

## **DEPARTMENTAL WEEKLY REPORTS**

**September 6, 2013**

### **Public Works & Water Resources**

This week we signed a letter of support for a multimillion dollar William Penn Foundation grant being applied for by the Brandywine Conservancy. This grant will provide funding for a watershed restoration initiative for the headwaters of the Brandywine, White Clay and Red Clay Creeks. There is no financial obligation to the City as all matching funding will come from the UD Water Resource Agency, the Brandywine Conservancy, the Brandywine Valley Association, the Stroud Water Research Center and the Natural Lands Trust. The City stands to benefit from this initiative as any improvements to the headwaters of the White Clay Creek will improve water quality at our surface water intake.

We met with the ESRI GIS mapping software company this week to discuss mapping applications that are applicable to water, wastewater and stormwater utilities. They have many industry specific solutions that will aid us in rapidly transitioning from paper to digital mapping and asset management. This software will allow us to take advantage of the tablet computers that were included in the Smart Meter project for digital map viewing and editing in the field.

The Smart Meter project is moving along well, we are up to 41.6% completion for water meter installation. We are currently addressing issues related to meter pits located in sidewalks and residents who did not respond to the initial three notices from PMI.

The curb ramp contractor has now completed 45 of 68 ramps and has moved to the north side of Park Place.

We are continuing to prepare for the DNREC audit of our MS4 stormwater permit. Currently they are scheduled to inspect our industrial permit locations on September 11<sup>th</sup> and our records on the 19<sup>th</sup>. This will continue to absorb a lot of our staff time over the next two weeks, but we will be better prepared for the inevitable EPA audit that we expect to happen sometime in the coming months. We have been able to get a student from the UD WRA to assist with scanning and data collection for the audit.

Pennoni has commenced their evaluation of the storm sewer systems that have been subject to the most severe flooding this summer. We expect to be substantially complete by the end of the month.

We are working with the Planning Department to procure pricing for the proposed entrance revisions from Lot onto Center Street.

We have a paving contractor beginning work on water and sewer patches on state roads around town. We have been repairing all patches on City streets in-house since the merger and this has worked out well.

## **Electric**

The line crews are finishing the work on Sunset Road where a contractor bored in cables from Apple Road to just before Orchard Road. A transition box, terminations, elbows, and fuses on the poles are being installed. They have been changing the transformers in the area and will be changing the pole insulators to accommodate a voltage upgrade.

Electricians have been finishing the SCADA installation and upgrading the backup communication system at two substations, while engineering has been troubleshooting and updating programs to all the tap changers and relays being connected.

Engineering has been preparing for a shutdown of several Main Street businesses after hours in order to upgrade the transformers that will feed the new 7-11 at 46 South Main Street. Engineering is also compiling the monthly reads of the 20 University meters for billing purposes.

Tri-M, working for the City, will finish pulling wires on South College Avenue by the bridge this week. Another contractor, working for UD, is finishing rerouting a City owned pole line at the Star Campus.

## **Parks & Recreation**

### **Administration & Planning**

Last Wednesday I met with department personnel to talk about the GPS unit installations and the purposes for them on our vehicles.

Tom and I met with a representative of DeIDOT to discuss landscaping and care for the Elkton Road traffic median between the Christina Parkway and Christina Creek Bridge.

At their meeting last Monday, Council approved the contract for the installation of a sub-surface drainage system at the LeRoy Hill Park baseball field pending the award of a DTF grant. The DTF grant committee meets on September 12 to make their recommendations of award.

We received the Curtis Mill Park final drawings and contract specification. I distributed the materials internally for review and comment. I have committed significant time reviewing the materials this week.

Tom and I committed time reviewing and commenting on subdivision plans. Grindline completed installation of the flatwork forms and rebar in preparation for pouring concrete this week at the Phillips Park Skate Spot.

Tom conducted park inspections and wrote up work orders as needed.

Tom met with the Pennoni landscape architect to finalize the landscape plan for the Curtis Mill Park project.

Tom had a discussion with the landscape architect for the Newark Shopping Center project to discuss the landscape plan.

Tom met with Pomeroy Trail contractor to discuss reseeding needs along the trail.

Cenise and Tom met with the vendor working on the plaque for the Reservoir.

Rich continues researching options for Christmas tree for the Academy Building Lawn.

### Parks Maintenance

Mowing operations continue to keep the crew very busy.

We repaired a wash out at the Hall Trail caused by a clog under the drain pipe.

The crew started removing tree limbs and other woody debris in the areas along the Hall Trail where we eradicated the bamboo in preparation for the contractor to do the grading and seeding of the areas. The area will be maintained as a meadow/reduced mow site and next fall we'll begin a multi-year effort to add tree planting to the site.

We salvaged a piece of railroad track from the Pomeroy Trail project that will be installed in the Phillips Park Skate Spot as a skate feature. The crew cut and prepared the rail and the contractor will install it.

The crew prepared soccer fields for team practices and completed several maintenance work orders.

### Recreation Services

Paula completed recreation program statistics on summer activities.

Paula visited Downes and West Park Schools throughout the week checking on the first week of the Before and After School programs and filling in supplies as needed. She is still working on hiring new staff for Tuesdays and Thursdays since staff availability is very low on those days.

Paula continued to place registrants on soccer teams, order shirts for the league, and confirmed the picture day coming up before the start of the season.

Paula sent out letters to the winter volleyball teams inquiring about the upcoming season and an email blast to previous participants about upcoming fall programs.

Sharon and Debbie have been preparing for Newark Community Day.

- They are working on vendor placement and performance times.
- Sharon, Debbie and Joe met with Mike Loftus from UD regarding the Green.
- Recent sod replacement and seeding is causing us to rearrange vendor placements to keep them off sensitive areas.
- Vendor information was emailed on Tuesday, September 3.

- Performances and demonstrations will be taking place in front of Memorial Hall and near Main Street.

Sharon attended the wrap up meeting for the Newark Triathlon.

Tyler met with one of his dance instructors in preparation for upcoming dance classes.

Tyler removed the parks and recreation display from the Newark Library and dropped off our activities newsletter.

Tyler met with Carol Houck and did some cleaning at the Wilson Center in preparation for The Data Centers' public meeting.

Joe, Liz and the I.T. Director had a conference call with our registration software company, Maximum Solutions, to discuss a conversion to their new system, Max Galaxy.

Joe is working on final statistics for fall 2012-summer 2013.

Joe is organizing the ribbon cutting for the Handloff Park Skate Spot that will take place Thursday, September 12.

## Finance

As one of four members on the Audit Committee of the Board of DEMEC, I participated in the RFP process to select an audit firm for DEMEC's next three financial audits. The selected firm will be presented for approval of the entire Board at the next DEMEC Board meeting.

Deputy City Manager Andrew Haines, Marta Pacheco and I met with FOP and AFSCME leadership this week as part of the ongoing labor negotiations with the City's unions.

## Customer Service

The Welcome Center officially opened for business on Tuesday, August 27, 2013. Denise Walsh is primarily staffing the Welcome Center with support from all full-time customer representatives. The next steps to bring the welcome center to full operation include the addition of a second station, the installation of sign-in/ID badging equipment, integration with door locks, and other items.

The meter reader staff was recently reduced from 3.0 full-time employees to 2.5 full-time employees as a result of continued progress in the smart meter installation. We continue to flex the meter reader schedules based on the number of manual and automatic read cycles and manual work orders scheduled for each work week.

## Accounting

Operating budget hearings were held with the City Secretary's Office, Police, Planning, Court, Information Technology, Parks & Recreation, and Electric. This year, there will be three rounds of budget hearings, in part because we are doing CIP and Operating

Expenditure (OpEx) Budgets at the same time; in part to institute a form of quality control over the budget process.

### **Alderman's Court**

This past week we held three Court sessions. This resulted in 53 Arraignments, 53 Trials processed and 1 Case Review. There were 9 prisoners videoed from prison.

### **Police**

On August 28<sup>th</sup>, undercover Newark police officers arrested a 29-year-old female for prostitution at a local hotel. A male who provided security for the prostitute was also arrested.

On September 1<sup>st</sup> at approximately 2:50 a.m., Newark Police responded to the first block of East Cleveland Avenue in regard to a fight. Upon arrival, the officers learned that earlier in the night multiple subjects attempted to gain entry into a party at the residence. The subjects were denied entry and asked to leave. A minor altercation ensued between the people at the party and the subjects attempting to gain entry, and one of the subject's shirts was ripped during the incident. After the party, the residents were in their living room when a group of males began knocking on their rear door. The group demanded to know who ripped their friend's shirt earlier in the night. The residents did not let them in, and advised the subjects to leave their property. For approximately 15 minutes, the subjects continued to knock on the door, and then forced open the rear door. The subjects entered the kitchen and began assaulting the residents. Officers responded to the scene and took Conor Travers and Frank Ward into custody without incident, and Eric Smith was taken into custody after a brief foot chase. The three victims, also University of Delaware students, did not sustain any major injuries.

On September 3<sup>rd</sup>, officers from the Traffic Bureau and Special Operations Squad were assigned to assist with traffic at the George Wilson Center community meeting. No overtime was used and no patrol officers were removed from their assigned patrol sector.

We have received a replacement lapel camera for our Parking Enforcement Officer to test. One PEO on each shift will wear and test the camera.

### **City Manager's Office**

#### **Personnel**

- Assisted with The Data Centers public information session.
- Met with the FOP for a 2<sup>nd</sup> negotiation meeting.
- Met with AFSCME for the initial negotiation meeting.
- Worked with IT Manager Josh Brechbuehl to address appropriate applications for City IT needs.
- Continue to work with Chief and the Police Department staff on the next recruitment test process.

## Community Affairs Officer

I have been working with Heather Redding, Information Officer for Newark Nationals Little League, and Joe Spadafino to finalize the recognition event for Newark National Little League at Community Day.

I sent the press release for Community Day.

I spent some time updating the DNP website with September event information and creating the September events e-newsletter.

I spent some time helping with preparations for the Data Centers LLC community information meeting.

I spent some time working on a redesign of the police recruitment brochure. The first draft is done and I am working with Lt. Mark Farrall and Andrew Haines on edits.

I spent some time updating the website for City Secretary Renee Bensley regarding election information.

I have been working with Joe Spadafino on the ribbon cutting at Handloff Park Skate Spot on September 12. The media alert is to go out this week. I will also be working on the handout program and press release to go out after the event.

## IT

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

- The city purchased a new product called LabTech which will allow IT to be much more responsive to city employee IT needs.
  - We will have advanced ticket tracking and escalation.
  - We will be able to manage all computers and devices from a centralized location.
- Dell was in to review our current server environment and has confirmed that our plans to move to a virtualization platform is needed.
  - They will be working to provide final pricing on costs related to this project.
- We have finalized the equipment necessary to implement our Wide Area Network (WAN).
  - Pricing has been confirmed and we are just waiting for approval to purchase.
- The Honeywell Smart-Meter project is ongoing and on-track.
- The CityView upgrade project is ongoing and on-track.
- Esri was in this week to demo ArcGIS for multiple departments.
  - This product would be used for providing an all-encompassing GIS (Geographical Information System) solution for the city.

## Planning & Development

### Planning

Considerable time was spent this week preparing for last night's Planning Commission meeting, during which the Commission approved the major subdivision and site plan approval of the .708 acre property at 178 S. Chapel Street (East Village at South Chapel) with conditions; tabled consideration of a subdivision amendment regarding street and subdivision name changes to further consider wording of the amendment.

At last night's Planning Commission meeting, Development Supervisor Mike Fortner presented an update of the Comprehensive Plan.

Some time was spent on Unicity agreements this week.

Also on Thursday, Planner/DNP Administrator Ricky Nietubicz and I met with representatives of the Blood Bank of Delmarva to discuss the CAA Blood Drive and marketing opportunities. The drive is scheduled for November 1-13<sup>th</sup>.

On Friday morning, I met with Howard Smith to discuss the Rental Housing Needs Assessment Study RFP and Steering Committee responsibilities. He agreed to serve on the committee, along with UD Campus Planner and Architect Peter Krawchyk and key City staff members. The goal is to keep the Steering Committee neutral on rental housing issues, and bring in others as part of focus group research in Phase II of the study, if approved. The committee is now reviewing and rating the 9 proposals received to determine which firms we'd like to invite to make verbal presentations.

On Friday afternoon, I joined Code Enforcement Division staff in a meeting with representatives of the Finance Department to discuss separation of duties and the CityView project.

Some time was spent this week on the One South Main Street subdivision agreement. Council will consider the rezoning, major subdivision and special use permit for this project at the regularly scheduled meeting on September 9, 2013.

This morning, Mike participated in the Bicycle Safety Checkpoint cosponsored by DelDOT, Newark Bike Project and Newark Bicycle Committee.

### Economic Development

On Tuesday morning, Ricky staffed the Design Committee meeting. The committee did a design review of the proposed 58 E. Main Street redevelopment on schedule for Planning Commission review in November. A full design review report will be forthcoming for Commission consideration. The committee also looked at several concepts for holiday street pole banner designs and recommended three as replacements for the current design, all of which were snowflake designs that could be customized to include either "Welcome to Downtown Newark" wording or the DNP logo.

On Wednesday, Ricky staffed the Merchants Committee meeting – the committee decided on a revised concept for the “Gift Card Giveaway” that has been conducted in years past. In order to use existing “Small Business Saturday” promotions, the committee decided to do a “half off” gift card promotion on Small Business Saturday (November 30), where for \$25, customers can get two \$25 gift cards or one \$50, and for \$50 customers can get either two \$50 gift cards or one \$100 – with a limit of one per customer. The committee believes that this promotion will be less confusing to the public than past promotions that required customers to save receipts from an ever-changing list of participating restaurants and retail stores to reach a certain amount (\$250 worth of purchases – alcohol and tips didn’t count) to get a free \$25 gift card.

On Tuesday evening, Ricky attended The Data Centers information session held at the Wilson Center.

Ricky explored options for the DNP to partner with the Newark Arts Alliance to promote and expand the Harvest Arts Festival.

### Community Development

On Tuesday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>, Mike spoke to housing counselors at the YWCA concerning housing programs in Newark.

### Parking

Considerable time was spent this week on parking lot layouts to maximize inventory.

This week the Parking Division ordered the credit card meters for the 90-day trial period to be installed by the first week in October.

Lot #5 parking permits are now sold out.

### Code Enforcement

ASDR – Academy Street Dining and Residence Hall building permit has been issued.

The footing and foundation permit has been issued for Campus Walk.

A building permit has been issued for Choate Street Commons – five townhouse apartment buildings.

The annual U/D Fraternity and Sorority Safety Program has started. Fire Prevention Inspector Bill Street and Property Maintenance Inspector Ryan Straub along with U/D officials, will be going over this program for the next 2 weeks with the new students.

CSH/mp