

## DEPARTMENTAL WEEKLY REPORTS

**March 1, 2013**

### Parks & Recreation

#### Administration & Planning

I conducted park inspections and prepared related maintenance work orders.

I completed a second review of a regional park and trails map that State Parks is creating. The map will include nearby state and county parks and trails as well as Newark parks and trails network.

Last Wednesday I met with U of D representatives to discuss a connection to the Pomeroy Trail at their General Services building/property.

Last Thursday Carol and I attended the State Engineers Week Banquet and Awards program. Pennoni, our consultant for the Pomeroy and Newark Rail Trail project, received a Conceptor Award for the design, engineering and construction oversight for the project.

I'm continuing my review of the Preliminary Design Plans for the Curtis Mill Park project.

On Monday of this week we met with the contractor who will take down the Curtis smoke stack. Demolition work should begin this Thursday and be completed within two weeks with the cooperation of Mother Nature.

Tom attended a two day Arborist Workshop at the Hagley Museum last week.

Tom committed time working on these projects: DRPS Conference, National Trails Day Event and the 2013 Christina River Clean Up scheduled for Saturday, April 6th.

Tom met with a representative of the White Clay Creek Wild and Scenic organization to discuss the removal of invasive species in the riparian buffer at the Curtis Mill Park site and possible funding assistance for the planned meadow and wetlands planting.

Tom spent time coordinating this weekend's clean up along the Christina Parkway being done by Alpha Pi Omega from the University of Delaware.

Rich continued working on the Parks Maintenance Cost Tracking program.

Tom reviewed plan for a proposed development.

#### Parks Maintenance

The crew continued with stump grinding and tree and shrub pruning operations throughout park system.

The crew completed or worked on these work orders: adding wood carpet under play and swing units, replaced basketball goal and net at the Wilson Park and painted the bathroom partitions in a restroom at the Center, cleaned the fins on the wall mounted heaters at City Hall and Wilson Center, and modified the entry gate to tennis court at Wilson Park for Electric Department access to replace burnt out lights.

We repaired turf ruts for Electric Department at a property on Lehigh Road.

### Recreation Services

Paula followed up with summer volleyball and softball teams regarding their return to the leagues for the upcoming season. She also contacted summer camp counselors to confirm their availability.

Paula posted summer counselor and lifeguard positions on the University of Delaware website.

Paula met with a yoga instructor regarding the possibility of offering youth classes.

Paula reviewed the 2013 Camp Guide and continued to work on summer brochure updates. She completed facility requests for those programs that are confirmed and continues to work with fitness instructors on finalizing summer schedules.

Sharon prepared for and held the USAF Heritage Brass Quintet concert on Tuesday evening for a group of approximately 150 individuals from the community. The concert went very well and the Newark Post did a nice job of covering the event.

Sharon has been working on the 2013 Summer Camp Guide which will be distributed in early March.

Sharon attended the Memorial Day Parade Committee meeting on Tuesday night.

Tyler worked on proofing the Summer Camp Guide and summer program planning.

Tyler met with the dance instructor to go over costume orders and other details for the end of year recital which will occur in May.

Joe and Sharon met with Public Works & Water Resources about logistics for the Memorial Day Parade.

Joe conducted a recreation supervisors' staff meeting to discuss activities in their areas of supervision.

Joe is organizing the skate spot community meeting scheduled for Wednesday, March 13, at the George Wilson Community Center.

Joe is organizing the Summer E-newsletter and meeting with staff about summer programs and activities.

## Police

On Wednesday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, the Newark Police Department Special Operations Unit and the Delaware Division of Alcohol & Tobacco Enforcement conducted a compliance check at Mojo's on Main Street. DATE agents made four fictitious ID arrests and members of the Newark Police Department charged three suspects for underage consumption of alcohol just off the Mojo's premises.

On Monday, February 25<sup>th</sup> at approximately 8:55 p.m., the Newark Police responded to South Chapel Street, north of Continental Avenue, for a report of a strong-armed robbery. A 21-year-old female victim, a University of Delaware student, reported that she was walking southbound on South Chapel Street with her phone in her hand. The victim observed an unknown black female walking towards her. The victim stated that the female then started running at her and grabbed her phone out of her hand. The female suspect also tried to steal the victim's purse but was unsuccessful. The female suspect fled the area running between the 700 and 800 buildings of Scholar Drive. A K9 track was initiated with the assistance of a UDPD K9, with negative results. The suspect is described as a black female with a fit build, 20-23 years old, 120-130 pounds, approximately 5'05" tall, wearing all black and a black baseball style hat.

On Monday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, Linda Burns' replacement will begin work. Mrs. Jacqueline Ambrosi worked for a law firm in Cherry Hill, NJ for ten years as an Administrative Assistant supervising office staff. Mrs. Ambrosi served in the United States Navy from 1983-1987. Mrs. Ambrosi speaks fluent Spanish and will be a valuable asset to our Criminal Investigation Division.

Also on March 4<sup>th</sup>, our three new police recruits will begin their training at the Delaware State Police Academy. The 22-week academy training program will be completed on August 22, 2013, at which time the recruits will return to NPD to begin field training.

## City Manager's Office

### Community Affairs Officer

I have spent a considerable amount of time preparing for Wine and Dine the past couple weeks. I had been following up with a potential sponsor of the wine glasses and finally received word that they were going to sponsor the glasses. I ordered the glasses which should be arriving next week. I have been working with the printer of the wine bags for the event and have received approval from the wine bag sponsor on the design. Those have gone to print. I have solicited musicians for the event and have since contracted with several musicians and music groups to perform at various locations in downtown. I have contracted with the balloon vendor to decorate the street for the event. I worked on the design of the posters and postcards with ZZ House. Those have been printed and are in the process of distribution to the restaurants. I am also labeling over 1600 postcards to be mailed out to the DNP mailing list. I am in the process of retrieving menus and wines featured for the event from the restaurants in time to create the program for the day. I will spend a considerable amount of time following up with late restaurants and designing and organizing the program next week.

I attended a meeting with the Skate Spot Committee regarding outreach for donations. I sent out a press release for the Skate Spot Workshop on March 13. I updated the skate spot webpage with the new information.

I have been capturing photos of the Curtis Smoke Stack demolition and shared them on social media and have since been answering questions and concerns about the removal of the smokestack via social media.

I have updated several items on the website for the Finance Department including the property tax rate and business license information.

I have been working with Civic Plus (our website host) to fix an issue with the Report a Concern feature. It was only on the administrative side and did not affect public use. It has since been resolved after a couple weeks of them testing the issue.

Press releases were also sent out for the Comprehensive Development Plan update workshop and the Parks and Recreation Summer Camp and Program Fair.

## **Planning & Development**

### **Planning**

On Thursday morning, I met with AUDG Holdings, LLC to discuss the Cottages at the Plaza project to be reviewed at Planning Commission in March.

Also on Thursday morning, I joined Code Enforcement staff in a meeting with Sue Oliver to discuss CityView and its application(s) for the Division.

On Thursday, Development Supervisor Mike Fortner staffed the Board of Adjustment meeting. A variance was granted for 276 S. College Avenue at this meeting.

Considerable time was spent this week preparing for the March 5, 2013 Planning Commission meeting.

On Tuesday afternoon, the Planning Commission packets were delivered for the March 5, 2013 Planning Commission meeting. 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 Comprehensive Plan amendment, the rezoning, major subdivision and site plan approval of 19.69 acres from the MOR (manufacturing/office/research) zoning to RM (garden apartments) zoning and 4.70 acres from MOR (manufacturing/office/research) to BC for 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. The 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).

This week new plans for the Trader's Alley subdivision, previously tabled by the Planning Commission, were submitted for review. Plans were distributed to the operating departments for comments. The project is tentatively scheduled for May's Planning Commission.

Mike spent considerable time preparing for the Planning Commission's Comprehensive Development Plan Workshop on Housing, "Help Shape the Future of Housing in Newark," held at the Newark Senior Center on Tuesday evening. Topics included:

- Assessing housing needs.
- Current housing stock and homeowner characteristics.
- House Affordability.
- Future housing needs.
- Housing Goals and objectives.

More than 35 people attended the session.

On Wednesday, Planning and Development staff, Parking Division staff and Code Enforcement staff met with Sue Oliver to discuss IT Assessment items.

### Economic Development

On Thursday, I attended the Greater Newark Economic Development Partnership (GNEDP) Steering Committee meeting, and then later that afternoon I attended the GNEDP Mixer at the Courtyard by Marriott - UD

Planner Ricky Nietubicz continued coordinating between DE Sports Commission, DEDO, the merchant community and other stakeholders on promotions for Downtown Newark during the NCAA Womens Basketball Tournament. A rack card design was finalized that will be printed and distributed to teams, officials and ticket buyers during the event, containing details about downtown businesses and special offers from participating businesses. Ricky also coordinated the shuttle service with University of Delaware to get fans back and forth between the Bob Carpenter Center and Main Street.

This week, Ricky began coordination of Main Street Mile fundraising events (guest bartending and the run itself).

On Tuesday evening, Ricky and I joined Mayor Funk at a TD Bank Mixer at their central office. TD Bank is a generous sponsor of many of our downtown events.

Also this week, Ricky continued efforts to build the online/social media presence of the DNP through the Merchant Committee's "February Facebook Friday" Giveaway Program.

Our reach, as measured by the number of people who “like” our page and therefore receive regular updates from it, has increased 12% and continues to climb; this will help us be much more effective in engaging downtown businesses and their customers moving forward, as well as our event promotions.

### Parking

Kate's Place started the demo in Lot #4. The Parking Division has been closely monitoring that lot for traffic flow and continues to make adjustments as needed. The Parking Division has also ordered more signage to help direct traffic.

### Code Enforcement

The estimate was received for replacement of the sprinkler system water flow alarm bell on the front of City Hall. This bell has not worked in 8 to 10 years.

Code Enforcement Supervisor Steve Wilson attended a meeting with staff and the demolition contractor for taking down the smoke stack at Paper Mill Park (old Curtis Paper Mill). Work should begin this week, weather permitting.

This week Steve also attended a meeting on security doors for foyer. Estimates will be coming.

All existing building projects are moving along fine.

## **Public Works & Water Resources**

We opened bids for the Water Main Project on Brook Hill Drive. The bids came in very nicely. There will be a recommendation at the next Council meeting to award the contract to Austin & Bednash in the amount of \$184,398. We had budgeted \$300,000 for this project.

We have been corresponding lately with the State regarding our activities with Sediment Erosion Control. We are a delegated agency and have regular reporting requirements that we need to comply with. That we have accepted delegated authority allows us to review, approve and administer the developers sediment and erosion control plans and projects. Had we not accepted the delegated authority we would have to wait for the state or other authority to review and approve our projects. Having this authority allows us to make the development process one that is in our control versus waiting for someone else to grant the approval.

We have started inspecting sidewalks for defect correction. We will be using various means to communicate what we are doing with the residents and businesses in the inspection area. I have been working with Mike Clark to streamline the process so that we inspect and have the deficiencies all corrected in the same year. Previously this has been a two-year process.

We are continuing with our coordination to complete the storm water retrofits at the Hunt at Louviers.

We continue to coordinate with the UD who is leading the effort to close the old UD landfill. Through past use we have interest in and are responsible for a share of the expenses associated with this work.

### **Finance**

The Customer Service Department is now fully staffed as Latrice Nichols is back from her maternity leave.

The Accounting Department's new temporary Accountant , Donna Bent, is working well in assisting staff with year-end, month-end, and other general accounting work.

Accounting, IT, and Code Enforcement staff met regarding the progress and implementation of the upgraded version of CityView.

Met with Roy Simonson and Debi Keeley regarding review and possible reclassification of billing codes for sewer customers.

Gathered information from DEMEC members regarding interest rates provided to electric customer deposits. This is to supplement research done on industry standard electric customer deposit interest rates. A recommendation will follow.

Customer Service Supervisor Larissa Jones successfully completed building 29 custom letters in the Harris utility billing system, a previous IT function. This will eliminate the manual process and staff time involved in generating letters.

### **Alderman's Court**

This past week we only held two Court sessions because of the Presidents' Day holiday. This resulted in 60 Arraignments and 37 Trials processed. We also had 4 Case reviews, 3 which were rescheduled for trials along with 7 prisoners transported for the Department of Corrections for sentencing, bail reviews, etc.

### **Electric**

The line crews continued working on hot spots found by infrared scans, replacing stolen ground wires on poles, and fixing the streetlight circuit on Townsend Road after a contractor bored in conduit. They have also been working on the Wilson Farm and Kate's Place projects and have been checking the poles needed for the smart meter project for grounds and power.

The electricians have been working on the new security station at City Hall and have been working on SCADA issues at substations.

Engineering has been working with the SCADA developers and substation equipment technical support on communication issues. Engineering has also been designing and

managing upcoming and ongoing projects and is helping the University interview candidates for an electrical supervisor.

CSH/mp