

DEPARTMENTAL WEEKLY REPORTS

August 16, 2013

Alderman's Court

This past week we held three Court sessions. This resulted in 61 Arraignments, 64 Trials processed, 15 Case Reviews and one plea entered. There were no prisoners videoed.

Police

Our incidents of crime continue to decline in the City. Year to date in 2013 we have had 8 less robberies, 208 less assaults, 41 less burglaries, and 111 less thefts, as compared to 2012.

Cpl. Spadola has begun training officers on using www.raidsonline.com. Earlier this year, Newark PD began utilizing the service which maps out NPD's crime data. The site features some powerful analytical capabilities, and will be very useful in helping officers observe crime trends and also to keep the public informed of activity in their neighborhood.

Newark's newest recruits have finished their first week on the job. The first half of their week was spent observing their Field Training Officer (FTO). The Field Training Process lasts approximately 12 weeks, and involves the officer having multiple FTO's which helps the officer learn various viewpoints.

On August 13, 2013, the City of Newark received several inches of rainfall which created major flooding in the area. Floods were reported throughout the City and traffic lights were out at 11 major intersections in the city. Several officers were assigned to the major intersections to direct traffic. No major incidents resulted thanks to the quick response of all City departments and DelDOT.

City Manager's Office

Personnel

- Held the initial meeting with the CWA union negotiation team.
- Met with Diamond Technologies regarding the RFP award and onboarding details.
- Facilitated IT Manager Josh Brechbuehl's first week of meetings and introductions.
- Participated in two (2) DELPELRA Executive Committee conference calls for fall/winter conference organization.

Planning & Development

Planning

This week Subdivision Advisory Committee comments on the proposed addition of 14 apartments to the Mill at White Clay were provided to the developer.

On Thursday afternoon, I met with Hal Prettyman to discuss a potential development project.

This week the department submitted its personnel proposal as part of the operating budget process.

Some time was spent preparing for the September 3, 2013 Planning Commission meeting. Tentative items being reviewed are:

1. A rezoning, major subdivision and site plan approval of the .708 acre property at 178 S. Chapel Street. The applicants are requesting rezoning from the current MI (general industrial) to RA (multi-family dwellings – high rise apartments), subdivision and site plan approval to build ten townhouse style apartments on the property.
2. Review and consideration of a subdivision amendment regarding street and subdivision name changes.
3. A Comprehensive Development Plan update discussion.

Some time was spent preparing for the August 8, 2013 Board of Adjustment meeting. On the agenda is one request for a variance for an electronic bulletin board sign for the Newark Emergency Room and another for eight variances to RM zoning area requirements for 28-30 N. Chapel Street.

Some time was spent preparing for the August 12, 2013 City Council meeting. At this meeting Council took the following actions regarding planning related items:

1. Approved the redesign on the Center Street entrance to an entrance/exit configuration with conditions.
2. Approved a Comp Plan amendment, rezoning and major subdivision of 16 townhouse style apartments on Cleveland Avenue to be known as Cleveland Station.

Last night, Development Supervisor Mike Fortner hosted and Planner Ricky Nietubicz assisted in facilitating the Planning Commission “Visioning and Aspirations” workshop. The event was well attended and we received a lot of input from residents about how Newark can continue to progress forward, including making transit improvements, recruiting specific businesses to target (professional non-UD-connected businesses, retail catering to professionals, etc.) and quality of life improvements. Mike spent considerable time researching and preparing the presentation.

Economic Development

This week Ricky worked through some last minute coordination items between Top of Newark Triathlon promoter and various City departments. We look forward to hosting the event and expect it to draw several hundred competitors – and we expect that the event will go smoothly with minimal impact to traffic. We are very hopeful that this will become an annual event and another staple of our calendar. The event will be held on Sunday, August 18, 2013. It is an all day event.

Parking

On Tuesday, Parking Administrator Marvin Howard and I joined staff in a meeting with representatives of a property owner to discuss moving forward with the Lot #1 garage project.

This week Marvin is working on collecting cost quotes for the Center Street entrance/exit reconfiguration approved at Monday night's Council meeting so that the work can be completed in a timely manner.

The Parking Division continues with their summer maintenance program.

Code Enforcement

On Thursday, Code Enforcement Supervisor Steve Wilson and I met with representatives of Atlantic Realty Company to discuss the Construction Improvements Plan and processes for the Newark Shopping Center redevelopment.

A permit was issued for the tenant fit-out at 500 Creekview Road.

A permit was issued for the patio at the Greene Turtle Restaurant.

Tuesday's storm caused damage to the Studio Green apartments. Their structural engineer is working on required corrections.

Public Works & Water Resources

We took delivery of our drainage inspection camera and have begun using it to check the condition of our storm sewer system. Most recently we were looking at the condition of the lines that drain Main Street. The portion that we have inspected was found to contain a variety of debris. We will be meeting with our sewer cleaning contractor on the 27th when they get back in town.

During the last rain we experienced flooding of City Hall again through the loading dock area. Parks Department personnel were on site and had the gas pump running before the water reached the level of the loading floor. Unfortunately, as the rain intensity increased and water backed up from the street, the capacity of the pumps was overcome and water entered the building.

The sump pumps in the basement were originally intended to handle all of the rain water pumping requirements associated with the loading dock and ground water from springs. At some point in time an electric pump was added to supplement the ability of the sump pumps and this year we have added a gas driven pump. There are also back flow devices (flap gates) on the storm drainage system to keep the water from South Main Street from flowing back toward the loading dock. One or both of these back flow devices were held open causing the water to come back from the street.

I have had a pump repair firm inspect the sum pumps located in the building to prepare a proposal for replacing the pumps with a more capable system. Within reason I intend on installing the largest pumps available that we can handle without making major changes. I will also get a quote on replacing the motor control system. I am also investigating the replacement of the flap gates with a system (tide flex) that can more effectively handle debris that might get caught while still controlling/eliminating the amount of water that can flow towards the loading dock.

Once we are comfortable with new sump pumps we will next look at the electric pump that was installed at the loading dock and increase the capacity of that system with an eye toward eliminating the gas powered pump and the need to manually intervene during a rain event.

During the latest rain event we were able to gather more information on areas that experience problems. We have coordinated with the UD to access the old Chrysler site and will be using our new inspection camera to investigate the condition of the drainage system. We will remove any debris that we can and coordinate with the UD to remove whatever we are not able to remove ourselves. We have limited funding for this type of work and will work with Carol, Andy, and Lou to address issues that are in excess of our budget capabilities. We will present several alternatives at the stormwater workshop in September to generate funds to support our stormwater utility activities.

Electric

Tuesday morning, a thunderstorm with heavy winds tore through the City. A tree fell on the lines at South Main Street and West Park Place and snapped a utility pole with several circuits on it, but stayed energized. At the same time a lightning strike burned up cables on Barksdale Road. The crews took several hours to restore the power to the Barksdale Road circuit, while other crews were busy all day replacing the pole and moving the energized circuits over.

The line crews have continued working on fixing any issues emerging from the in-house infrared scanning that is continually being done on circuits and equipment.

Engineering established remote communications to two relays on a substation transformer that has had none previously. New equipment had to be inserted into the fiber optic ring and remote testing performed.

Tri-M finished the work on East Main Street and has started installing poles on South College in preparation for more reconductoring from Kent Way down to Holton Place where it ties into circuits from the Phillips Avenue Substation.

Parks & Recreation

Administration & Planning

We completed a review of the final drawings for the Curtis Mill Park project and forwarded them to Pennoni.

We received notice from the New Castle Conservation District and State Forest Service that we have been awarded grant funding to remove a stand of bamboo in Karpinski Park located along the banks of the White Clay Creek. Congrats to Tom for pursuing the grant funding.

On Wednesday I attended a training session on the use of the new Networkfleet vehicle GPS system.

Frequent rains continue to slow progress on the Skate Spot and Main Street Tree Pit projects. We continue to make progress but a good stretch of dry weather sure would be helpful!

We held a pre-construction meeting for the Phillips Park Skate Spot. The construction contractor is beginning to mobilize to start at Phillips. The grading and seeded phase of the Handloff Skate Spot is taking place now. Signage will soon be installed as well.

I met with Tom, Joe and Rich at Hill Park to discuss installing posts and cable along certain section of the parking lot to prevent vehicles from parking on the turf.

I began preparing materials to submit for a reimbursement request for grants funds for the Skate Spot project.

Tom conducted park inspections and developed work orders. He also completed inspecting his section of Christina Creek and trail and found three blockages needing removal.

Tom completed the Request for Quotations for the purchase of new play unit for the Wilson Park funded through the CDBG program.

Tom started working on an Urban Tree Grant application through the State Forest Service.

Parks Maintenance

Mowing operations are ongoing.

The crew prepared ball fields for league play, built a new lift rack for storing away materials and supplies for Special Events, continued working at the McKees Park site in preparation for solar panel installation, completed several park maintenance work orders, repaired windows at the Wilson Center and resupplied paper throughout City Hall.

Recreation Services

Paula checked on the final week of Rittenhouse and Hobbit Camps throughout the week. This completed another very successful nature camp program.

Paula sent out first day letters to the Archery Camp and Rittenhouse Rocks Camp registrants.

Paula continued to promote registration for the youth soccer league and send out soccer skills information to those who have registered. She will finalize the team rosters after the soccer skills session and continue to add players as they register.

Paula worked on organizing information and files for personnel and participants in preparation for the upcoming school year for the Before and After School programs at Downes and West Park Elementary Schools. The first inspection by the Office of Child Care Licensing will be at West Park School in September.

Paula completed the playoff brackets for the Monday A and BB Summer Volleyball Leagues. She informed the coaches and updated the City website with the information.

Paula met with a prospective skateboarding instructor regarding the new classes that will be offered this fall at the new Handloff Park Skate Spot.

Sharon and Debbie held week two of Safety Town. We conducted field trips on Tuesday and graduation on Friday. Forty seven (47) children went through this year's programs. The volunteers, staff and guest speakers did an excellent job teaching the area children how to be safe.

Community Day vendor applications are still coming in.

Sharon and Joe attended a wrap up meeting for the 2013 Nefosky Walk and 5K Run; \$7,542 will be donated to charities.

Camps held at GWC included Rittenhouse Before and after Camp Care, Camp GWC, Safety Town and Computer Explorers.

Camp GWC and Rittenhouse Before and After Camp Care concluded for the summer on Friday, August 9. It was a great year for both with record numbers. We had two additional weeks of Camp GWC.

Tennis Camp was held all week at Handloff Park and Downes Elementary School (rain location). We had 21 campers participate.

The outdoor pools were closed two days and slow most of the week with the rain and cooler, cloudy weather. We have one week remaining with the pools scheduled to close for the season August 17.

Tyler prepared for the final week of summer specialty camps scheduled August 12-16 including Computer Explorers, Rittenhouse Rocks, Sneaker Club, and the Dangerous Camp for Boys.

The recreation staff worked on fall program planning and proofing the newsletter.

Joe met with Public Works about the Phillips Park Skate Spot construction documents.

Joe met with Piranha Sports about their triathlon course and staging area at the reservoir and Redd Park.

Joe is organizing the Fall E-newsletter that will be delivered on Monday, August 19.

Joe is working on gathering information for the Curtis Paper Mill kiosk that will cover the history of the mill.

Joe is working on the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Handloff Park Skate Spot.

Finance

Members of the Finance Department met with new IT Manager Joshua Brechbuehl to introduce Mr. Brechbuehl to the IT operations that drive the Finance Department. We shared punch list of open items and worked on a plan to address the most pressing issues in the coming weeks and months.

Customer Service

We are beginning 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 continue to work normal hours. However, on days that involve ERT readings or cycles with a high proportion of smart meter installs, the schedules are reduced accordingly.

Accounting

The internal budget hearing schedule for all department directors was developed today. 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.

CSH/mp