every weekend.

The Whee Wanna Play Day (school's out) program was held at the George Wilson Center on Friday, February 15.

Joe has been working with Grindline Skateparks to prepare a community/public meeting to discuss designs of the skate spots at Handloff and Phillips Parks.

The parks and recreation staff met with Sue Oliver to discuss IT assets and needs.

Joe spent time working on a design concept for the plaza area for Curtis Paper Mill Park plan.

Joe is updating the City website to include information about the Skatespot project and preparing a power point to market our search for additional donations and contributions for the project.

Police

On Monday, February 18th at approximately 1:35 a.m., the Newark Police responded to the 100 block of East Delaware Avenue for a report of an armed robbery which had just occurred. The 24-year-old male victim, a Wilmington University graduate student, reported that he was walking eastbound on East Delaware Avenue when he was grabbed from behind. The victim reported that the unknown suspect demanded his money while placing what felt like a gun to his face. The victim was then pushed to the ground and three additional suspects began to repeatedly punch the victim in the head and face. The suspects stole the victim's wallet and cell phone. The victim was able to break away from the suspects, who then fled the area. The original suspect was seen getting into a dark four door sedan and fleeing the area. The suspect with the gun was described as a light skinned black male, approximately 20 years old with a thin building and loose braids. No surveillance video is available at this time.

On Thursday, February 21st, a Deputy US Marshal conducted a security review of City Hall and the Alderman's Court. The Deputy's report of security improvements will be provided to the City Manager for review.

Planning has begun for this year's Saint Patrick's Day weekend. Since the holiday falls on a Sunday this year, grant money will be used to fund an increase in downtown patrols on Saturday, March 16th and Sunday, March 17th.

Planning & Development

Planning

Considerable time was spent this week preparing for the March 5, 2013 Planning Commission. The following agenda items will be reviewed:

1. A rezoning, major subdivision, two special use permits and a parking waiver for the property located at 230 E. Main Street (Newark Shopping Center). The applicants are requesting development approval to renovate the existing shopping center, and build a bank with drive-through window service and 220 two-bedroom apartments and associated parking garage.
2. A rezoning, major subdivision and site plan approval of 10.99 acres from the MI (general industrial) zoning to RM (garden apartments) on the northern section of the plan; and rezoning of 8.70 acres from BC (general business) to RM (garden apartment zoning). 4.70 acres of the combined site is to remain BC and is the access way to the proposed developments as well as Suburban Plaza, WSFS Bank and the Home Depot. The proposal consists of a total of 168 lodge and cottage cluster style apartment units.
3. A major subdivision of the .781 acre property at 107-131 New London Road. The applicant is requesting major subdivision approval to construct 12 townhouse style apartments at the site. The property is currently zoned RM (garden apartments).
4. Discussion regarding the update of the City's Comprehensive Development Plan.

Some time was spent this week preparing for the April Planning Commission. Projects proposed for consideration are: Campus Village, 63 – 67 W. Cleveland Avenue, Kershaw Commons and a parking waiver for 46 E. Main Street

Two applications for special use permits were also received this week: one for alcohol sales at 170 E. Main Street (Café Ole) and one for a customary in-home occupation in Twin Lakes.

This week Development Supervisor Mike Fortner completed a grant application to WILMAPCO's Transportation Alternatives Program for shared lane markings for bicycles to be installed on E. Main Street between the Pomeroy Trail and South Main Street.

Considerable time was spent preparing for the Planning Commission Workshop on housing to be held on Tuesday, February 26th, at 7 p.m. at the Newark Senior Center, 200 White Chapel Road, Newark, Delaware.

Economic Development

Planner Ricky Nietubicz worked with Planning Aide Brian Laws and Lane McLaughlin on an updated Downtown Newark Map & Guide, with the goal of having the new product in hand in advance of the NCAA Women's Basketball Tournament

coming to Newark in late March. They began exploring ways to improve the web interface, so that it can be more frequently updated as businesses move into and out of Newark, and can be interactive with users as a future improvement to the website. We will continue to post a pdf version of the Map & Guide brochure (now expanded to include South Main Street) available on our website and accessible via QR code.

This week Ricky also worked with Community Affairs Officer Dana Johnston on Wine & Dine restaurant follow-ups and event details.

This week The Greene Turtle was enrolled in the Gift Card program.

Community Development

This week 2013 Revenue Sharing agreements were sent to recipients.

Parking

Kate's Place started the demo in Lot #4 on Monday so the entrance into that lot from Main Street is now closed. The Parking Division will closely monitor that lot for traffic flow and add signage to direct customers to our Lot #3, and make alterations as necessary to ensure safe and convenient use of the remaining parking inventory.

Code Enforcement

Nine citations were issued over the weekend of 2/16-2/17.

As noted above, the demolition is continuing at Kate's Place. The alley between Kate's Place and Panera Bread has been closed and the parking lot fence has been installed to limit access to the construction site.

Work continues on constructing the security booth in the entrance of the Municipal Building.

Public Works & Water Resources

The Water Resource Agency (WRA) at the University has been coordinating projects to remove dams from the White Clay Creek to allow anadromous fish to access spawning grounds that have been blocked by dams and other obstructions.

Funding has been received for the design and removal of the first dam. The WRA is in the process of applying for another grant for the design and removal for the second and third dams. The third dam is a City of Newark sewer crossing in the vicinity of McKees Lane. The White Clay Creek downstream of the concrete encased sewer crossing has incised and created a barrier that fish cannot pass. This project would eliminate the barrier and in the process correct what will become, in the long term, a maintenance requirement of the city to protect the sewer line from being undermined.

As the project moves forward I will be developing a capital project to account for any match that may be necessary.

We met this week with a concrete contractor to discuss our contract strategy and see if there are any steps we can take to make our process better. We are targeting the end of March to have the curb ramp project on the street. The street program will follow shortly thereafter.

We interviewed individuals for entry level laborer positions in the water and street divisions of the Public Works and Water Resources Department. We have a nice selection of candidates to choose from.

We met with residents of the Hunt at Louviers this week to discuss the storm water basin retrofit projects. I visited the site subsequent to the meeting to investigate some concerns and will be distributing my thoughts along with some supplementary information that was requested.

I have asked staff to investigate what we can do to get our trash collection vehicles back on the road more quickly. Maintenance issues have created the need for overtime when we have equipment in the shop and have to complete the routes with fewer pieces of equipment than would normally be used. The current \$3,000 limit on credit card purchases appears to be one of the problems as we routinely have part needs that exceed that amount. There may be other issues as well.

Finance

Finance completed the final insurance applications for the policy year 2013-2014. There were more applications required this year as Willis will be marketing the upcoming policy year coverage.

Reviewed renewal service agreement with our insurance broker Willis. Made recommendations to Carol to waive the bid process and renew the agreement for another two years.

Customer Service, IT, and Electric Departments worked on figuring out if, how, and when meter reading and billing changes can be made regarding UD's request for a supply rate change before new ESA starts June 1st.

Customer service is heavily involved in the smart meter project, developing flow charts, custom rules for Meter Sense, reviewing claim forms, and attending meetings.

Accounting is preparing for the December 31, 2012 year-end financial statements audit. Working on final year end entries for the CAFR, audit schedules and CAFR preparation will follow.

Alderman's Court

This past week in Alderman's Court we have held three Court sessions and one DUI case review session. This resulted in 88 Arraignments and 70 Trials.

We also had an afternoon DUI case review session during which 2 case reviews plead during the case reviews and 7 were continued for Trial to a later date.

CSH/mp