

DEPARTMENTAL WEEKLY REPORTS

March 22, 2013

Planning & Development

Planning

On Thursday afternoon, I met with Scott Mason, president of Chapel Street Players to discuss facility improvements.

On Thursday afternoon, I joined Code Enforcement, Assistant Chief of Office of State Fire Marshall John Rudd and representatives of the Trader's Alley developer to discuss the Code and access issues for that project.

This week the application for a special use permit and minor subdivision at the Park n Shop Shopping Center for a Wawa with gas pumps was received and distributed to staff for comment.

This week an application for a Special Use Permit for a home occupation at 300 Edjil Drive was received and distributed.

This week Council packets for Campus Walk, the Newark Shopping Center, and the Cottages at the Plaza were prepared and delivered to the City Secretary's Office.

Considerable time was spent this week preparing for the upcoming Planning Commission meeting (April 2, 2013). The following items are on the agenda:

1. A minor subdivision of .469 acres at 65-67 E. Cleveland Avenue in order to replace the existing two unit duplex residential building with four (4) townhouse style apartments.
2. A parking waiver for the property located at 46 E. Main Street. The applicants are requesting an 11 space parking waiver.
3. A Comprehensive Development Plan amendment, and the rezoning and major subdivision of .457 +/- acres at 63 W. Cleveland Avenue and 60 New London Avenue to rezone the parcels from BN (business neighborhood) and RM (residential multi-family) respectively to BLR (business limited residential), create one tax parcel and construct six (6) townhouse style apartments, with associated parking and access ways.
4. A minor resubdivision of a portion of the Kershaw Commons subdivision located at Kershaw Street and E. Cleveland Avenue in order to remove parcel lines, reconfigure parking spaces, and construct five (5) townhouse style apartments.
5. Comprehensive Development Plan update discussion.

Considerable time was spent reviewing the minutes of the March 5, 2013 Planning Commission meeting.

Some time was spent reviewing materials for the Curtis Mill Park project.

Some time was spent preparing for the upcoming Board of Adjustment meeting.

This afternoon, Development Supervisor Mike Fortner attended an American Planning Association Webinar titled "Dynamics of Effective Pedestrian and Bicycle Committees".

Mike and Ricky met with a UD graduate student on developing a report on how the City can use "Crowd Funding" to fund small scale public projects such as public art and bicycle racks.

Considerable time was spent researching revisions to the Zoning Code and developing a draft of the Housing Chapter for the update to the Comprehensive Development Plan.

On Tuesday, Mike sent out an e-newsletter to over 200 recipients promoting the upcoming Planning Commission Workshop which focuses on Economic Development – March 26th at 7 p.m. in the Council Chamber.

Economic Development

On Wednesday evening, Ricky staffed and I attended the DNP Board meeting (March 13th). Among other agenda items, the board reviewed and approved the draft budget for the upcoming year's activities.

This week Ricky received and began distribution of the new Downtown Map and Guide brochure in advance of the NCAA Women's Basketball Tournament and Wine & Dine activities at the end of this week and the beginning of next week.

Also this week, Ricky refined editorial content for the Delaware Today supplement with the writer and editor, assisted editorial staff with setting up several interviews with downtown business owners, arts organization leaders and other downtown stakeholders. We're looking forward to a slightly different format to the special section this year that we expect to showcase Downtown Newark very well.

On Monday evening, I joined you at the New Castle County Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner, during which Mayor Funk was honored.

Community Development

This morning, Ricky completed a loan signing for a Home Improvement Program.

Parking

On Tuesday, Parking Administrator Marvin Howard attended the Traffic Committee meeting.

The Parking Division is working to have the loading zone meters installed by the Wine & Dine event to be held on Saturday, March 23rd. Poles for the other new meter locations will also be installed by the event, but unfortunately the meter housings, mechanisms and heads on order for these additional locations will not be received until the end of the month. They will be installed as soon as they are received.

Public Works & Water Resources

Mike Clark and I have been working on the sidewalk inspection program. We have adjusted the schedule to finish the program in one year versus two. We are providing an opportunity for residents to have our city contractor complete the work for them at the bid prices in the contract. As a side bar, we are still conducting follow up sidewalk reinspections from last year's program to determine if the work has been completed.

Spring leaf clean-up is going well. We are using both single man collection vehicles.

In our continuing efforts to streamline our operations we are in the process of closing the transfer station on Wednesdays so that we can dedicate all of our manpower to Green Wednesday (we are also looking at options to move Green Wednesday to another day, more on that in the future reports). In addition to these efforts, we have increased the scrutiny with which we are inspecting the trash trucks so that we limit the trash that can contaminate the yard waste.

Our annual spring water main flushing has been significantly modified by the NCAA Basketball tournament. We will do our work after the games have concluded to the maximum extent possible.

We have been meeting with the Honeywell meter team all week discussing the Meter Sense software. I continue to be encouraged by what I see and hear.

Jim Angelo has completed the street condition assessment. We will use the data in house (we did not contract with our consultant this year) to help us put together next year's street repair program.

We are looking at options to contract out the collection of metal waste. We often find that what we have to pick up is already being collected by scrap collectors so we might as well see if we can engage someone to collect all of what has been called in.

We continue to coordinate the work at the Hunt at Louviers storm drainage ponds. The schedule is as follows:

- Last week of March – spray herbicide (one day activity)
- Week of April 8 – mobilize to begin grading
- April 22 – bring in plants to plant Zones 1 and 2
- Friday, April 26 and Saturday, April 27 – volunteers on site to plant Zone 3
- Monday, April 29 – final clean up, stabilization, demobilization

Electric

The line crews have continued installing the smart meter radio network devices on the streetlight arms. They have also installed a pole at the Bloom site for another temporary service.

The meter technician has been working on CT services, while the electricians are mostly working on general maintenance items at South Well Field and Curtis Water Plant. They also installed outlets for truck block heaters at the Phillips Warehouse.

Engineering and electricians attended a 5-hour continuing education class on the National Electric Code needed yearly to maintain their licenses. Engineering also spent three days with MeterSense engineers and other city personnel defining and delving deeply into processes necessary for billing and smart meter utilization. MeterSense is the meter data management software which makes the vast amounts of data from the smart meters usable.

Parks & Recreation

Administration & Planning

Last Wednesday we held a kick-off meeting for the skate spot project with Grindline, the design/build firm, staff and our volunteer committee. That evening we conducted a public workshop to get input on the design of each of the two facilities. More than 30 people attended many offering really good ideas for design features. Grindline will now take that information and create drawings for each site.

We continued our discussions with Public Works and Water Resources pertaining to the concept of having the automated refuse trucks and operators empty park trash containers as part of their regular collection routes.

I committed a good deal of time on matters relating to the Curtis Mill Park project.

I began working on the anti-idling grant reimbursement request to be submitted to the Delaware Energy Office.

Tom reviewed quotations for the concrete pad installation under picnic shelters at Dickey and Wilson Center. The project is being funded through the Community Development Block Grant program.

We conducted interviews to fill our seasonal park maintenance positions. These employees will work with our full-time crew cutting grass, doing landscaping tasks and various other maintenance tasks.

We're coordinating with the PWWR Department for the removal of a portion of the macadam at Phillips Park in preparation for the construction of the new Skate Spot at that site.

Tom met with a representative from the Lang Development Group concerning locating play units within designated play areas at Twin Lakes Town subdivision.

Tom attended the Christina River Clean Up meeting. He is busy coordinating the clean-up for the Newark section of the creek. This year's clean-up is scheduled for Saturday, April 6.

We have made arrangements with the State Department of Corrections (DOC) for female inmates work with us on certain park maintenance and grounds clean-up projects.

Thank you to the Electric Department for replacing the lights at the Wilson Park tennis courts.

Parks Maintenance

The horticulture crew continued cut backs of lirope and ornamental grasses at various sites. DOC inmates assisted with this project.

The crew completed these building maintenance tasks this week:

- Cleaned the grease traps at the Wilson Center
- Completed ceiling repairs and refinished two beds in the cell block (Police Annex)
- Repaired a urinal in City Hall
- Relocated office furniture in the Finance Department

We transported materials to the Wilson Center for the Recreation Camp Fair, conducted park trash removal, removed the fall event banners from the light poles along the Hall and Pomeroy Trails, placed wood carpet (safety surface) under play certain units, conducted tree and shrub pruning at several sites, repaired several picnic tables and blew off leaves and debris from tennis and basketball courts.

Recreation Services

Paula attended the Junior Basketball League championship game and handed out trophies to end the season.

Paula conducted an orientation for a new staff member at the Before and After Care program. She also continues to re-check personnel files in preparation for the upcoming licensing inspection for Downes Elementary School on March 18. Staff is assisting in cleaning up and preparing children's files for the inspection as well.

Paula started setting up interviews for summer camp counselor positions and continues to contact interested volunteers on their availability.

Paula completed a ball fields and Rittenhouse Camp inspection with the Tom. Work orders were submitted based on the inspections.

The recreation staff helped prepare for and worked the Camp Fair conducted at the Wilson Center. The First Annual Camp Fair was a success with 48 families and 110 people attending.

Sharon prepared the events vendor package for release on March 18. She has also been coordinating volunteers and logistics for upcoming events including the Egg Hunt, Nefosky Walk & 5K Run and the Community Clean Up.

Tyler prepared supplies and worked the Summer Camp Fair held at the GWC on March 16.

A tennis Play Day was held at GWC in conjunction with the Summer Camp Fair to promote our upcoming lessons scheduled to start within the next week. Tyler is finalizing details for tennis classes with instructors.

Tyler participated in a Delaware Recreation and Parks Society Executive Board conference call.

Tyler worked on promotional flyers for summer camps and activities.

Joe attended the Curtis Paper Mill Park meeting about flood plain alterations for the project.

Joe organized the skate spot public meeting for March 13. The meeting was well attended and we received good feedback from the skateboarding community.

Joe attended the skate spot kick off meeting with Charlie and several City departments who will be involved with the project and Grindline the design/build contractor for the project.

Joe filmed an interview session with Comcast Newsmakers. It will air in April.

Finance

Larissa attended the Honeywell project meeting for Harris Northstar from Monday to Wednesday this week.

Online Utility Exchange, the program that Customer Service will rely on to verify customer identity when establishing service, will be implemented soon. This will also assist in complying with the Red Flags rule.

Focus is still on the 12/31/12 CAFR completion, financial statements audit fieldwork starting on March 25, and insurance renewal for policy year 4/1/13-4/1/14.

Alderman's Court

The weeks are getting busier and busier. This past week we held three full Court sessions. This resulted in 101 Arraignments, 65 Trials processed, 3 Case Reviews, 4 Building Code Trials and 3 other events from prison such as bail reviews and one probation violation hearing.

Police

Officers were very busy during the course of the Saint Patrick's Day weekend. On Saturday, March 16th, in addition to regular patrol officers, an additional 22 officers worked on grant funded overtime. During the day, officers made the following arrests: 6 Disorderly Conduct, 28 Underage Consumption of Alcohol, 26 Open Containers of Alcohol, 28 Disorderly Premise, 5 Littering, 1 Noise Violation, 2 Resisting Arrest, 1 Misrepresentation of Age, 1 Fictitious Identification, 2 Special Event Permit Required, 1 Trespass on Railroad Tracks, 1 Driving Under the Influence, and 10 Traffic Violations. On Sunday, March 17th, an additional 18 criminal arrests were made for violations such as: Noise, Underage Consumption, Driving Under the Influence, etc.

On Saturday, March 23rd, certain parking meters will be bagged for the Newark Wine and Dine event. Officers will be patrolling Main Street and South Main Street on foot during the event.

Preliminary planning will begin next week for "Newark Day" which is scheduled for June 1st.

All officers are currently scheduled for the spring firearms qualifications.

City Manager's Office

Community Affairs Officer

This week I have spent a considerable amount of time tying up last minute preparations for Wine and Dine. Glass, wine pouch, and program distribution to the restaurants will happen Friday.

Ricky Nietubicz, Planning and Development, and I reviewed and commented on the Delaware Today outline for the Downtown Newark June supplement.

I worked on the text for the small section we have been given in University of Delaware's New Student Orientation handbook regarding city services and information. It was finalized and submitted to UD.

I wrote and distributed a press release about Newark's new Finance Director.

I've been working with Parks & Recreation Department on preparing a press release regarding the trash removal policy in the parks. I am waiting for some information from them in order to finalize it.

I have begun the process for developing the Summer 2013 Municipal Newsletter. All department heads have been sent previous articles and asked to update and/or submit new ideas by April 1.

CSH/mp