

DEPARTMENTAL WEEKLY REPORTS

August 23, 2013

City Manager's Office

Community Affairs Officer

I spent a considerable amount of time completing the Fall Municipal Newsletter that was e-mailed to residents on Monday, August 19. It, along with the Parks and Recreation Fall Activity Guide have been posted to the website and distributed to the Newark Free Library. Hard copies were mailed to residents who requested to keep receiving a hard copy.

I attended the Battle of the Downtown Bars hosted by the Main Street Mile Committee on Friday evening.

I attended the Top of Delaware Triathlon on Sunday morning and took photographs of the event and some participants.

I attended a meeting regarding the New Night in Downtown proposed event. I designed a preliminary logo and will be making adjustments responding to the brainstorming for the event.

I have been working with Heather Redding, Information Officer for Newark Nationals Little League, and Joe Spadafino to set up an event for us to recognize the team and their accomplishments. We have decided that the best time to do it is at Community Day at 1 p.m. We are still in the planning process and Council Members should expect to receive an invite. I put Heather in touch with City Secretary Renee Bensley about recognizing the team at the September 9 City Council meeting.

I attended the University of Delaware New Graduate Student Orientation on Wednesday afternoon and was able to speak to many new grad students and welcome them to Newark. Many were grateful to receive information about the city and happy we had such a great website as a resource.

IT

The following items have either been completed or are currently in progress:

- Diamond Technologies, Inc. Consulting Services and Management of IT Network Operations begin Thursday 8/22/13.
 - Notice has been sent to all staff to inform them of any change in processes.
- David Hopkins is now leading the CityView project from the IT side and is pushing to ensure all checkpoints are met.
 - The project is at risk of falling behind schedule and David is working to ensure that does not happen.
- We are reviewing an upgrade to WinScribe for the City Secretary due to the current versions' end of life.

- We are reviewing the online version of Quickbooks to evaluate whether or not it will suit and meet our needs.
- Andrew Haines and Lou Vitola are discussing the purchase of 8 laptops that will be used only for Training seminars. The initial need is for CityView training that is already scheduled. We will then begin bi-weekly trainings to continue developing the City staff's computer knowledge.
- We have determined that the Barracuda SPAM and Virus Firewall is nearing its end of life. It has become non-responsive and Barracuda Support has suggested replacing it.
- We have begun work to get all City offices connected via a Wide Area Network. Currently DSL is used to provide internet at satellite locations, and we are working on increasing that speed and requisitioning the equipment to allow us to network these sites via a secure VPN.
- We have begun work to consolidate the City's public domain name services (DNS) from multiple locations into a single, more easily managed account.
 - This will involve contacting the University for their assistance as they currently hold Newark.de.us.
- The Honeywell Project is ongoing and moving along according to timelines already established.
- David Hopkins is coordinating the CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) upgrade for the PD.
- The 2014 IT Budget is being reviewed and adjustments are being made in line with the long term vision of the department.

Planning & Development

Planning

On Wednesday afternoon you and I met with Councilwoman Hadden to talk about rental housing.

Also on Wednesday afternoon, Development Supervisor Mike Fortner and I met with Lang Development Group to discuss their submittal for a major subdivision at the Mill at White Clay.

On Thursday morning, I attended the staff meeting.

On Thursday, August 15th, Planner/DNP Administrator Ricky Nietubicz, Parking Administrator Marvin Howard, and Mike met with a representative from ESRI to discuss how Geographic Information Systems (GIS) can support operations in the Newark Planning Department, as well as how other GIS programs could be useful.

Also on Thursday, Mike provided staff support at the Board of Adjustment meeting. The Board of Adjustment took the following actions:

- An electronic message sign at the Newark Emergency Center on East Main Street. Since the applicant stated that the message sign would not flash, include no animation or movement, and would only change once or twice a day, the City Solicitor, Bruce Herron, determined that the sign was not a "flashing sign" and

- therefore not prohibited under our sign ordinance. The case was withdrawn, the fee refunded and a sign permit will be issued.
- 28 and 30 North Chapel. The applicant proposed to tear down the existing legal non-conforming duplex and build a 4 unit apartment. While the building would be constructed on the existing footprint, since they were adding two units, the project was a minor subdivision and would need variances for setback, side yards, open area, and lot size. The additional units also required variances for maximum density and parking. The Board of Adjustment rejected the applicant's request for a variance on maximum density from 16 units per acre to 25 units per acre and parking. Variances were given for maximum lot coverage (from 20% to 25%) maximum lot size (from 1 acre to .16 of an acre), building setback (from 30 ft to 5.2 feet) and side yards (from 25 feet to 6 feet and 7.4 feet). All of those variances are conforming to the lot's current structure.

On Friday morning, I met with IT Manager Josh Brechbuehl to discuss Departmental IT needs.

On Saturday, Mike attended a Community Picnic in College Park where he handed out brochures and discussed with residents of College Park the City programs that help renters purchase a home. The effort was organized by Representative Paul Baumbach and the YWCA to promote home ownership in College Park.

On Tuesday afternoon, the deadline for RFPs for the Rental Housing Needs Assessment Study revealed submittals from 9 different consulting firms. A steering committee will be set up to review these proposals.

Economic Development

On Wednesday evening, Planner/DNP Administrator Ricky Nietubicz staffed and I attended the Downtown Newark Partnership Board meeting. Improvements to Newark Day to be more business-friendly were discussed. The Board decided to refer the matter back to the Newark Day sub-committee for a more definitive recommendation on how to conduct next year's event. Also discussed were Food & Brew Fest and the Top of Newark Triathlon.

On Thursday afternoon, I joined you for the Greater Newark Economic Development Partnership's Steering Committee meeting.

On Monday morning, Ricky and I joined you, Parks and Recreation and Police staff as well as interested members of the DNP Board to discuss a replacement event for Newark Day. The idea will be discussed at the next DNP Board meeting.

On Monday evening, you and I attended the UD Pep Rally at the Field House sponsored by the NCC Chamber of Commerce.

Ricky assisted the Merchants' Committee and DNP board member Cari Rogers of Moxie with final planning & execution of first annual Newark Fashion Soirée held on August 15th. Each of the participating retail shops (Grassroots, Moxie, Clothes in the Past Lane, Switch, Mid Atlantic Ballet and Heart and Home) dressed 3-4 models in clothes available at their shop, who then circulated around Main Street and through participating

restaurants (Taverna, Caffe Gelato, Klondike Kate's, Catherine Rooney's, 16 Mile). Live musicians were also positioned in three locations on Main Street. The event was a success and we look forward to hosting similar events in the future to remind restaurant patrons of our numerous retail shops.

Ricky and Marvin also assisted the Main Street Mile Committee with planning & execution of Main Street Mile Battle of the Bars held on August 16th. The event was a resounding success and raised over \$4,200 for the DNP and Police K9 unit. Taverna was the winner of the "Battle".

Ricky coordinated various departments and the race promoter for the Top of Delaware Triathlon held Sunday August 18th. The event went very smoothly with minimal disruption to traffic throughout the City. A review meeting with the promoter and all operating departments is scheduled for next week.

Parking

Considerable time was spent this week on design and layout strategies for both the Lot #1 Garage and the Center Street Entrance/Exit to Lot #3.

On Monday morning Marvin and I joined you, City Solicitor Bruce Herron, Deputy City Manager Andy Haines and Finance Director Lou Vitola in a meeting with Mark Dunkle and Pelsa Engineering to discuss the Lot #1 Garage concept plan.

Code Enforcement

A C/O for 47 Church Street should be issued this week.

A conditional C/O for the Lofts at Rittenhouse should be issued this week.

On Tuesday, Code Enforcement Supervisor Steve Wilson attended the restaurant alcohol meeting with the Police on Tuesday.

Public Works & Water Resources

Kelley is busy preparing for the State to audit our Storm Water program that is permitted under the National Permit Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). We are putting a significant amount of work into this effort as this is preparatory to a Federal audit that we expect will take place later this year. We have the dubious distinction of having one of, if not the most, highly regarded program in the state so we are sort of the test bed for the states audit system. We appreciate all of the cooperation that we are receiving from the other departments as this is a group effort that we are leading.

Construction projects are picking up as the weather moderates.

We have completed more than a third of the curb ramp program. The contractor is doing a very nice job.

On the paving program we have fully completed 2 of 12 sites.

- We have completed the curbing on 6 of 11 sites requiring curbing repair.

- We have 2 streets that have been milled that are awaiting paving.

The paving of the Downes School and the trail located behind the school leading to the creek has been completed.

Drainage issues, construction projects, and the meter project are the major areas that the rest of the department is engaged in. This is a whirlwind time for the department.

Not surprisingly the creek levels have remained sufficient that we have been able to keep the reservoir full. This allowed for an easy entry and exit from the reservoir for the Sprint Triathlon held this weekend. Except for some footprints in the grass and an ATV tire mark here and there one could not tell there was a major event on the site over the weekend. We will be having an event wrap up later this month and will be discussing plans to put the event on again next year with the steps that would be necessary to accommodate the expected increase in participation given the rave reviews the promoter has received.



We are waiting for proposals back from contractors on a project to rebuild the berm and drainage pipe structure on an embankment behind the homes on Creek Bend Court. The embankment receives water from Ridge Wood Glen and holds back a small pond during large storms and has failed significantly. The facility was built using corrugated metal pipe that has outlived its useful life causing the bank to fail along with it. To expedite the process we have solicited quotes from several contractors and will be presenting the project at a future council meeting for your consideration.

We have been working with Partnership for the Delaware Estuary on the placement of native mussels in the wetlands bench of the reservoir. The Estuary would like to see if they can use the reservoir as a habitat and nursery for juvenile and adult mussels as they work to reintroduce them into the local streams and to see if they can help to improve the water quality in the reservoir. These mussels do not create the problems associated with the zebra mussels. If we are successful this would be a benefit to the reservoir and the Estuary's program to reintroduce the mussels to the local creeks.



Electric

The line crews have been changing transformers in the central part of the city between West Park Place and Winslow Road. They are replacing the 4kV transformers with dual voltage transformers in preparation for a 12kV upgrade.

Late last week, an underground cable on Timberline Drive went bad and the line crews found the bad spot to be under a driveway. Two homes were restored to full power with portable autotransformers and the bore contractor is scheduled to install conduit early next week.

The electricians have been working on final preparations on two substations getting ready to receive SCADA equipment. The SCADA communication devices have been built, programmed, and shipped. Most of the infrastructure has been previously installed, but some wiring and power supplies can be installed before the equipment arrives.

Engineering has been working with the SCADA developer migrating the newest version of the communication software and custom screens onto the server and checking the performance of the updated features.

The engineering assistant's wife had their first baby, a boy, and is taking the week off to bond.

Parks & Recreation

Administration & Planning

Joe and I met with new IT Manager, Josh Brechbuehl.

Last Thursday we met with representatives of the Delaware Trail Spinners and Delaware State Parks to discuss a path forward to get back to work on the Redd Park trail rehab project. Grant funding is in place to complete the trail work. This final Phase V of the project will include a new trail loop in the north end of Redd, complete some work in Phase III and IV, and a connection from Redd to Possum Park Road across either a DP&L property or a DelDOT easement.

Last Thursday Joe, Tom, Rich and I met with a representative of ERSI to discuss GIS applications for park facilities and operations.

Had discussions with Pennoni earlier this week; all permitting has been completed for the Curtis Mill Park project!! I should receive the final engineer drawings and contract documents very soon. We can then advertise the construction contract.

The Skate Spot at Handloff Park is open for business!! Though there are some cosmetic items still to be completed, the facility is now open for skaters. Lots of very positive comments from the skaters and parents. Construction began this week on the facility at Phillips Park. A ribbon cutting ceremony is scheduled for early September at Handloff.

Joe and I attended the Triathlon last Sunday. My congratulations to the planners and their onsite staff for a well conducted event.

I have been reappointed to another 3 year term on the Governor's Council on Greenways and Trails.

I submitted a recommendation to award Contract No. 13-12, LeRoy Hill Park Baseball Field Improvements.

Tom conducted his quarterly building maintenance inspections and developed work orders as needed. He also attended a bid opening for Hill Park baseball field drainage project and called references given by the contractor who was low bid.

Tom reviewed and commented on landscape plans for two new proposed subdivisions.

Tom committed time working with the PWWR Department on trail rehab work planned for an area behind Downes Elementary School.

Tom continued monitoring progress on the Main Street tree pit project.

Parks Maintenance

We continued to be very busy with our mowing operations.

We prepared the softball fields for league championship games.

The crew completed several general park maintenance work orders, continued doing tree work as a result of recent bad weather, did seasonal tree and perennial pruning and cleared debris from inlet pipes at various park sites prior to last week's heavy rain storms.

Recreation Services

Paula checked on Rittenhouse Rocks and Archery Camps during the week. She delivered supplies to both camps and ensured camp trips ran smoothly.

Paula conducted the skills session for the Elementary and Junior Youth Soccer Leagues. She created the teams and sent the team rosters and practice schedules to the coaches and delivered equipment to the fields for the start of practices on August 19.

Paula met with the Downes and West Park School Before and After Care administrator and supervisor in preparation for the start of the programs. Staff orientation and training sessions will be held August 22 and 23.

Our Summer Adult Volleyball League championship matches occurred last week and will continue into next week.

Sharon has been working on flyers, PSAs, Channel 22 requests, and data entries for the Fall 2013 activities.

Sharon and Joe attended the Downtown Newark Partnership meeting to discuss Newark Day.

Debbie has been wrapping up items from Safety Town.

Sharon is preparing for Community Day; the late fee is now in effect. She has contacted the Electric Department about working the event and is reviewing vendors and demonstrators/performers' applications.

Camps held at GWC included Dangerous Camp for Boys, Sneaker Club, two Computer Explorers Camps and Art Camp. This was the final week of summer camps.

This was the final week for the outdoor pools. George Wilson Center pool closed for the season on Saturday, August 17. Dickey Park pool had to close early due to vandalism.

Tyler checked programs on the online registration site for accuracy.

Joe attended the pre-construction meeting for the skate spot at Phillips Park.

Joe is working on the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Handloff skate spot.

Joe met with the Finance Director to discuss the Delaware Community Foundation and how it could benefit the James Hall Scholarship Fund.

Finance

The Finance Department is preparing for a conference call with Fitch Ratings scheduled for Monday, August 26, 2013. Staff members will be meeting ahead of the conference call to review key highlights of the City's financial performance in 2012 & 2013. The call is expected to be positive and should not result in any negative ratings action.

Customer Service

We continue to flex the meter reader schedules based on the progress of the smart meter installation. We know in advance which days involve manual turnoffs, manual reads, or high work orders; on those days, most meter readers will continue to work normal hours. However, on days that involve ERT readings or cycles with a high proportion of smart meter installs, the schedules will be reduced accordingly.

Accounting

The internal budget hearing schedule for all department directors was developed last week. The first meeting will take place on Friday, August 23, 2013 with PWWR. This year, there will be three rounds of budget hearings, in part because we are doing CIP and Operating Expenditure (OpEx) Budget at the same time; in part to institute a form of quality control over the budget process. The first round of CIP hearings was completed in May in the event the Charter amendment did not pass. The second round of hearings is scheduled in early September to formulate the first draft of the OpEx budget. The third round of hearings is scheduled in mid-September so that the OpEx budget can inform the process to finalize the CIP budget. We anticipate presenting the CIP budget at the October 1, 2013 Planning Commission Meeting.

Alderman's Court

This past week we held three Court sessions. This resulted in 71 Arraignments, 68 Trials processed and 3 Case Reviews. There were 5 prisoners videoed and 4 transported to court later in the week for trials.

Police

Newark Police have arrested 29 year old Robert L. Adger, of Warwick, MD, for a robbery which occurred at approximately 2:52 a.m. on August 19th in the 600 block of Lehigh Road. During the incident, a 27 year old male victim was seated on a bench in front of his apartment building when he was approached by two black males. One male displayed what was believed to be a handgun and demanded that the victim turn over his property. When he advised he had no valuables in his possession, the suspects ordered the victim into his apartment. Once inside, the suspects stole a cell phone belonging to the male victim and a purse belonging to a 24 year old female victim who was inside the apartment. The suspects were last seen fleeing in a dark colored SUV.

It was learned that the stolen cell phone was equipped with GPS tracking software. Using this software, officers were able to track the location of the phone which led them to the area of Pleasant Valley Road. At approximately 4:00 a.m., officers observed a vehicle matching the description of the suspect vehicle travelling on Pleasant Valley Road. Officers initiated a traffic stop on the SUV and detained its three occupants. Stolen property, including the victim's cell phone, was located in the vehicle. Additional property which had been discarded by the suspects was located by a Good Samaritan on Appleton Road at Route 213.

During their subsequent investigation, detectives have positively linked the driver of the vehicle, 29 year old, Robert L. Adger of Warwick, MD to the robbery. Although not involved in the robbery, two additional occupants of the vehicle, Alex Mouton and William Seward, both of Newark, were charged with Receiving Stolen Property. Detectives are working to identify the second suspect responsible for committing the robbery with Adger.

Newark Police Lieutenant Kevin Feeney and UDPD Lieutenant Robert Simpson organized an educational forum with the majority of restaurant managers in the city. The event was held at the fire station on Ogletown Road. Presentations were given by Newark's Deputy City Solicitor, State Alcohol Officers as well as UDPD and NPD.

The Newark Police Department received a "lapel" shirt camera for our Parking Enforcement Officers to test. Unfortunately, the shirt clip broke the first day of testing. The company will be sending out a replacement camera to test.

The University student move-in begins this weekend. Our Fall Crime Suppression patrol zones have been established to handle the extra downtown activity.

CSH/mp