

DEPARTMENTAL WEEKLY REPORTS

April 17, 2014

Planning & Development

Planning

On Friday morning, I met with Code Enforcement Supervisor Steve Wilson and City Solicitor Bruce Herron to review the Code definitions for rooming/boarding houses.

Also on Friday morning, I met with Chris Locke of Lang Development Group to review the Subdivision Advisory Committee comments on the Madeline Crossing major subdivision plan.

On Monday afternoon, I met with Will Mather of Duffield Associates to discuss an administrative subdivision plan.

This week the Department received two new applications for Administrative Subdivisions. One is to remove lot lines between three parcels in Kelway Plaza for the continuous use of a doctor's office; and, the other is to accommodate the donation of four feet at the entrance to the STAR Campus to the State for right-of-way for South College Avenue.

Council considered the following Planning and Development related items:

1. The rezoning, major subdivision and special use permit for 201 East Delaware Avenue. The proposal is to demolish the existing building and construct one three-story mixed-use building containing first-floor office space and parking and 12 upper floor apartments.
2. An ordinance amending the City's Subdivision Regulations to give the Public Works and Water Resources Director authority, in certain instances, to modify site design and construction requirements concerning wetlands.
3. A request from Deli Days, LLC to lift an existing deed restriction prohibiting the sale of alcohol at the property located at 168 East Main Street (formerly the Pita Pit and Coldstone Creamery). The applicants also request a special use permit for a restaurant serving alcohol in the BB zone.
4. A minor subdivision plan for .3542 acres located at 75 Ray Street and 0 Rose Street in order to demolish the existing single-family dwelling on the site and construct two one family four-bedroom dwellings in a semi-detached, duplex layout.
5. A request for a special use permit from the Warren A. Price Automotive Group to construct an A-frame radio communications tower for company use at the site located at 1344 Marrows Road.

Considerable time was spent this week reviewing all development proposals for consideration at the May Planning Commission agenda

Considerable time was spent reviewing definitions for "accessory use" and "neighborhood" from zoning codes across the country.

Some time was spent working with Business and Focus magazine concerning an upcoming feature of the City.

Some time was spent reviewing materials for a potential revision to the City's home based business ordinance.

On Thursday, Development Supervisor Mike Fortner met with Institute of Public Administration and Office of State Planning staff to review and discuss the maps in the Comprehensive Development Plan update.

On Monday, Mike staffed and Planner/DNP Administrator Ricky Nietubicz and I attended a Planning Commission Workshop on the update of the Comprehensive Development Plan. The Planning Commission will continue a discussion of the Plan at their regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting on May 6th.

Time was spent helping with the planning of Newark's Bike to Work Day which will be held on May 16, from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. The event will be held in front of the Trabant Center.

Economic Development

DNP Administrator Ricky Nietubicz is working on gathering event schedules from arts organizations throughout downtown (Newark Arts Alliance, Chapel Street Players, Mid-Atlantic Ballet, Delaware Dance Company, UD museums) for promotion via the Tourism, Arts and Downtown Development "Eat, Drink and Buy Art" promotion, designed to encourage tourism throughout Delmarva. We hope that the increased exposure of our arts community, which is among the strongest involved in the promotion, will drive more visitors downtown to patronize not only our arts community, but our restaurants and retailers as well, particularly during the slower summer season.

This week, Ricky also surveyed those that participated in the Wine & Dine Downtown event about various aspects of the event. Those who responded were pleased with the result – one reported it was the best year of sales since the inception of the event.

Community Development

Mike processed and recommended approval for a Promoting Owner Occupancy of Homes (POOH) loan for an applicant purchasing a rental home in Nottingham Green.

Parking

This week the Parking Division installed the new large exit sign for Lot #3 directing traffic to the New Center Street exit.

Evaluation of smart parking meters and features continued this week.

Staff continues to search for replacement coin acceptions for the pay-by-phone equipment in Lot #1.

Code Enforcement

Code Enforcement Supervisor Steve Wilson is helping Public Works with gate access to some locations around the City to hook into the City Hall Door Access System.

Framing has started at 1 South Main Street.

The court yard at City Hall is almost completed. There are just a few things left to complete.

Public Works & Water Resources

Streets

- Provided both swaploader bodies for volunteers from the White Clay Creek State Park for cleanup in conjunction with the annual Christina River Cleanup.
- Catch basin in yard at 357 Stafford was excavated to determine the source of a sink hole at this location. A poor connection was determined to be the source of the erosion and a camera was placed in the pipe to determine further deterioration. The catch basin was then parged, sealed and backfilled.
- Sink hole repair/new blacktop at Heather Court.

Refuse

- Green Wednesday was cancelled this week due to the Good Friday holiday.

Water and Wastewater

- Leak detection correlators were installed to determine the source of water coming through the surface of the ground at Aronimink Road.
- Sewer manhole frame and cover replacement and masonry repairs.
- Completed water meter marriage file transfer and troubleshooting with Elster representative.

Management

- Contractor has finished drainage and grading work in the courtyard at City Hall. The fix was evaluated in the future training room during the rain on Tuesday, April 15 and so far has held.
- Planning continues for UDNI. A preferred tent layout and order was prepared, site location was verified, a signage plan was developed, and the sales/drop-off calendar was confirmed.
- Homeland Security Grant meeting with Advantech to discuss gate access management, security camera, and door alarm options at the City water treatment and detention facilities.
- Transfer station closure coordination with DNREC and JMT.
- Completed interviews for Senior Mechanic II position within the Maintenance Division.
- Specifications for Water Division replacement vehicles are underway. Top priority is the sewer flusher truck.

Stormwater

- Investigated and conducted a follow up visit for one illicit discharge complaint.
- Filled out the DNREC Notice of Termination (NOT) form to terminate our NPDES permit coverage for transfer station operations, and submitted it to the Public Works & Water Resources Director for his review, signature, and/or submittal.
- Conducted a quarterly wet visual monitoring event for our NPDES industrial stormwater permit for maintenance yard operations. This is a visual monitoring event, as opposed to a water quality monitoring event. Documented the required weather data from the DEOS (Delaware Environmental Observing System) website, and filled out the associated forms.
- Retrieved GIS parcel map information for the Engineering Assistant.
- Continued to work with the White Clay Wild and Scenic Management Plan Coordinator on an educational kiosk sign planned for Curtis Mill Park.
- Collected a water quality monitoring sample for our NPDES industrial stormwater permit for maintenance yard operations. We are required to sample bi-annually for pH, total suspended solids, oil and grease, surfactants, and total recoverable iron. A comparison is then made to benchmark values for our industrial classification in the industrial stormwater regulations.
- Ordered more storm drain markers to replenish the catch basin cleaning crew supplies. This winter was particularly hard on them with shoveling and snow blowing damaging or scraping up more than normal.
- Participated in an EPA Watershed Academy webcast, "Waters of the US Proposed Rule". This rule is intended to reduce confusion about certain Clean Water Act protections, not expand it. I'm not sure it achieves this in its current form.

Electric

A pole on Delaware Circle was destroyed in an accident and had to be replaced. While working on the pole a nearby backyard pole was discovered to be a danger and was also replaced. The line crews also started working on replacing over 1000' of large underground primary cable that feeds out from one of the City's main transformers.

With the help of the line crews a substation distribution breaker was removed and is being refurbished by a contractor. While the transformer was off, the electricians installed equipment to prevent an accidental breaker trip during routine maintenance. Also, an electrician and contractor started gathering oil samples of all the substation equipment as part of the annual testing.

Bloom Energy started feeding power back into the City after the Interconnection Agreement was approved. Currently, a net flow of about 150kW is being back fed into the City while the Bloom Boxes are being tested on site.

Engineering met with a crane contractor to go over the removal of a substation transformer in June and the installation of a new transformer in the fall.

Parks & Recreation

Administration & Planning

Tom, Rich and I met with the contractor who will install the landscaping in the traffic median on Elkton Road from the bridge (Christina Creek) just west of Casho Mill Road to the Christina Parkway. Funding for the project was provided, in part, by Home Depot at Suburban Plaza. Home Depot has committed to maintaining the traffic median adjacent to Suburban Plaza.

Curtis Mill Park Update:

- The contractor began excavating and relocating contaminated soils from Region 3 to an on-site location to be capped.
- The contractor will soon install a drain pipe and begin to backfill the mill race.
- The contractor began importing soil for capping purposes.
- I am committing time reviewing an invoice for payment from the project contractor.

I committed time working on the 2015-2019 CIP.

The recreation staff conducted the annual Nefosky Memorial Walk/Run at the Reservoir Friday evening.

The recreation staff conducted a very successful Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday. More than 600 people enjoyed the event.

The contractor who provided the low bid for our mowing contract was unable to get the required surety bond, thus cannot be awarded the contract. A recommendation to award the contract was presented to Council on Tuesday, April 14.

Tom conducted park inspections and developed maintenance work orders. He also met with landscape contractor doing plant installation at the development behind Suburban Plaza concerning plant species changes.

Tom attended Emerald Ash Bore training workshop to gather additional information on creating a management plan for the City's urban forest.

Tom completed this year's Christina River Clean Up as site captain here in Newark. There were three operations happening on Saturday - 49 trees/shrubs planted at the forested buffer area along the White Clay Creek, about 1,200 crocus bulbs were planted along the trail on top of the Reservoir and about 500 to 600 pounds of trash was picked up in the area along the Christina from the I-95 South on ramp up to and behind Dunkin Donuts on South College Avenue. Many thanks go out to all those who volunteered their time including Sam Palese and Shane Windell of the Parks staff.

Rich picked up plant materials that were used in the planting along the White Clay. He continued working on specs for a new truck to replace 1433 (2015 CIP), attended a meeting about the Elkton Road planting, and continued coordinating work in the IT room in the lower level room at City Hall.

Parks Maintenance

The crew worked on items to prepare ball fields for the coming season, continued preparing (painting walls and replacing ceiling tiles) the IT training room, committed time working on several park maintenance work orders and assisted with the Nefosky Run at the Reservoir.

We continue to work on landscaped beds (cleanup, mulching and herbicide applications) throughout the City.

The crew repaired the post and rail fence at the Reservoir and repaired ruts in turf around parking lot.

Recreation Services

Paula completed the men's softball league and adult summer volleyball league schedules. She sent it to the coaches and posted it on the City website. She has two more volleyball leagues schedules to complete once teams are finalized.

Paula met with Joe Spadafino and Ricky Nietubicz regarding the New Night event in June.

Paula started the interview process for counselors for summer day camp. She will continue to interview through April 23 and then make final selections.

It's been a busy week in the events office with the Nefosky Walk & 5K Run and the Egg Hunt, both being held over the weekend. Although the forecast was calling for a chance of rain for both events, it held off and we had beautiful weather. Over 200 people registered for the Nefosky Walk & 5K Run. Totals for the amount raised will be calculated after the Guest Bartender night, which is expected to be held within the next two months.

The Egg Hunt was a wonderful event with over 600 children collecting over 10,000 eggs and \$2,000 worth of prizes donated from local businesses. Special thanks to Delaware State Parks for allowing us to hold our event at White Clay Creek State Park and to DuKart Management (McDonald's), Dairy Queen, Friendly's, California Tortilla, Rita's Water Ice, Captain Blue Hen Comics, Newark Natural Foods, Watt Variety, Heart & Home, SAS Cupcakes, Cinemark Movies 10, Wilmington Blue Rocks, Vince's Sports Center, Christiana Skating Center, UD's Fred Rust Ice Arena, National 5&10, Unique Impressions, Wooden Wheels, Walgreens, Switch, Blue Hen Bed & Breakfast, Kirk's Flowers, Milburn Orchards, Minster's Jewelers, and Newark Deli & Bagel for their very generous donations.

Sharon and Debbie spent all of the week preparing for the two events, soliciting and collecting prizes, meeting with staff and volunteers, loading and unloading for the events, confirming services, etc. Sharon also worked on finalizing the Spring Concert schedule and will be posting it next week. Thanks to Parks and all of the other City staff that attended or supported the events this weekend.

Tyler attended the Downes Elementary Health & Wellness committee meeting. The committee is working on a plan to increase healthy habits for the students.

Tyler and Joe worked on details for the Newark Parks Photo Scavenger Hunt in conjunction with National Kids to Parks Day.

Tyler is making preparations and finalizing staff for the Spring Break Camp scheduled at the George Wilson Center April 21-25.

Tyler confirmed the location and is making preparations for the end of year dance program recital scheduled May 3 at the Delaware School for the Deaf. Picture day was also scheduled for April 30 at GWC.

Tyler met with the pottery instructor to discuss solutions regarding inconsistent firing of pottery in the kiln.

Joe is organizing the Summer Activity Guide which will go out on Monday, April 28.

Joe is working with the Delaware Archives to get a historic marker placed at the Old Newark Train Station.

Joe completed park inspections at Rittenhouse Park, Leroy Hill Park, Redd Park upper trail and the Reservoir.

Joe met with Sharon about the Nefosky Run and the Egg Hunt and assisted at both events.

Finance

City Manager Carol Houck and I met with Scott Lynch, Energy Services Manager with DEMEC, Inc. to discuss the possibility for public participation in McKees Solar Park. Recommendations and alternatives will be identified before the project is completed so that we can roll out a new program to replace the voluntary green energy block program. The green energy block program must be terminated because the supply of renewable energy associated with the program has been exhausted and will not be renewed. Program participants will be notified accordingly.

Customer Service

The Customer Service group continues to work on various upgrades and implementation work related to the smart meter project. The smart meter working group has held regular progress meetings to address the mCare (mobile work order platform) implementation, Customer Connect, and MeterSense user acceptance testing, among other items. The next meeting is scheduled for April 30, 2014. The customer service team is also undertaking cross-training efforts to be prepared with department coverage as the smart meter project requires more focused attention as we near completion.

Customer Service participated in a WebEx session with Harris on net metering in an effort to work toward a go-live date for automatic billing for customers with solar generation.

Accounting

The quarterly tax billing will be executed in the new CityView property tax billing module for the first time this quarter.

The 2013 financial statements are complete and undergoing final audit review. The final steps to the production of the comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR) include the management's discussion and analysis (MD&A) and the inclusion of supplementary data such as charts/graphs, analysis, narratives and photographs.

Alderman's Court

This past week we held three court sessions. We processed a total of 90 arraignments, 65 trials, 16 case reviews, and 14 capias returns.

Police

On March 23, 2014 at approximately 6:30 p.m., a male entered the State Line Cigarette Outlet on Elkton Road wearing a full face mask. The suspect lifted his shirt and showed the store clerk the handle of a black handgun and a knife clipped to the suspects pocket. The suspect demanded money from the cash register, which the clerk handed over. Newark Detective Greg D'Elia conducted the investigation and on Thursday April 10th, conducted a search warrant of a suspect's residence and seized evidence linking him to the robbery. The suspect was not home at the time of the search but turned himself in to police later that day. The handgun believed to be used in the robbery was recovered. The suspect was charged with Robbery 1st degree, Possession of a Deadly Weapon During the Commission of a Felony, Carrying a Concealed Deadly Weapon, and Wearing a Disguise During the Commission of a Felony.

On April 17th at 6:30 p.m., the Railroad Safety Presentation will be given at the Aetna Fire Station on Ogletown Road. The Police Department would like to especially thank Aetna Fire Chief A.J. Schall for being a panelist and also arranging the use of the fire station as well as making the physical preparations of the fire station for the public meeting. We would also like to thank New Castle County Emergency Management Coordinator Dave Carpenter for making arrangements with several presenters on the panel, as well as his own participation as a panelist.

Planning is underway to have additional police officers working grant funded overtime on May 3rd when Cinco de Mayo is often celebrated in Newark.

City Manager's Office

Personnel

- Held and facilitated a meeting with personnel that are eligible to the Early Retirement Incentive Plan (ERIP); this was an educational session for employees and their spouses to review the adopted ordinance amendment that effectuated the ERIP opportunity. The potential opportunity was well received among the employees, however, time will tell if the incentive fits into such a personal decision to retire. Employees are encouraged to set up private meeting with me to review the data directly specific to themselves.

- There were several personnel meetings with current and pending-retirement members regarding benefits, work challenges, and staffing matters with several departments.
- Facilitated a promotional process for lead mechanic in the PW&WR Department. A 360-Evaluation process was first held with numerous department staff that interact with the four (4) members of the Maintenance Division. These comments are anonymous, and are a helpful element to the leadership when assessing an operation and the personnel. I then worked with PW&WR Director Tom Coleman, and PW&WR Deputy Director Tim Filasky to interview each member of the Division for the promotional position.
- Participated in a webinar by our benefits broker, Mercer, on the Mercer Marketplace, which is a private exchange analogous to a public marketplace such as Healthcare.gov.
- Joined the Councilmember Orientation on Wednesday, for the newly elected Councilmen Gifford and Ruckle.

Community Affairs

I have spent a considerable amount of time on working on the editorial and layout for the summer 2014 Municipal Newsletter.

I have spent some additional time on preparations for the Administrative Professionals Day luncheon on April 23.

I sent some time wrapping up Wine and Dine: writing thank you letters for the Mayor's signature and invoices for sponsors.

A press release was sent out regarding the holiday recycling collection was sent out.

I worked with Karie Simmons of the Newark Post who is writing a story on Rico, the Alderman Court's bailiff.

I spent some time updating and scheduling meeting postings on Newark TV 22 this week.

Facebook

Likes of Page	Likes of Posts	Comments	Shares	Post Clicks
4	51	5	19	599

Twitter

New Followers	Unique Interactions	Link Clicks
22	56	99

CSH/mp