

City Manager's Weekly Report

Friday, March 17, 2017

Department:

Administration - City Manager

Notable Notes:

Mayor and Council -

Thank you all for your participation in the special meeting to discuss the Rodney site purchase agreement. Our staff worked hard to provide the level of detail requested, and we appreciate both Council's and the community's support and recognition of the positive impact a stormwater facility at this site can have on our community.

Please find below a brief update on the Newark Regional Train Station that I provided Councilwoman Wallace this week and share for awareness of all of Council.

DelDOT has advised it will be completing driveway gap analysis in relationship to further Florida T research. We have no additional information to share but will continue to update Council and the public. No additional meeting dates have been set at this time.

Please find the revised March 21st Traffic Agenda below.

Also attached below is a recent correspondence to Thompson Circle residents. It will be discussed at the March 21st Traffic meeting and is being recommended to improve collection service. Councilman Ruckle has been advised as well.

Additional Police and Codes staff will be on duty over this weekend to respond to the customary increased need for enforcement associated with the St Patrick's Day holiday. Coordination with the University Police has also occurred as well as advance outreach to restaurants regarding occupancy rules and safety.

As you are aware, our offices were closed this Tuesday in association with the snow event. I commend the staff for their dedication and hard work to address the storm made more complicated by icing. In addition to plowing, drain clearing, sidewalk and tree work handled by PW&WR and Parks and Recreation and Parking, the Electric Department responded to over 100 calls for branches on wires that caused localized outages.

Activity or Project:

Newark Regional Train Station

Description:

There will be an item on the agenda for the meeting of March 27th regarding the Train Station. I can also share the following: DelDOT/WILMAPCO – There is no confirmation for when new platforms (with two sides available for train service) will be added. This effort is underway with Amtrak. The two-sided platform is necessary to accommodate additional trains. However, the construction of the new parking lot and access from South College was recently advertised by DelDOT and construction is expected to start by this summer. The designs for the new train station building are in final stages and construction is expected to start by end of this year or early

2018. Utility requirements to accommodate new train station: Electric - All the power lines running from the bridge toward the old transfer station are being relocated farther from the tracks. All the aerial lines on the west side of the bridge must be relocated due to changes in the road and parking configuration for the new station. The City's work must coordinate with DPL's since we share quite a few poles. Two new electric services will be supplied for the site lighting and the building. Water - Our existing interconnection with United will need to be relocated due to the expense of running a new main perpendicular to the widened railroad lines if this occurs. The new interconnection will be on the SE side of the S. College Avenue bridge and will, at least temporarily, need rental pumps to activate. We have designed the new interconnection to be able to be run with rental pumps in the interim. The new interconnection has also been designed to allow for 2-way operation to improve resiliency (good news) with United. We will now be able to pump water into United's system if they have an emergent issue where they were unable to meet their demand like a main break or treatment plant failure. This is not something that is possible with the current interconnection.

Status: Started

Expected Completion: 3/17/2017

Execution Status: On Track

Activity or Project:

Snow Plowing Response

Description:

Hopefully we will not need to address snow again this year; however, I wanted to share detail that may assist in responding to concerns you may get about driveways being plowed in. It was shared with a Councilmember this week. Our drivers do what they can to avoid plowing in driveways as described below but, unfortunately, they have only limited control over how the snow falls off of the end of their plow blade. As the truck drives down the street, it pushes a pile that will "unload" in a driveway if the homeowner shovels all the way out to where our truck had previously plowed. We don't have the staffing or equipment to plow out each driveway as we work down the street without sacrificing our ability to plow all of our streets in a timely manner. We have recommendations on how to avoid this on the Snow Central page of the City's website, here is a link: <http://cityofnewarkde.us/DocumentCenter/View>.

Status: Completed

Expected Completion: 3/16/2017

Execution Status: On Track

Activity or Project:

Lobbyist

Description:

Per Council direction outreach to our Lobbyist occurred to make him aware of the following: Support HB47 with an effective date after the City's election and to, Pursue an amendment to Title 22, Chapter 3, Section 322(b) to have the qualifications for Board of Adjustment members

read “who shall have knowledge of and experience in the problems of urban and/or suburban and/or rural development...” (Wallace proposed; 4-1 vote to approve by Council)

Status: Started

Expected Completion: 3/14/2017

Execution Status: On Track

Department:

Alderman’s Court

Notable Notes:

Alderman's Court held three court sessions from 3/9/17 to 3/15/17 which included trials, arraignments, capias returns, code enforcement hearings, violation of probation hearings and video hearings. Parking was here on Monday and Wednesday to handle parking appeals.

The Language Link has been used several times over the past week for incoming calls with questions, paying bills, or scheduling court dates.

Mayor Sierer has expressed interest in observing court with each Judge and Paul Bilodeau.

Activity or Project:

Court Sessions

Description:

From 3/8/17 to 3/15/17 Alderman's Court handled 33 arraignments, 44 trials, 16 capias returns, 2 video hearings, 2 violation of probations hearings, and 2 code enforcement violations. The court collected a total 345 payments of which 182 were paid through PayPal and 163 were paid at court. The court also collected payments for criminal/ traffic fines which included 118 online payments and 49 were paid at court for a total of 167 payments.

Status: Completed

Expected Completion: 3/15/2017

Execution Status: Completed

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

Activity or Project:**Description:**

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

Department:

City Secretary and City Solicitor's Office

Notable Notes:

Bruce was in the office on March 13 for Council. Paul was in the office March 15 for Council and March 16 for Court.

Tara attended week 1 of the Municipal Clerks Institute in Dover on March 10. Topics covered include Public Administration, Economic Development in Your Community and Infrastructure Management for Local Governments. This is a six week program through UD's Institute of Public Administration which allows participants to earn 20 of the 110 points needed for the Certified Municipal Clerk designation from the International Institute of Municipal Clerks.

Bruce and Renee staffed the Council meeting on March 13. Follow up work was completed by staff on March 13 and 15 due to the inclement weather closure on March 14.

The March 14 Conservation Advisory Commission meeting was cancelled due to the inclement weather closure. The CAC is in the process of scheduling a new date for their April meeting as their regular meeting night conflicts with the City election.

Paul and Renee staffed the Council meeting on March 15. Follow up work was completed by staff on March 16.

Preparation for the April 11 City Council election took up quite a bit of time this week. Council approved the locations of the polling places at their March 13 meeting. The polling places are as follows:

- District 2 - Aetna Fire Station #7, 410 Ogletown Road
- District 4 - First Church of Christ Scientist - 48 West Park Place

Thanks to Jay Hodny in our IT Division for working to have the polling place finder updated and ready to go after Council approval and to Kyle Glazier in our Communications Division for designing the postcards that will be mailed to registered voters in Districts 2 and 4 to make them aware of their new polling places. Staff finalized and submitted all remaining paperwork to the Department of Elections - New Castle County office, finalized the ballots for the voting machines, did round two of updates to the voter lists by coding voters who had registered between February 1 and March 10, began preparation of the mailing universe for polling place postcards, completed,

posted and submitted the election notice ad to the Newark Post and News Journal, and worked with Election Board members regarding poll worker recruitment.

Renee spent time working on the recommendations to Council from the Boards and Commissions Review Committee regarding the Planning Commission and the Downtown Newark Partnership. Both are scheduled for first reading on March 27 and second reading on April 24.

Renee spent time drafting several bills and resolutions for the March 27 Council agenda.

Renee completed the direction sheet from the March 13 Council meeting and circulated it to staff and Council.

Renee drafted the agenda for the March 27 Council meeting.

Sarah and Teressa completed the advertisement and related mailing for the subdivision agreement amendment for the Lofts at Center Street, which would increase the occupancy of the project from 92 to 101 unrelated occupants. This was rescheduled for public hearing at the March 27 Council meeting since the February 27 agenda, where this was originally scheduled to be heard, was not completed.

FOIA requests took some time this week. The following actions were taken:

- Continued work with the City Solicitor regarding a response to a March 2 FOIA request from the Newark Post regarding executive session minutes related to the acquisition of the Rodney property.
- Received response to administrative cost estimate and closed a March 3 FOIA request from LCS, Inc. regarding 800 and 900 Ogletown Road
- Received, circulated to staff, determined there were no relevant documents and closed a March 9 FOIA request from Tyana Pierce regarding a 911 call.
- Received and circulated to staff a March 9 FOIA request from Environmental Alliance, Inc. regarding 401-425 New London Road.
- Received, provided information and closed a March 12 FOIA request from Lin Zhang regarding Council election totals and gender breakdown
- Received and circulated to staff a March 13 FOIA request from Environmental Alliance, Inc. regarding 92 East Main Street.
- Received, directed to the appropriate agencies and closed a March 14 FOIA request regarding a property outside the City.
- Received and closed a March 15 FOIA request from Sherlock Investigations Inc. regarding an individual's police records.
- Received and forwarded to the City Solicitor a March 16 FOIA request from Amy Roe regarding executive session minutes related to TDC.

The notice for the March 20 Council workshop, the revised March 21 Traffic Committee agenda and the March 21 Planning Commission workshop agenda were forwarded to Council.

Regarding minutes, staff time was spent on the March 13 Council (Tara drafting) and the March 15 Council (Sarah drafting) minutes. The March 13 and 15 Council Executive Session minutes are currently in the queue.

Sarah fulfilled 10 discovery requests for upcoming Alderman's Court cases this week. 99 total discover requests have been fulfilled so far for 2017. The court calendar for March 30 was received and the 18 associated case files were compiled for the Deputy City Solicitor by Sarah. 12 court calendars with 193 associated case files have been compiled for 2017 so far. Sarah also fulfilled one plea by mail.

The office received 6 new lien certificate requests this week, which were sent to Finance for processing. 2 lien certificates were completed and sent to the requestor. So far 82 lien certificate requests have been processed for 2017.

Activity or Project:

No progress to report

Description:

There is no progress to report on long term projects this week.

Status: In-Progress

Expected Completion: 3/16/2017

Execution Status: Behind Schedule

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

Department:

Community Relations

Notable Notes:

The recent storm provided several opportunities for us to engage with residents and business and resulted in an increased presence on social media. Megan joined our Public Works crew to cover the storm, as well as shoot video and photos of their efforts throughout the day. We gained 70 new followers on the City's Facebook page this week, 32 of which came on March 14. We utilized all avenues of communication, as needed, throughout the duration of the event, including: Channel 22, InformMe, Facebook, Twitter, press releases and web updates.

Five & Wine and Wine & Dine: More than 250 people are signed-up to participate in the Five & Wine 5-Mile Run/Walk. The registration price currently stands at \$30, but the price will increase to \$35 after 300 participants are signed up. Anyone interested in participating in the run/walk can register here: <https://runsignup.com/Race/DE/Newark/FiveWine>. We are still looking for volunteers to serve as course marshals during the race. Volunteers can sign up here: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080c4dafa622a3f85-five>.

As part of Five & Wine and Wine & Dine we are raffling off two sets of 4-day VIP passes to Firefly. Tickets are \$50 each and available for purchase at the municipal building, or online here: <http://newarkde.gov/993/12692/Win-VIP-Firefly-Tickets>.

NPD Recruitment Video: Megan is working with the Newark Police Department to create a recruitment video that can also be used for public relations purposes. The shoot was Thursday, March 16, and the video will be posted on social media, as well as Newark TV 22.

Press Releases/Media Inquiries

- City of Newark Declares Snow Emergency, Delayed Opening: <http://bit.ly/2mTbnfR>
- City of Newark Closed, Snow Emergency Still in Effect: <http://bit.ly/2mT8hbS>
- City of Newark: Severe Weather Update: <http://bit.ly/2mT8ewl>
- City of Newark Lifts Snow Emergency: <http://bit.ly/2nIU1Qw>
- Unicity Bus Services Delayed: <http://bit.ly/2mwjyLS>
- Josh Shannon, Newark Post, inquired about items recently posted by the City on Muncibid
 - Resulting coverage: http://www.newarkpostonline.com/news/article_b7fa595b-6ca6-5d33-891e-01dcf8eb057c.html
- Josh Shannon, Newark Post, inquired about storm preparation efforts by the City
 - Resulting coverage: http://www.newarkpostonline.com/news/article_8eb7a3b2-e552-5510-8d81-b9312a2d7a61.html
- Josh Shannon, Newark Post, inquired about preparation efforts by Code Enforcement in advance of St. Patrick's Day

Activity or Project:

School Hill/George Wilson Center Historical Research Project

Description:

We had another meeting at the George Wilson Center last week and plans continue to move forward for the event on May 20. We have received additional support from the University of Delaware and will be meeting with representatives in the coming weeks to discuss the collaborative efforts.

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

Department:

Electric Department

Notable Notes:

Winter Storm Stella had the crews working from 5:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. restoring power to Newark residences. No major outages, but lots of tree limbs fell and took out services to homes, blew fuses, and brought down primary wires in the backyards. The crews worked hard all day to get hundreds of people back on. The electricians and the meter technician also worked scouting problems and helping the line crews where necessary.

The electricians are installing cable tray in the Municipal Building for IT and have been installing camera boxes for the fiber optic project on poles throughout the City.

Engineering worked on the 2018 capital budget, the distribution plan for the 10 story building to go at the STAR Campus, and the Christina Schools' (Newark HS, Downes ES, and West Park Place ES) peak load contribution to the system during the five days in 2016 that DEMEC called for conservation.

Activity or Project:

SCADA and Automatic Restoration

Description:

Council approved payment for the project and purchase orders will be issued shortly.

Status: Started

Expected Completion: 12/31/2017

Execution Status: Behind Schedule

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

Department:

Finance - Accounting Department

Notable Notes:

PUB office will be closed for the day on Wednesday, March 29th for staff training. Advanced notice has been (and will be) provided so our customers are not impacted by the closing. Signs have been posted at the Welcome Center and customer service windows.

We are currently conducting interviews for the new Financial Analyst position approved by Council in the 2017 budget. Nine candidates were interviewed last week, with three finalists making it to Round II. A

follow up assignment was sent to the three finalists, and their submissions will be due back on Friday, March 24th.

At the March 13 Council meeting, City Council approved the 2017 Rate Stabilization Adjustment (RSA) at a rate of $-\$0.00472$. This is a change from the 2016 RSA rate of $-\$0.00335$. The average residential customer will see an additional decline in their electric bill of approximately $\$1.15$ per month. The total RSA adjustment will save the average resident $\$3.75$ monthly over the next year.

I would like to thank Council for approving the renewal of the City's insurance policies. Staff is working diligently to prepare all the paperwork to meet the April 1 effective date.

The City's Governmental fund is currently under review by FitchRatings. Fitch periodically reviews all of their outstanding ratings. The publication of their new criteria prompted this review. Fitch's new criteria established a scenario that considers how a government's revenues may be affected in a cyclical downturn and the options available to address the resulting budget gap. This approach conveys a range of the performance where a rating would be expected to remain stable and allows a better understanding of the potential for changes. As is the case with all of Fitch's reviews, this may result in an affirmation or change in the city's 'AA+' rating. I will keep Council abreast of any changes.

Accounting staff have been working diligently to clear out our filing storage area to make room for our pending move to the second floor in approximately two months.

Activity or Project:

Payments and Utility Billing (PUBS)

Description:

The group handled 582 phone calls last week, with the average call length of each call being 2:01. There were 35 service orders initiated by PUB during last week. The group processed 3,644 utility payments and CityView transactions, 646 of which were imported automatically with our electronic processes and 2,249 of which were imported via web, lockbox or preauthorized payment (PAP) over the last week.

Status: In-Progress

Expected Completion: 12/31/2017

Execution Status: On Track

Activity or Project:

Independent Financial Audit

Description:

The auditors from CliftonLarsenAllen will be back to continue their review of 2016 on March 27th and will be here for two weeks.

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

Department:

Planning and Development Department

Notable Notes:

Code Enforcement

- Several fires occurred this past week at 7 Terry Lane, 800 block of Lehigh Road and 101 Dallam Road.
- No major building or code issues occurred during the recent snow storm.
- All the pilings for the new building on STAR Campus have been installed. The next phase will be foundation and utility work.
- The demolition on South Main Street for the next phase of Chimney Ridge is continuing.
- Demolition continues for the new hotel at 400 Ogletown Road.
- Construction is ongoing at Cleveland Avenue.
- Interior framing work is ongoing at the Heights on South Chapel Street.
- Interior wall and roof installation continues at the University of Delaware South Academy Street dormitory, as well as fire system hydro testing.
- Construction is ongoing at the Lofts at Center Street. Steel structure installation began at the site.
- Staff again reported numerous trash and debris notices and violations issued this past weekend. Weekend patrols are continuing.
- Code staff is preparing for St. Patrick's weekend by visiting local establishments and coordinating efforts with NPD.
- Work continues to update data on older building permits and code cases in anticipation of the CityView replacement project.

Planning/Land Use

- Interim Planning and Development Director Dave Culver and Planner II Mike Fortner attended the City Council meeting on March 13. At the meeting, the drive-thru for the Dunkin Donuts located at 1002 South College Avenue was approved, as well as minor amendments to Chapters 27 and 32 regarding the processing of plans.
- This week the department received an application for a major subdivision from Karins and Associates on behalf of Twin Lakes Associates for a parcel located at the 100 and 400 block of North Twin Lakes Boulevard.
- On Thursday, March 16, Mike Fortner attended the WILMAPCO Technical Advisory Committee meeting and the Bike Newark meeting.
- Mike Fortner is working with the City's Conservation Advisory Commission (CAC) on developing a grant request for the City of Newark to DNREC's new grant program, Sustainable Communities Planning Grants. The new grant program is for municipal and county governments, non-profits, and academic institutions, to provide up to \$80,000 for planning grants to be use for Community Sustainability Plans, Climate Change Vulnerability Assessments and Action Plan, and Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Mitigation Plans. As part of the CAC led effort, we will be partnering with officials and representatives from the University of Delaware, WILMAPCO, and Bike Newark.
- Mike Fortner completed the staff report for a special use permit application for a home day care at 211 Edjil Drive. The application will be presented at the March 27 Council meeting.
- The Planning Commission will hold a public workshop on parking on Tuesday, March 21, 2017, 7:00-9:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, and will specifically discuss various approaches and changes to the way the City mandates parking requirements through its Zoning Code.
- The following was also completed this week:
 - 5 Deed Transfer Affidavits
 - 27 Building Permit Reviews

Activity or Project:

N/A

Description:

N/A

Status:

Completed

Expected Completion:

3/17/2017

Execution Status:

Completed

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

Department:

Police Department

Notable Notes:

Traffic:

- On March 15th, Lt. Aniunas and Sgt. Davis attended a meeting with Tom Coleman and Mark Deshon of Bike Newark to discuss a bike lane proposal on North College at West Main Street.
- During the week, the traffic unit will conduct stop sign enforcement in the Fairfield development following citizen complaints.
- On March 15th, the traffic unit assisted with patrol supplement for firearms qualifications.

Special Operations:

- On March 13th, Sgt. D'Elia and M/Cpl. Conover took over as the supervisor and assistant supervisor for the Special Operations Unit.
- On March 13th, Lt. Aniunas attended the City Council meeting to discuss the proposed Community Policing Center project.
- On March 15th, Lt. Aniunas, and Deputy Chief Farrall met with Andrew Haines and Josh Brechbuehl to discuss implementation of the Community Policing Center at 134 East Main Street.
- On March 15th, Sgt. D'Elia along with Code Enforcement and Delaware Alcohol and Tobacco Enforcement (DATE) visited area restaurants to review ordinances and restrictions in preparation for the upcoming St. Patrick's Day.
- On March 16th, Officer Taras Gerasimov will attend a meeting with the Bike Newark group.
- On Saturday, March 18th Mayor Sierer will conduct a ride along with the Special Operations Unit.

Patrol Division:

- On March 13th through 15th, Sgt. Micolucci, Cpl. Brandon Walker, Cpl. Darryl Saunders (SOU) and Officer Shannon Craig attended a train the trainer program for the Fair and Impartial Policing program.
- On March 16th, DC Farrall, DC Feeney and Officer Alex Whitt will participate in a Newark Police history presentation at the Newark Senior Center. The presentation is being hosted by the Newark Historical Society.
- On March 13th and 14th, patrol officers did an exceptional job patrolling the streets and responding to utility issues, traffic crashes, stranded motorists and other issues related to the ice/snow storm.

Auxiliary Services:

- Attended WMD committee meeting.
- Final stages of planning a NTOA SWAT school in the end of April 2017.
- Submitted application for 2nd cycle SALLE grant.

Administration Division:

- NPD hosted a 2 ½ day Fair and Impartial Policing training class which began on Monday, 3/13 at Embassy Suites. Law enforcement agencies from each of the three counties sent representatives to attend.
- Sgt. Jones started as the training officer on Monday, 3/13.
- Sgt. Jones and Lt. Nelson will be conducting interviews on 3/16 for officers interested in being firearm instructors.

Criminal Investigations Division:

- The Street Crimes Unit continues its proactive enforcement and arrested a female for prostitution at the Super 8 on E. Main Street. The defendant was also wanted out of South Carolina for fraud and was committed pending extradition.
- On Tuesday, 3/14/17, the Newark Police Department was called out to investigate a reported kidnapping/robbery at the Christina Mill Apartment Complex. Officers from University of Delaware Police Department, New Castle County Police Department and Delaware State Police Aviation Unit all responded to the scene. During interviews with the reporting female, Newark Detectives noticed that there were inconsistencies in the series of events reported. The Newark Police Department, through an extensive overnight investigation, has determined that this case has been falsely reported.
- Newark Detectives and Street Crimes Unit will be working order maintenance patrol during this St. Patrick's Day weekend.

Activity or Project:

N/A

Description:

N/A

Status:

Completed

Expected Completion: 3/16/2017

Execution Status: Completed

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

Department:

Public Works and Water Resources Department

Notable Notes:

Activity or Project:

Downes School Safe Routes to School Grant

Description:

We held a meeting for the Safe Routes to School grant that has been awarded to the Downes Elementary School recently and were presented initial concept plans for various pedestrian and bike improvement options. I have attached a copy of the concept plans for your reference. Unfortunately, the funding originates at the federal level and requires a lot of hoops be jumped through which makes small projects relatively inefficient. As a result, the \$125,000 grant isn't going to go as far as a lot of us had hoped which is disappointing. Right now the leading candidate for the project is installation of new striping to create protected bike lanes in both directions on Casho Mill Road as shown on the concept plans.

Status: In-Progress

Expected Completion: 12/31/2018

Execution Status: On Track

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

3/12/2017 to 3/18/2017