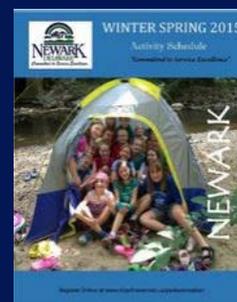




Committed to Service Excellence

2015 Winter/Spring Municipal Newsletter

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This Issue's City Manager Message:

As we begin a new year, some of us take the time to reflect on the past and look forward to the future, a new year with new resolutions to be the best self that we can be. As a municipality, we undertake a similar annual process of self-reflection and planning for the future, through our budget process. Our budget is much more than just a spreadsheet of income and expenditures, indeed, it's actually two documents that detail our operations for the upcoming year, and outline our aspirations and priorities for capital improvements over the next several years; together these documents are a whopping 311 pages! The final budget represents months of effort made on your behalf by our dedicated Department Directors, staff and ultimately your Mayor and Council.

Looking back, 2014 was a good year for the City of Newark. Yes, I boldly make such a statement, even with 2014 being a year that included a controversial development project proposed for the University of Delaware's STAR Campus. As your City Manager I cannot help but pause and wonder what other innovative and progressive action our community could have accomplished without this, but a municipality is, and must be, dynamic and adaptive, as unexpected scenarios are brought through our processes. However, I am pleased to say, while looking back and during our development of the 2015 budget we accomplished a great deal in 2014, and we are poised to continue this momentum this year! More specifically...

In 2014 we completed the transformation of two longstanding brownfields into productive, beneficial sites for our community; the former Curtis Paper Mill (purchased in 1999 for \$200,000, and the recipient of over \$800,000 in



Curtis Park Ribbon Cutting Ceremony



"Cutting the Power Cord" to open McKees Solar Park

brownfield remediation funds) into the City's newest park, while paying homage to its history, and our former refuse landfill off of McKees Lane into the McKees Community Solar Park, helping to reduce Newark's dependence on fossil-fueled power from the wholesale grid and providing various opportunities for all in our community to participate and support green energy. More information about all of Newark's green initiatives can be found

at www.greennewarkde.org.

Other, less visible, improvements were completed for our water and electric utility infrastructures, including replacement of a mile of water mains and numerous handicapped ramps, as well as the installations of new electric transformers to keep up with increasing electrical demand in our older neighborhoods. "Smart" water and electric meters have increased operational efficiencies and have improved revenues in association with their accuracy. Likewise, "smart" parking meters now allow customers to pay for parking more conveniently by credit card in our downtown ([click here](#) for an informational video about how to use them). We also utilized funds awarded when we achieved the state's only "Gold" level award as a Healthy and Active Community to start an employee bike share program, and provide our employees a healthy and idle-free way to travel to local meetings and appointments. 2014 also saw Newark edge closer in our quest to achieve a "Silver" designation as a "Bike Friendly" community with our installation of sharrows on a number of major routes, including Main Street, as part of a continued commitment to our bicycle infrastructure, spearheaded by the [Newark Bike Committee](#). (On a related note, after many years of semi-nomadic movements between temporary shops, the [Newark Bike Project](#) moved to a permanent home on South Main Street this summer.)

Many improvements were made to our information technology systems and operations to better accommodate current needs as well as provide a more secure environment for our data. To get the most of our information technology investments, we also created a technology training room that allows for staff training in a cohesive, convenient group setting, in house. By eliminating the operation of our refuse transfer station, we realized hundreds of thousands of dollars in savings, as well as improved efficiencies. Perhaps most exciting, you may have heard that Newark was selected to be the "pilot city" for the [Chesapeake Crescent Initiative](#)



Newark Resident Information Guide

Pay Utility Bill

Utility Bill Automatic Debit

UD Student Electric Account Transfer Request



Deposit unserviceable American flags in a drop box located at the entrance to the parking lot to V.F.W. Post 475 off of Veterans Lane just beyond the Municipal Building.

(CCI) Safe + Smart City project, which provided our Department Directors direct engagement with industry leaders in the fields of technology, utilities, safety, etc. with a goal of helping us identify opportunities to be an even more progressive and successful community! We are eagerly awaiting the recommendations of the coalition partners, provided at no cost to Newark early this year.

Likewise, in the benefits realm of operations, our organization achieved several medium- to long-range cost saving initiatives related to pension and health care reforms, as we moved from defined-benefit to defined-contribution plans for new hires, and became the first Delaware city to become part owner of its employee health care program with a seat on the board of the Delaware Valley Health Trust. These initiatives, undertaken with the support of our employee unions and management staff, will serve to reduce future personnel costs, further engage our employees in controlling costs and help to position our organization to continue to provide its same level of services well into the future.

Over the past several years, we have placed a high priority on the maintenance of our infrastructure. Nearly every news outlet has stories of localities having to deal with crises created by a cumulative lack of maintenance, as far away as [Los Angeles](#) and even in our [nation's capitol](#), and it is our absolute commitment that Newark's infrastructure not deteriorate beyond the point of functionality. As with any system, this requires continued investments. Based on [a 2011 study](#), we have been adjusting our water rates to better reflect the cost of providing water service, so that we can avoid deferring necessary maintenance into the future to the point that a crisis is eventually created.



Stormwater challenges in Newark

We are proud to say that our [rates remain very competitive with private sector providers](#). To face our stormwater challenges head on, we have [proposed the development of a stormwater utility](#). Three beneficial public meetings on the topic were held last year to educate residents of the issues as well as learn from and attempt to accommodate the suggestions made. This dialog will continue in 2015 with a goal of prioritizing our known community stormwater concerns and put funding directly into determining and repairing problems.

By carefully managing expenses, working to diversify our revenue sources and finding ways to work smarter, we have kept our service provision well above average, while keeping household costs below that of comparable jurisdictions. Using a simple means of comparison, refuse collection alone in nearby, unincorporated areas of New Castle County typically costs more than \$300 per year, while our total average residential annual property tax

burden is only about \$530 a year, to say nothing of the many other additional services provided, such as residential snow removal, our 660 acres of parks and open space, and our dedicated and accredited police force. This is only accomplished as a result of our reliance on margin transfers from our electric, water and parking utilities.

Rest assured, we are committed to do our part to reduce costs, and we are proud that efficiency initiatives implemented since 2013, such as the consolidation of our Public Works and Water and Wastewater Departments, implementation of smart metering, elimination of our refuse transfer station and improvements to our large truck maintenance, leaf collection and street sweeping programs, as well as employee pension and benefit reforms, will result in savings of over \$3 million through 2015, and will continue to generate operational savings into the future. These initiatives are the direct result of looking at our organization with our eyes wide open and being willing to make tough decisions or fully evaluate options. For that, I thank our Mayor and Council for their support of decisions and our departments for their commitment to our community.

Looking forward into 2015 and beyond, our Budget document and Capital Improvement Program lay out how we plan to continue to improve the quality of life in Newark, and continue to live up to our slogan, "Committed to Service Excellence," by providing the highest quality services at reasonable costs. Much of our infrastructure is out of sight, but not out of mind, as we plan to continue replacing water mains, sanitary sewers and upgrade our electric delivery system to make sure it remains highly reliable while finding ways to rely less on revenue transfers from our utilities to fund other community services. This year will see the consideration of the design for a new electric substation located at the University of Delaware Science, Technology and Advanced Research (STAR) Campus take place that will serve future STAR tenants as well as provide much

needed backup to the southern area of our community if developed. Other infrastructure improvements will be much more visible, such as our



Night and day: the difference between LED (left) and High Pressure Sodium (right) street lighting

annual street improvement program and, new in 2015, our conversion to LED streetlights along our major roads; the photo at right highlights the difference between LED (left) and conventional high-pressure sodium bulbs, to say nothing of the reduced electric usage and significantly longer lifespan of the LED units. Come this spring you will also notice the full introduction of solar operated and compacting refuse and recycling units within our downtown district that provide us operational efficiencies (from seven days a week collection to twice a week collection),



BigBelly solar-powered compactors on East Main Street

greater cleanliness and move Newark further towards its goal of being environmentally friendly by finally committing to recycling along our Great American Main Street.

Operationally, we are committed to continue to identify and implement changes to increase our productivity and adapt to changing needs, communicate more effectively and better engage you, our residents. Being nimble and embracing opportunities as an organization and community will continue to be important as we prepare for an inevitably changing future. So, in closing, again as an organization and progressive community, our "New Year's Resolutions" aren't all that different from the goals many have as individuals - to be a healthy, productive, engaged, leaner and more nimble organization. As we begin this New Year I remind you that we start working on our goals early or as opportunities arise. Please join us, in person at meetings or online by checking out our website or "Budget Central" page, and help us to make our 2015 goals a reality, and to formulate the goals of our community for 2016 and beyond! On that note, please register for InformMe, our resident notification system, through our [homepage](#) or [directly](#).

All my very best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol J. Houck".

If you have not viewed our introductory video yet, please take a few minutes to [check it out!!!](#)

Stay up to date on all things snow with our "Snow Central" page!



For all the latest National Weather Service forecasts, and our Public

Works and Water Resources Department's response plans - check it out!

Water Main Flushing

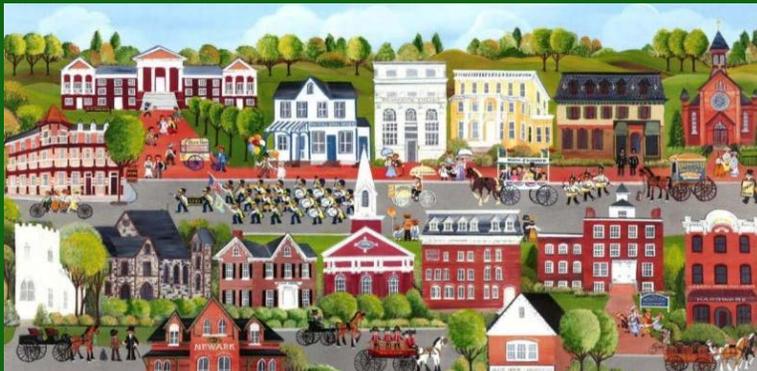
In order to keep our water mains clean and clear, the Public Works and Water Resources Department conducts twice-yearly flushing; the next scheduled round will occur on or about the last week of March. To maximize operational efficiency and ensure thorough flushing of the entire system, the Department no longer assigns specific neighborhoods to specific days of the week. However, we will update our [website](#) and social media feeds to keep residents updated of which areas have been flushed, and which areas are scheduled for flushing the subsequent day(s).

Yard Waste Collection to Resume in March



"Green Wednesday" yard waste collection will re-start on or about the first week of March. Please check the City homepage for more specific dates or call Public Works and Water Resources at (302) 366-7040.

Comprehensive Development Plan V



Work to update the City of Newark Comprehensive Development Plan will continue through the upcoming months, with the next scheduled City Council workshop on Monday, February 2. Check out [THIS PAGE](#) on our website for the most up to date drafts and participation opportunities, and come join us if you can! If you can't make it in person, check out the [NewarkPlanBlog](#) page and give us your input electronically if you can.

New Calendar of Events Magnets are In!



DOWNTOWN Newark 2015 COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR
A New Day Everyday!

JANUARY
Restaurant Week: Monday, 1/19 – Sunday 1/25

MARCH
Downtown Newark's Annual Wine & Dine: Saturday, 3/28
Egg Hunt: Saturday, 3/28, 10AM (Rain Date 3/29 2PM)

APRIL
Spring Community Clean Up: Saturday, 4/11, 9-11AM

MAY
Spring Concerts on the Academy Lawn Every Thursday, 5/7 – 5/28
Memorial Day Ceremony - 1PM UD Green ; Parade - 2PM Main Street

JUNE
Spring Concerts on Academy Lawn Every Thursday, 6/4-6/25
New Night Downtown, 6/13 3 -9PM

JULY
Fireworks: Saturday, 7/4, 6-10:30PM
(Rain Date: Sunday, 7/5 – Dusk; Fireworks Only)
Downtown Newark's Annual Food and Brew Fest: Saturday, 7/25

AUGUST
Top of Newark Triathlon: Sunday, 8/16, Newark Reservoir

SEPTEMBER
Community Day: Sunday, 9/20, 11AM – 4PM
(Rain Date – Sunday, 9/27)
Annual Taste of Newark: Sunday, 9/27, NOON – 3PM, Old College Lawn

OCTOBER
Main Street Mile: Saturday, 10/3, 9AM
Fall Community Clean Up: Saturday, 10/10, 9-11AM
Halloween Parade and Trick-or-Treat Main Street: Sunday, 10/25, 3-5PM

NOVEMBER
Turkey Trot: Saturday, 11/21, 10K – 9am, 5k 10:30PM
Small Business Saturday, 11/28

DECEMBER
Winterfest: Friday, 12/4 (Rain Date – Saturday, 12/5), 6-8pm

enjoydowntownnewark.com

These are always popular and go fast - stop by the Municipal Building (220 S. Main Street) or Parking Office (45 E. Main Street, second floor) to get your 2015 fridge magnet!

[Forward email](#)



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