

DEPARTMENTAL WEEKLY REPORTS

September 13, 2013

Electric

The line crews have upgraded the primary voltage in the center part of the City between Park Place and Sunset Road after weeks of upgrading the equipment on the poles. The line crews also installed a switched capacitor bank, troubleshot a smart meter gateway, fixed a police camera feed, and insulated the lines on Benny Street for a crane.

The line crews and personnel from Public Works & Water Resources have been supporting the underground bore contractor installing conduit along Timberline Drive to repair a bus line that went bad several weeks ago.

The electricians are preparing for Community Day this Sunday. They are checking the power harnesses and locations for hookups in the University's buildings along the Green.

Engineering and the meter technician worked with the contractor for the Main Street 7-11 to find a suitable service location and the meter technician has been working with the smart meter installer on several difficult meter installations. Engineering has also been fixing the last few SCADA devices needed for integrating the latest substations onto the system.

Parks & Recreation

Administration & Planning

We committed time updating the department profile for the 2014 Operating Budget.

I prepared for and attended my 2014 Operating Budget hearing last Wednesday.

Curtis Mill Park Project:

- I received the Letter of Agreement from DeIDOT for the traffic signal installation modifications, entrance improvements and Paper Mill Road adjustments.
- I received the Letter of Approval from DNREC for the Sediment and Storm Water plan.
- We completed a review and submitted comments of the final construction drawings and contract document. Pennoni will make the necessary changes and get it back to us so that the construction contract can be advertised.

The survey crew located and marked the northernmost property corners of Redd Park. This will help us mark out the path of the new north trail loop to be constructed. The loop is part of the 5th and final phase of that project. We will continue to work with the Delaware Trail Spinners and other volunteers to complete this work.

I sat in on a conference call with Carol Houck, Maureen Feeney Roser and representatives of the Home Depot to discuss landscaping improvements and long-term maintenance of the Elkton Road traffic median in front of the Suburban Plaza property.

The Kells Park multi-purpose court received an asphalt over lay this week. The project was funded in this year's CIP and was included in the City's street improvement contract. The court lines will be painted in about a week.

I continue to work on grant reimbursement submittals for park projects.

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

Tom contacted DeIDOT about watering plant materials on the South Main Street/Elkton Road traffic medians.

Tom and I reviewed several subdivision landscape plans and submitted comments.

Tom completed landscape inspections at subdivisions for the release of escrow funds.

Our contractor will complete soil preparation and seeding this week of the areas along the Hall Trail where we removed the large stand of bamboo. We plan to begin planting trees in the area next year.

Tom and Sam Sneeringer, Electric Department, visited two sites to review landscape repairs where new underground lines were installed.

Rich continued assigning field staff maintenance work orders and overseeing their work.

The Skate Spot contractor is making very good progress on the construction of the Phillips Park facility. If the weather continues to cooperate, the project could be completed in three or four weeks.



Joe continues to work with Dana Johnston planning for the Skate Spot Opening Ceremony which will be held this Thursday, September 12 at 3:30 p.m. at the Handloff Park Skate Spot.

Parks Maintenance

The crews continue to stay busy with mowing operations.

We continue to do landscape bed maintenance throughout the City.

The crew committed significant time placing wood carpet (safety surface material) under children's play units throughout park system.

We committed time doing front line maintenance on mowing equipment.

We relocated a spectator bleacher unit from George Reed Park to the Handloff Park Skate Spot.

We salvaged a piece of train track rail from the Pomeroy Trail project to be incorporated in the Phillips Park Skate Spot. The crew spent time cleaning it up and preparing it for installation. This will be a unique skate feature for the skate boarders.

The crew completed several routine building and park maintenance work orders.

Recreation Services

Paula continued to put registrants on soccer teams. She added a group of players to the Elementary League to increase the number of teams to four.

Paula completed the soccer schedules for the Elementary and Junior leagues and distributed them to the coaches and updated the City website.

Paula sent letters to the registrants of the Tiny Tot and Little Kickers programs informing them of the schedule. Over 45 participants are enrolled.

Paula completed orientation for the remaining Before and After Care staff who missed the original orientation. She also stopped by the After Care program throughout the week to drop off supplies as needed.

Paula sent a letter to last year's Youth Basketball League coaches inviting them back to coach again this year for the coming season. Coaches meetings are scheduled for the end of September.

Sharon and Debbie have been preparing for Community Day. They are assigning vendors, confirming information with the University of Delaware, scheduling volunteers and staff, and marketing the event.

Tyler held tennis instructor interviews. The fall session of tennis lessons began on Saturday, September 7.

Tyler met with the principal at Downes regarding upcoming afterschool programs including tennis and the CATCH homework club.

Joe is working on the fall 2012-summer 2013 statistics.

Joe is organizing the Handloff Skate Spot ribbon cutting that will take place on Thursday at 3:30.

Joe is working on the Parks and Recreation display area for Community Day.

Finance

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

The Health Renewal was presented to the Benefits Committee this week. Our consultants are communicating directly with Highmark of Delaware in an effort to reduce the magnitude of the health insurance premium increase (a component of which is inflexible as it is directly resultant from the Affordable Care Act).

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. During the first seven business days of welcome center operations, the customer service group interacted with over 500 visitors, 267 of whom made a payment right at the window. Between visitors, an additional 278 payments dropped off in the bin were processed. 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.

Accounting

Operating Budget Hearings were held with the City Secretary's Office, Police, Planning, Court, Information Technology, Parks & Recreation, and Electric. The next round of meetings is scheduled for September 16, 2013, at which point we hope to have an idea of the total revenue and expense budgets in order to fine tune the CIP proposal.

Alderman's Court

This past week we held 3 Court sessions. This resulted in 30 Arraignments, 56 Trials processed, 5 Case Reviews and 1 Plea. There were 5 prisoners transported from prison for various cases.

Police

Our Patrol and Special Operations officers have been very busy the last week. Partnering with the University of Delaware Police, numerous arrests have been made in the downtown areas for open container of alcohol, underage drinking, and disorderly conduct.

Last week Newark detectives arrested a local business owner for unlawful physical contact involving two juveniles. Additional charges are expected. On September 10th, the Newark Police Department along with the Department of Justice and the Child Advocacy Center sponsored a community forum to discuss the arrest. Information was provided on how to speak to children about the incident. Lt. George Stanko, Lt Mark Farrall, Cpl. James Spadola, and NPD Victim Service Advocate Susan Alfree did an outstanding job in organizing and running the meeting.

On September 3rd, Chief Tiernan attended the New Castle County Local Emergency Planning Committee meeting. One of the topics discussed was rail transportation of hazardous material. We are looking into sending ranking officers to training offered by Norfolk Southern and E.I. DuPont. The training is designed to prepare agencies on how to respond to railroad related hazardous material incidents. While the training may be focused more on fire department response, it will give us an overview on how they deal with this type of incident.

Questions have been raised about Newark's Emergency Operations Plan not being more incident specific. The purpose of EOP's is to establish policy and procedures for a coordinated effort to manage potential disasters. The **EOP** establishes **who** is responsible for **what function** at an event. Each responding agency has its own "**Operations Plan**" specific to an incident type. The **operations plan** will more specifically state **how** each agency will deal with the event. One book will not have operations plans for police, fire, public works, DEMA, FEMA, TSA, etc. Our EOP is submitted to and approved by New Castle County Division of Emergency Management.

On September 9th, at approximately 11:30 p.m., Newark Police responded to a disorderly house party on South College Avenue. Responding officers observed over a thousand people in the area with a DJ set up in a backyard. While dispersing the crowd, thousands of people walked in the street screaming, shouting and walking over vehicles. Over seventy police officers from other jurisdictions responded to assist. The two residents of the house party were arrested, as well as a camera person, filming the crowd.

City Manager's Office

Personnel

- Convened the Health Benefits committee, and the committee reviewed with Mercer (our broker) the pending 2014 renewals
- Held 2nd negotiation meeting with CWA union
- Held 3rd negotiation meeting with FOP union
- Held 1st negotiation meeting with AFSCME union

- As a part of the budget review team, held 2014 Operation Budget hearings for all departments
- Worked on numerous personnel matters
- Worked with police staff, Marta and Dana to prepare for the start of a new police officer recruitment

IT

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

- We have just completed a complete network reconfiguration of the municipal network which will set us up nicely for future projects and upgrades.
- We have a quote and approval for a new server for our Laserfiche project (document imaging).
- We have several training sessions being planned for October. We will be working to schedule rooms and the Council Chamber to allow these trainings to occur.
- We are investigating the use of Wireless Point to Point devices to allow us to connect our Parking Booths to the Parking Office Internet for high speed credit card charges.
- The Honeywell Smart-Meter project is ongoing and on-track.
- The CityView upgrade project is ongoing and on-track.

Planning & Development

Planning

On Tuesday, I presented the Planning and Development Department's (Planning, DNP, Parking and Code Enforcement) budget submittals for the 2014 Operating Budget to the Budget Review Committee.

Considerable time was spent this week on Freedom of Information Act requests for The Data Centers and the Newark Shopping Center projects.

On Friday afternoon, I met with Chief Tiernan, Officer Spadola, UD Director of Auxiliary Services Richard Rind and UD Transportation Services Manager Shearee Moore to discuss the Unicity Bus System and issues of homelessness.

On Monday morning, I joined Parks and Recreation Director Charlie Emerson in a conference call with Home Depot to discuss landscaping of the Elkton Road median near the Suburban Plaza Shopping Center and maintenance of same.

On Monday evening, City Council took the follow actions on Planning and Development related items:

- Approved the Unicity Bus Agreements with UD and Delaware Transit Corporation.
- Approved amendments to the City's Subdivision Regulations as they relate to the requirements for bicycle storage facilities for major subdivisions.

- Approved the rezoning and major subdivision of the properties located at 7 and 15 South Main Street for construction of a four story mixed use building to be known as One South Main.

Considerable time was spent this week preparing for the upcoming Planning Commission meeting. Tentatively scheduled for review are:

1. Election of Officers and 2014 Calendar.
2. The 2014 – 2018 City of Newark Capital Improvements Program.
3. A subdivision amendment regarding street and subdivision name changes [Tabled at the September 3, 2013 meeting].
4. A minor subdivision at 392 Stafford Avenue to insert a lot line creating two lots instead of one at the RS zoned property.
5. Consideration of an application for a major subdivision and site plan approval for the Mill at White Clay Creek of 4.5 acres located off of Paper Mill Road near Margaret and Annabelle Streets. The proposed project will renovate the existing pump house building into four one- or two-bedroom apartment units and construct ten three story townhouse style apartment units.
6. A Comprehensive Development Plan update discussion.

On Tuesday morning, I hosted a Subdivision Advisory Committee meeting to review two projects tentatively scheduled for Planning Commission review in November. Specifically, the committee discussed the addition of six townhouse style apartments to the Continental Court development on S. Chapel Street, and the replacement of the building located at 56-58 East Main Street with another mixed use building containing first floor retail space and 27 upper story apartments. The committee's comments have been sent to the developers for plan revisions.

Considerable time was spent reviewing proposals received for the Rental Housing Needs Assessment Study. Steering Committee rankings are due to Purchasing on Friday.

This week three new applications for development were received. Specifically, we received an application for a minor subdivision and special use permit for adding 3 apartments to the one story building at 70 E. Main Street (formerly the Newark Newsstand) currently under construction; a rezoning and major subdivision for a 12 unit apartment building on S. Chapel Street and Benny Streets (formerly an expired subdivision known as Pike Park); and an annexation and minor subdivision of a property located at 428 Paper Mill Road.

On Tuesday evening, Development Supervisor Mike Fortner met with the members of the Conservation Advisory Committee to discuss the Comprehensive Development Plan.

On Monday, Mike attended the second Safety Check Point on Campus to promote bicycle safety to UD students. The Check Point was held at the North Campus Bridge and was sponsored by DeIDOT. The event gave free bicycle lights and helmets to bicyclists, as well as other bicycle safety information.

Economic Development

Planner/DNP Administrator Ricky Nietubicz began getting pricing from various vendors for new Holiday season banners. The Design Committee recommended several designs that could be customized with a DNP message and/or logo.

Ricky also worked on preparations for Community Day and will be staffing DNP/Planning Department booth where we will provide information about downtown and upcoming events; sell Taste of Newark tickets; and talk to attendees about the Comprehensive Development Plan update.

Later this evening, Ricky will host and I will join Carol Houck in attending the DNP Board meeting.

Community Development

This week a contract was awarded for repairs to a Swarthmore Drive home under the CDBG Home Improvement Program (HIP) to mitigate water intrusion issues.

This week two other applications for the HIP program were received, which are currently under evaluation for scope of work to complete – one on Cannon's Way and one on Rose Street.

Parking

Parking Administrator Marvin Howard and Ricky staffed the Parking Committee meeting this morning. The committee was updated on several ongoing projects in off-street parking lots (renovations and new entrance/exit to Lot 3, progress of construction in Lot 4, status of land assembly in Lot 1). The Committee was also updated on the upcoming Smart Meter Pilot Program.

The Parking Division is moving forward with work associated with the entrance/exit of Lot 3.

Code Enforcement

The building permit for Rupp Farm (on Chambers Street) has been issued.

Gates are up to enclose the fence at the Bob Carpenter Sports Building, which had been an issue in municipal Lot 2.

Campus Walk footing and foundation work has begun.

Considerable time was spent this week responding to property maintenance and rental complaints.

Public Works & Water Resources

Letters were mailed out this week for a public meeting on smoke testing that will be performed as part of the Kells Avenue sanitary sewer capacity improvement project. The meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 17th from 7-9 p.m.

Pricing for the 2013 water main cleaning and lining project are due September 13. We are using a fully structural product this year that is designed to restore 50 years to the design life of the existing pipe. We are going to be working on Old Oak, Corbit, Kennard, Terry and Ray Streets this year. We had several main breaks in this area this past winter and this drove our decision to try a structural product over cement lining as was done in the past.

DNREC performed an inspection of our NPDES industrial stormwater permit locations this week as part of the audit of our sediment and stormwater program. The inspections went well and we should receive a final report following the audit of our records and office documents later this month. This audit is ahead of the EPA audit we expect to happen in the coming months.

The Smart Meter project is moving along well, we are up to 45.5% completion for water meter installation.

We identified a partial blockage of a storm sewer culvert under Casho Mill Road that drains the Saw Mill Court area. This is a DeIDOT maintained storm sewer system and they are working to schedule a dig-up and repair of the pipe. We expect that this will help alleviate some of the drainage problems in Saw Mill Court and potentially reduce overtopping of Casho Mill Road during large storms.

We are nearing the end of a speed study being performed with the assistance of the PD on South Main Street, New London Road, Paper Mill Road and Christina Parkway. Once complete we will use this data to work with DeIDOT in preparation of a mutually acceptable plan for revising existing speed limits.

The new booster pumps at the Northwest Booster are now up and running and are working well so far. We have a final walkthrough with DEMA on Monday, September 16th that will allow them to sign off on reimbursement through the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant program. Once the site work is complete we will be working with the West Branch Landscaping Committee to design an acceptable landscaping plan and to select a surface treatment for the 3M wrap of the booster skid.

The street contract is moving along well. Eight (8) of the 12 streets on the contract are now complete with curb work currently under way on Fairfield Drive.

CSH/mp