

DEPARTMENTAL WEEKLY REPORTS

May 17, 2013

Planning & Development

Planning

On Thursday, I attended the Employment Law Seminar at the Riverfront sponsored by Young, Conaway, Stargatt and Taylor.

On Thursday, Development Supervisor Mike Fortner traveled to Dover to meet with officials from DelDOT on the Newark Comprehensive Plan, and attended the "Spring Showcase" for Transportation Planning and Engineering.

Considerable time was spent on the Department's Capital Improvement Program submittals.

On Monday evening, City Council took the following action on Planning and Development Department related items:

- A. Approved the minor subdivision of the 0.459 acre property at 65 and 67 E. Cleveland Avenue to demolish the existing building and replace it with four townhouse style six-bedroom apartments.
- B. Approved a parking waiver fee reduction for 46 E. Main Street.

Considerable time was spent preparing for the upcoming Planning Commission meeting. Tentative agenda items to be reviewed are:

- A. A rezoning and major subdivision for .457 +/- acres at 63 W. Cleveland Avenue and 60 New London Road. The applicants are requesting rezoning from BN (business neighborhood) for the West Cleveland Avenue parcel and RM (residential multi-family) for the New London Avenue parcel to BLR (business, limited residential), and subdivision approval to create one tax parcel out of the two parcels to construct six (6) townhouse style apartments with associated parking and access ways. A Comprehensive Development Plan amendment is also requested to accommodate the proposed development.
- B. A major subdivision approval to construct a four story building with ground and second level parking and 12 upper floor two and three bedroom apartments at the location of the Trader's Alley's existing surface parking lot and attached to the Trader's Alley building fronting on Main Street. In addition, the required BB zoning special use permit for the upper floor apartments is being requested.

- C. The rezoning from BL (limited business) to BB (central business district), major subdivision and special use permit to construct a six story mixed use building for the property located at One South Main Street (in between the Trabant Garage and Bayard Sharp Hall).

Some time was spent preparing for tomorrow night's Board of Adjustment meeting. The following agenda item will be reviewed:

- A. The appeal of Roland & Regina Roth, – 274 Beverly Road for the following variance:
- a) Sec. 32-9(c)(2) – lot coverage. Maximum lot coverage shall be 20%. Plan shows 22.1%, requiring a 2.1% variance.

Some time was spent on Newark Charter School construction issue clarifications and agreement compliance.

On Tuesday evening, Planning Commission and Planning and Development Department staff participated in a workshop on the roles and responsibilities of the Planning Commission. The following items were discussed:

- Role of the Planning Commission in Newark – A “Home Rule” City.
- Relationship between Staff and the Commission.
- The Comprehensive Plan in Newark.
- The Development Review Process in a Nutshell – Annexations, Rezoning, Subdivision Review, Special Use Permits, and Parking Waivers.
- Municipal Code Amendments – The Heart of Planning.
- The Legal Framework for Planning in Newark and Delaware.
- The Commission's Public Hearings.

Some time was spent on the unfinished Pike Park subdivision plan and associated subdivision regulations.

Considerable time was spent on the RFP for a rental housing market analysis and associated issues.

Tonight, Mike will conduct a Neighborhood Workshop for the update of the Comprehensive Development Plan with residents and stakeholders of the New London Community. The workshop will be held at St. John's AUMP Church, 77 New London Road beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Economic Development

On Tuesday, Mike helped coordinate and Planner/DNP Administrator Ricky Nietubicz assisted with Newark's Bike to Work Day Celebration. The event was very successful in gathering support for the bicycle community downtown. Ricky provided live updates via the Downtown Newark Partnership Facebook and Twitter pages.

The deadline for Food & Brew (to be held on July 27th) restaurant registration was this past Monday. Considerable follow up reaching out to the management/owners failing to register for participation has been performed and will continue. We are very excited to have the Greene Turtle on board – it will provide an anchor for the end of South Main Street and will allow us to advertise the Municipal Building parking lot as another place where patrons can park, and then utilize the shuttle service to get to the rest of the event.

Ricky met with Rick Ferrell and Vandell Hampton to learn about the First State Community Loan Fund and small-business lending options that may be valuable to our businesses, particularly those who are in the process of expanding, moving or who are new to Downtown Newark.

Community Development

This week Ricky received an application for the CDBG Home Improvement Program and is in the process of determining eligibility and scope of work for an applicant at 404 Webb Road.

Parking

On Wednesday afternoon, I met with UD Director of Parking and Transportation Services to discuss potential projects and collaboration.

On Friday morning, I joined with Mayor Funk and Carol Houck in representing the City at the Elected Officials Round Table discussion sponsored by the Greater Newark Economic Development Partnership

The change machine in Lot # 6 was stolen last Thursday. The Police Department indicates they are making significant progress in the investigation.

Progress continues on the Center Street entrance to Lot #3 even though weather impact has caused delays.

Ricky began the design process for the new “Newark’s Great, We Validate” stickers. We are hoping to use cling-style logos that can be placed on the inside, rather than stickers that stick on the outside of windows, in order to give them a bit longer lifespan. The new stickers will fit better with our new branding in terms of colors, fonts, etc.

Code Enforcement

Code Enforcement Supervisor Steve Wilson attended a meeting with U/D representatives on the new dining hall project.

C/Os for Lots 20, 27, 28, 29, and 30 in Newark Preserve were applied for.

A new air handling system and air sealing for the evidence room in the Police Department should be starting in a week or two; the equipment is on order. Once the equipment is received, it should take about 5-7 days to complete.

Grass complaints are still coming in. We have had or are having eight properties cut this week.

Public Works & Water Resources

Public Works and Water Resources inspectors have been coordinating with local businesses to discuss the maintenance that they need to perform on their stormwater management facilities.

Mike Clark and Brian Laws have been busy finishing up last year's sidewalk program and performing inspections for this year's work.

Working with Honeywell we have begun the slow roll out of the water and electric meter installation. Now that the mesh network is significantly installed we need to have some meter reads coming back to the City so that we can work with the system and make sure we are ready to go live, if you will. We will slowly ramp up from this point until we have a full crew later this summer putting in the water and electric meters throughout the City.

Bids were opened this week for the Pavement Program. Fontana was the apparent low bidder. We have had them doing work in the City for some time so the reference checks will be easy to perform. We will have a recommendation for the Council to consider at the next Council meeting.

Work continues apace on the second pond at the Newark Water Treatment Plant. Merit Construction has removed about 25% of the material in this pond.

Austin and Bednash has begun the process to install the new water line on Brook Hill Drive. They should be digging next week if they have not already begun by the time that you read this report.

Electric

With help from the Water Division personnel, the line crews pulled a remote camera through a conduit under Chestnut Hill Road to find another smaller conduit intersecting and blocking the raceway. It appears to have been installed long ago by a horizontal bore for DeIDOT traffic controls. The installation likely nicked the primary cables in the conduit which continued to work until failing several weeks ago. Now the difficulty lies in getting DeIDOT to open the road to remove the encroaching conduit and repair the City's conduit.

The line crews finished installing all of the devices possible so far for the smart metering system. There are devices needed to be installed on Delmarva poles for water reads outside of the City and devices needed to be installed on University buildings for fiber optic connections to complete the system.

The line crews also replaced switches on a capacitor bank, installed a switched bank at another location, and installed line hose for a construction crane on Delaware Avenue.

The electricians continued rewiring the substation controls that burned up two weeks ago while the meter and GIS technician are identifying conductor phases and meters in the field for the outage management system embedded in the smart meter project.

Engineering has been occupied with the smart meter project. There is now internet access to all the system components that will eventually read all electric and water meters and their alarms. Engineering is also installing the programs and controls for the switched capacitors that the line crews have been installing.

Parks & Recreation

Administration & Planning

Tom and I observed a couple of trees down in the Christina Creek to determine if we need to remove them.

Most of my time this week was committed to preparing the Department's 2014-2018 CIP.

Merit (Pomeroy Trail construction contractor) made good progress this week on remaining project items.

Pennoni submitted the Project Application for a Nation Wide Permit to the Army Corps of Engineers for the Curtis Mill Park project this week.

Tom conducted park inspections and prepared related maintenance work orders.

One of the requirements set forth by the CORPS for the Conservation Easements on the Pomeroy Trail is to evaluate the two monitoring points and submit a report once each year for the first five years after construction. Tom worked with Pennoni to complete the first evaluation and report. We will do the remaining four ourselves.

Tom and Rich reviewed applications for YBC crew leader position opening and started setting up interviews.

In 2012 Tom worked with State Forest Service, Newark Police and Aetna personnel to gather information for the development of a "Community Wildfire Protection Plan". The Forest Service took that information and created the Plan. We received and distributed the Plan for review. I'm happy to report that the Plan is completed and in place.

Rich committed lots of time coordinating for the annuals (flowers) bed installation along South Main Street/Elkton Road areas. Planting should occur late this week and into next week.

Parks Maintenance

Grass is growing and we are mowing!!

We conducted monthly fire extinguisher inspections at all City facilities and performed various building maintenance tasks.

The crew prepared the annual beds at City Hall and South Main Street/Elkton Road traffic medians.

We set up the stage for Thursday's Spring Concert.

The crew is continuing to complete work at Rittenhouse Park for this summer's Rittenhouse Day Camp program.

We continue to clean and prepare the pools for the summer season.

Recreation Services

Paula sent out price quote information to local bus companies for our summer youth trips.

Paula continued conducting final evaluations with staff in the Before and After Care program.

Paula worked on employment contracts and independent contractor contracts for upcoming summer programs.

Paula completed the final newsletter for the school year for the Before and After Care program and sent it to the parents.

Sharon and Debbie are very busy making final plans for Sunday's Memorial Day Parade and Newark Day scheduled for Saturday, June 1st.

Newark Day performers have been confirmed. This year's headliner will be Country Music Artist Katie Arminger. Thanks to radio station WXCY for their continued partnership to bring up and coming national artists to our Newark Day stage.

The second concert of the Spring Concert Series was held Thursday. Howard Valentine and The Prophets of Love kept the audience hopping and wanting more this week. The next concert to be held on May 16th will feature Ruthanne Ankey, who will be performing a family show featuring a May Pole with lots of audience interaction.

Sharon has also been assisting the Police Department personnel in the coordination of the Guest Bartender Night that will support the Nefosky Walk & 5K Run charities. The event will be held at Catherine Rooney's in Wilmington on Thursday, May 16th beginning at 6 p.m.

Tyler conducted interviews for tennis instructors for the summer season.

Tyler participated in a conference call for the Delaware Recreation and Parks Society (DRPS) to discuss the 2014 DRPS Conference.

Joe continued working with Grindline on the Phillips Park Skate Spot design. He is also working on other potential funding sources to enhance the design.

Joe attended a meeting with Pennoni on the Pomeroy and Newark Rail Trail to discuss the conservation easements and how they function.

Joe attended an Employment Law Seminar at the Chase Riverfront Convention Center.

Joe is reviewing the seasonal personnel manuals for pool operations and camps in preparation for summer staff orientation and training.

Finance

I participated in a meeting with Andrew Haines and our medical/health insurance consultants (Mercer Health & Benefits) to discuss the financial implications of the early medical trends for the 2014 health insurance renewal, the portions of PPACA being rolled out in 2014 and beyond, and other related issues. Mercer will provide updated information in advance of our follow-up meeting, which will be scheduled in June.

Our review of document management solutions continued this week, as representatives from Finance, the City Manager's Office, the City Secretary's Office, and IT participated in a discussion about the City's needs and the solutions offered by Xerox.

Customer Service

The Harris Northstar 6.4 upgrade is complete, and the group is working on various open items with Harris related to the transition.

The "move out" rush is underway for our student population. From Monday, May 13, 2013 through Wednesday, May 15, 2013, customer service handled 468 calls with an average call length of 2:54 and an average wait time of 3:00. Service transfers and move outs are lower than the same period last year, but the rush period has clearly started this week.

Accounting

The Department Directors are drafting CIP budgets this week, which are due May 17, 2013 in advance of preliminary CIP budget meetings scheduled for the week of May 20, 2013.

Alderman's Court

This past week we held three Court sessions and one Case Review session. This resulted in 91 Arraignments, 52 Trials processed, 22 Case Reviews and 1 prisoner videoed from prison.

Police

On Monday, May 13, 2013, the Newark Police obtained an arrest warrant for Michael J. Creed, charging him with Assault 1st Degree and Possession of a Deadly Weapon During the Commission of a Felony. At approximately 1:20 a.m. on May 12, 2013, the Newark Police responded to the City of Newark Parking Lot #1, located at 54 East Delaware Avenue, for a report of a stabbing. Responding officers learned that an argument ensued

between the victim and the suspect in the parking lot, which led to a fight. During the fight, the victim sustained three stab wounds to the chest and abdomen. The victim, a 22 year old University of Delaware student, was transported to Christiana Hospital by private vehicle, prior to police arrival. The victim underwent surgery and is currently listed in stable condition. With the use of surveillance cameras in the area, detectives were able to obtain information on a vehicle that the suspect had been associated with just prior to the fight. Through additional investigation, it was learned that the suspect began to yell towards a group of people in the parking lot; that group contained the victim. The victim approached the suspect, at which time, the suspect was observed leaning into a car and then coming out again. The victim grabbed the suspect by the shoulder and the suspect was seen making punching motions toward the victim. The suspect then ran away and the victim realized that he had been stabbed.

Defendant: Michael J. Creed, DOB 12/09/87 25 years old
1858 Dixie Line Road
Newark, DE 19711

Chief Paul Tiernan commends the men and women of NPD for their quick response the night of the incident, and the outstanding investigative work of Detective Fred Nelson on this case.

On May 12th, Sgt. Michael VanCampen received a national award as a finalist for Police Officer of the Year. The award was presented at a dinner in Washington, DC.

On May 15th, Lt. Feeney and Lt. VanCampen attended the New London Neighborhood Workshop organized by Mike Fortner. The officers responded to traffic and quality of life issues.

Operation Plans have been finalized for the Police Department's role in the Memorial Day Parade, University of Delaware Graduation Day, and Newark Day.

City Manager's Office

Personnel

- Attended a labor law seminar with the department directors; the event was facilitated by our labor counsel Young-Conway.
- Met with residents regarding their ADA concerns pertaining to the curb in front of their home.
- Pulled together colleagues that are involved with the uniforms to further develop a future dress policy that is simple to deploy.
- The ad-hoc committee of employees reviewing document management vendors met with a fourth (4th) vendor; intend to have decision recommendation in time for budget process.
- Attended Council meeting and worked on related personnel matters for the meeting.
- Lou Vitola and I met with Mercer, our benefits broker, to look at 2014 renewal options. These options included self-insurance for healthcare in relation to PPACA (national healthcare reform act) and the pending costs legislated for January 1, 2014.

Community Affairs Officer

I am continuing to work on the Food and Brew Fest.

I disseminated the press release for the Sharrows installation on Main Street, which received a lot of attention on social media and in traditional media.

I disseminated the press release for the Memorial Day parade and ceremony this upcoming Sunday.

I attended the LiUNA training center grand opening with Carol Houck and took photographs and live tweeted it.

I attended the Bike to Work Day event and took photographs and live tweeted it.

I have been working on the city website to update some information, and I am currently trouble shooting an issue that customer service is having with the utility account online form for open/close/transfer of service for renters.

IT

- Projects
 - Cityview Upgrade
 - Project team demonstration of the mobile and portal applications is scheduled for May 16, 2013.
 - Harris Project v6.4 Upgrade
 - Weekend upgrade successfully completed. We did experience several go live issues with the software which is to be expected with any software installation or upgrade. The most critical was with eCare. The vendor has been very responsive with addressing issues as they are being reported.
 - Smart Meter Project
 - A conference call was held this week to discuss the draft business processes between NorthStar, MeterSense, and Elster AMI with the Newark and Honeywell team.
 - There was a meeting held to discuss the export file PMI will be supplying and how Customer Service will import using the Mass Meter Exchange part of mCARE.
- IT Operations
 - Working with the new network engineer to strategize I.T. projects for implementation during the three month engagement. More details will be provided in next week's status report.
 - Working on the I.T. 2014 Capital Budget.
 - Desktop inventory has been completed.
- Other
 - Met with Xerox to discuss their document management system.

CSH/mp