

**CITY OF NEWARK
DELAWARE**

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

August 31, 2020

Those present at 7:00 p.m.:

Presiding:	Deputy Mayor, James Horning, District 1 (Chair) District 2, Sharon Hughes District 3, Jay Bancroft District 4, Chris Hamilton District 6, Travis McDermott
Absent:	Mayor Jerry Clifton District 5, Jason Lawhorn
Staff Members:	City Manager Tom Coleman City Secretary Renee Bensley City Solicitor Paul Bilodeau Chief Communications Officer Jayme Gravell Chief Purchasing and Personnel Officer Jeff Martindale Electric Director Bhadresh Patel Finance Director David Del Grande Financial Analyst Trevor Miller Parks and Recreation Director Joe Spadafino Parks and Recreation Deputy Director Paula Ennis Planning and Development Director Mary Ellen Gray Code Enforcement Manager Stephanie Petersen Parking Manager Marvin Howard Parking Supervisor Courtney Mulvanity

1. Mr. Horning called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. **SILENT MEDITATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mr. Horning asked for a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Horning explained the procedures for the GoToMeeting Platform. He stated that at the beginning of each item, he would call on the related staff member to present and, once the presentation was complete, he would call on each Councilmember in order of district number to offer their comments. If a Councilmember had additional comments to add later, they should signal Ms. Bensley through the GoToMeeting chat function. Members of the public wishing to comment should also signal Ms. Bensley through the chat function with their name, district or address, and the agenda item on which they would like to comment. He noted that for participants logged in by phone, names would only appear as Caller One, Caller Two, et cetera, so it was imperative that the participants inform Council of their identities. He stated that all lines would be muted until individuals were called to speak. All speakers were required to identify themselves prior to speaking and, in compliance with the executive order on teleconference meetings by Governor Carney, votes would be taken by roll call. He continued that it may be necessary to adjust the guidelines if any issues arose during the meeting. He reminded that all lines should be muted until called upon to speak.

MOTION BY MR. HAMILTON, SECONDED BY MR. MCDERMOTT: THAT COUNCIL MOVE ITEM 4.B.1 TO THE BEGINNING OF THE AGENDA.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE 4 to 0.

Aye: Bancroft, Hamilton, Horning, McDermott,
Nay: 0.
Absent: Clifton, Hughes, Lawhorn.

3. 4. **ITEMS SUBMITTED FOR PUBLISHED AGENDA:**

B. Others:

- 1. Resolution No. 20-__:** A Resolution Supporting the Redevelopment of George Read Village II by the Newark Housing Authority – Newark Housing Authority (30 minutes)

4:55

Marguerite Ashley, Co-chair of the Board of Commissioners of Newark Housing Authority (NHA), explained the background points of the resolution to support the redevelopment of the George Read Village II, Independence Circle, where NHA owned 36 senior housing units. She stated the consideration of the resolution was part of a continuum of City support for the redevelopment and that beginning in December 2017, Council awarded the NHA Community Development Block Grant Funds (CDBG) for a planning grant and NHA received three years of planning allocations from CDBG. She stated that NHA secured a development partner and intended to apply for low-income housing tax credit funding in April 2021. She revealed the NHA administered 200 housing units, including 90 with private sector landlords through the Housing Choice Voucher Program, 18 NHA-owned scattered site single-family homes, the George Read Village Independence Circle, and 56 housing units in Alder Creek, the former Cleveland Heights, which opened in 2015.

Ms. Ashley explained the proposal for Independence Circle was like the development of Alder Creek where obsolete housing would be demolished and replaced by new construction. She shared the NHA and its developer partner would seek private sources of capital funding, primarily low-income tax credits, to make a \$20 million investment in brand new housing to serve households earning less than 50% of area mean income in Newark. In June 2020, the NHA Board of Commissioners selected Leon N. Weiner and Associates as development partner, a Delaware-based, nationally recognized homebuilder and developer for affordable housing.

Mr. Hamilton thanked Ms. Ashley for the presentation.

Mr. Horning appreciated the presentation and the NHA's work.

The Chair opened the table to comments from Council.

Dr. Bancroft had no questions.

Mr. Hamilton commended the NHA's work on Alder Creek and noted the homes were more attractive and some were equipped with solar panels. He looked forward to the completion of the George Read Village. He asked Ms. Ashley if the projected included solar panel installation and Ms. Ashley could not confirm but anticipated site-wide Wi-Fi.

Mr. McDermott asked if the homes were occupied and Ms. Ashley confirmed that every unit was occupied. She continued that Housing and Urban Development (HUD) took serious measures in relocating residents as the development occurred. Mr. McDermott asked who was responsible for the relocation and how the process unfolded. Ms. Ashley informed the residents were guaranteed to be homed in their same status throughout the construction project and the responsibility fell to the NHA and Leon N. Weiner and Associates. Mr. McDermott asked how NHA selected the developer and Ms. Ashley replied NHA held a public bidding process.

Ms. Hughes withheld comments because of technical issues.

Mr. Horning thought the location was ideal because it was walkable, close to public transit associated with the College Square redevelopment, and the library. Mr. Horning noted the housing was primarily for seniors and Ms. Ashley explained the site currently had 36 garden-style apartments for seniors with plans was to include up to 18 scattered-site, single family homes owned by the NHA. She explained it would be a combination of family homes with at least the same amount of senior housing and part of the plan was to take the 36 existing senior units and the 18 single-family homes and forge them into additional units of affordable housing. Mr. Horning asked if the net gain was 10 additional affordable housing units and Ms. Ashley confirmed. Mr. Horning thought the project was important in meeting the City's goals of affordable housing and asked if the footprint would remain the same with a reconfiguration with higher density. Ms. Ashley confirmed that the plan included remodeling the current administration building on Main Street to gain additional density and said the developer partner was in the design phase.

Mr. Horning asked Ms. Bensley if the resolution was meant to express support for the project and Council would have the opportunity for input when it returned with a plan and underwent the development approval process. Ms. Bensley confirmed and explained that the resolution was in support of the applications to HUD for the allowance of the sale and disposition of the 18 scattered rental

properties and when NHA was further into the process and ready to present the development for approval, it would likely come before Council based on the particular criteria at the time. She deferred to Ms. Gray as far as the scope of the project and how it fit but imagined it was a major subdivision.

There were no public comments and the Chair returned the discussion to the table.

Ms. Hughes asked who owned the homes and Ms. Ashley replied the NHA owned the houses and the 36 senior apartments. Ms. Hughes asked if the senior apartments were part of the potential sale and Ms. Ashley corrected that the project was a redevelopment. She explained that Alder Creek was a collaboration between the development partner and the NHA where the development partner owned the site that was overseen by NHA. After the 20-year low-income housing tax credit compliance period ended, NHA had an attractive option to reassume ownership and the same situation would apply to the George Read redevelopment project.

Ms. Ashley thanked Ms. Bensley for helping the NHA get onto the agenda and commented that she was extremely helpful.

MOTION BY MR. HAMILTON, SECONDED BY MR. MCDERMOTT: THAT COUNCIL APPROVAL A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE REDEVELOPMENT OF GEORGE READ VILLAGE II BY THE NEWARK HOUSING AUTHORITY.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE 5 to 0.

Aye: Bancroft, Hamilton, Horning, Hughes, McDermott,

Nay: 0.

Absent: Clifton, Lawhorn.

(RESOLUTION NO. 20-H)

- 4. 1. **FINANCIAL STATEMENT:** None
- 5. 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS ON CONTRACTS & BIDS OVER \$75,000:** None
- 6. 3. **SPECIAL DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:**
 - A. FY2021 Planning and Development Department Budget Presentation – Planning and Development Director (60 minutes)

23:18

Mr. Horning stated the budget presentations were important in how the City conducted business and was an opportunity for residents to examine the details. He reminded the budget overview took place two weeks ago and individual departments were scheduled to present their detailed budget plans. He summarized that the City was looking to fill a COVID-driven budget gap with cash reserves and staff hoped that the UD school year proceeded without incident to keep the City in a good financial position in order to avoid a property tax increase through use of the reserves. He cautioned the presentation was not a debate and public speakers were limited to five minutes.

Mr. Coleman explained the departmental budget hearings would begin that evening and over the next few meetings, staff would present the initial line by line budget requests for all operating departments. He explained staff approached the hearings differently because of the economic impact of the pandemic and significant departmental budget cuts and focused instead on year over year changes. The change in format allowed for shorter presentations so staff could answer questions on the budgets. He revealed that the City faced a \$2 million shortfall in 2021, assuming there was not another total shutdown, and asked for consideration when each department's budget request was presented. He noted there were primarily three tools at staff's disposal to help close the budget gap and one hail Mary: cutting costs, raising revenues, utilizing reserves, and waiting for potential stimulus money from the Federal Government. Mr. Coleman thought there was a chance to receive Federal aid but did not think it was appropriate to assume funding would include revenue replacement funding for local governments.

Mr. Coleman informed staff cut costs by eliminating supplies and decreasing contractual services as much as possible as proposed in the initial budget requests, but contractual items that were considered Council priorities were still included. He revealed staff cut capital-spending but left critical projects and/or those that were funded by debt service. He noted staff could also cut expenses by trimming personnel costs through reductions in force, eliminating or reducing currently offered services, or reducing non-wage personnel expenses, such as potential changes to the health care plan. He informed most of the members of the benefits committee had to approve the changes to the benefits plan, which also required

some union to agree, and was not a change that he or Mr. Del Grande could perform unilaterally based on Council direction. He informed personnel cuts could include attrition or lay-offs and that staff held open positions whenever possible and pointed that Council recently approved the restructuring of the administrative department to eliminate an open position. He noted that lay-offs were a difficult discussion and would result in a reduction of the level of service provided expected by residents. He stated 2020 was an example of reduced services because the AFSME unions were running at 30-50% capacity since the State of Emergency began. If Council decided on lay-offs upon the completion of the department hearings, Mr. Coleman explained there would need to be serious discussions about expectations and timing. He also noted that the City had the option to return services back to New Castle County instead of performing them locally but stated they would not affect the 2021 budget because the City had to follow a process to transfer services and the timeline extended beyond the City's 2021 budget timeline. He noted that on the revenue side, Council could consider utility rates, taxes and fees for City services. He suggested beginning with a customer charge for water and sewer to cover fixed costs, including new debt service payments associated with the 2018 referendum. He shared that the City had reserves in each utility fund and in the general fund, and that he and Mr. Del Grande agreed there was a little more than \$7 million to use before affecting the bond rating. He admitted reserves were an option but warned they were also the City's rainy-day fund and there were significant error bars on the revenue projections due to the pandemic and the associated unknowns.

Ms. Gray presented the Planning and Development Department's initial budget request which would highlight each division's yearly accomplishments and focus on the changes in the 2021 budget. She revealed the proposed budget reflected a negative budget impact of the COVID pandemic and was pared down to focus on core functions. She defined the Department functions as physical land use development, community development, economic development, parking and transportation, and code enforcement, and said they were divided into land use, code enforcement, and parking.

Ms. Gray headed the Land Use and Planning Division, which advised and made recommendations to the City Manager, Planning Commission, and City Council regarding physical development and the implementation of the City's Comprehensive Development Plan. The Division was responsible for updating long-range planning documents; administering and reviewing plans and procedures for annexations, rezoning, subdivisions, parking waivers, the preservation of historic buildings, and special use permits; recommending zoning and subdivision regulation revisions; reviewing building permit and certificates of occupancy and economic hardship applications for zoning compliance; and administering the Federal Flood Insurance Program, and served as staff to the Planning Commission and the Board of Adjustment. Additionally, the Division included Economic Development, Transportation and Technical Services, and Community Development. She listed the Division staff as one Director, two Planners, and one Administrative Assistant.

Ms. Gray explained the Division was busy in 2019 and pointed to the code amendments, land use applications, special use permits, received plans, ongoing land use projects, workgroups, plans and permitting activities listed on pages 7-10 in the presentation. She noted the abundance of land use activity and pointed that there were many projects on the horizon. She listed the Division's accomplishments:

- Adoption of the Transportation Improvement District Agreement
- Started implementation of the Newark Sustainability Plan
- Completed the Green Building Code Workgroup (November 2018 – June 2020)
 - Proposed Revised Code to be before Council on September 14th
- Completed the Rental Housing Workgroup (April 2019 – November 2019)
 - Presented to Council on February 3, May 18, and July 13, 2020
 - Council adopted the workplan on July 13 and staff was moving forward with the plan
- Initiated and continued work on implementing the Parking Policy Workplan

Ms. Gray highlighted the changes in the budget from last year with the Executive Summary on page 18 of the presentation. She proposed to eliminate intern funding and decrease the consulting budget by \$90,000 where the proposed request was for \$110,000, including \$75,000 for contractual planning services and \$35,000 for continued support of the Transportation Improvement District Workgroup. Staff decreased the training budget by \$9,040 by eliminating out-of-state travel.

Ms. Peterson presented the Code Enforcement highlights and explained the Division was responsible for the administration and enforcement of the International Construction Codes (ICC), related State of Delaware Codes, and applicable portions of the Newark Municipal Code. The Division performed comprehensive plan reviews of all major City construction projects and issued permits for building construction, fire protection, rental units, signs, elevators, and coordinated permit reviews with other City

departments. The Division issued contractor licenses, fire safety registrations, and business licenses. Each unit conducted reviews, typed citations, met with contractors or property owners, or met in the field with building, fire and property management inspections and responded to and investigated building, fire and property management complaints. She listed staff as one Code Enforcement Manager, three Property Maintenance Inspectors, four Code Enforcement Officers, one Fire Marshal/Emergency Management Coordinator and two Administrative Assistants.

Ms. Peterson listed Code Enforcement's accomplishments:

- Reviewed 2018 International Building, Plumbing, Mechanical, Energy, and Fire Code and adopted in early 2020
- Reviewed and recommended new and proposed projects within the City
- Code Enforcement Officers and the Fire Marshall reviewed and approved over 1,000 construction permits, including several large commercial projects
- Reviewed and inspected over 1,500 rental permits
- Updating the current Emergency Operations Plans, Continuity of Operation Plan and overall base model of emergency operations during City-wide events

Ms. Peterson noted Code had two vehicles slated to be replaced in 2020 but chose to postpone for a savings of around \$50,000 and that the budget remained largely unchanged except for the vehicles previously mentioned.

Mr. Howard admitted the Parking Division was not immune to effects of the COVID pandemic because the economy and local population had a direct impact on parking revenue and noted the decrease in 2020 revenue numbers. Parking staff understood cuts were necessary for 2021 and proposed a budget with an overall decrease in operational expenses in the General Operating Budget and the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Despite COVID, the Division oversaw numerous infrastructure and hardware improvements across the City's parking system:

- Completed expansion of Lot #1 (191 spaces to 239)
- Secured lease of Lot #7, granting access from Delaware Avenue and Main Street to new lot behind Duck Donuts and Starbucks
- Completed Phase II of the Newark Parking Kiosk Program, including removal of old, high cost parking equipment, staffing, and customer service, and removal of single-space meters with high subscription costs

Mr. Howard explained that the savings from Phase II allowed staff to begin the final phase of the Parking Kiosk Program, which was a CIP item. Staff saved costs on the T2 Kiosk hardware after realizing the City needed fewer physical kiosks due to the high adoption rate of the Passport mobile application.

Mr. Howard informed that the Parking Division made many budget cuts in response to COVID-19 and the proposed parking budget had a 14% decrease in 2021 compared to the 2020 approved budget. He explained that many of the cuts directly correlated to projects in 2019 and 2020. He reported a \$30,000 decrease in personnel costs, an overall decrease in the supply budget for training, a major decrease in merchant fees and discounts due removing single space parking meters and changes in handling credit card fees, and multiple decreases in contractual service areas.

Mr. Howard revealed the Division had one CIP project focus for 2021: the completion of the Newark Parking Kiosk Program, the final phase of the City's move to a single-space meter, multi-system parking meter system mobile application. He continued that because of the early completion of Phase II, staff added Courtney Street and the campus district of Academy Street, leaving staff with two streets in the college district. Upon completion of the project, the City would have a single, unified parking system where each component had the same centralized parking and was tied to the License Plate Recognition System.

Ms. Gray informed the City had received funds from the Federal Housing and Urban Development's CDBG Program since 1974, which benefitted low- to moderate-income residents. The Department administered the CDBG Program according to Federal guidelines, reviewed project funding requests, and developed the operating budget in conjunction with the City Community Development and Revenue Sharing Advisory Committee, monitored programs for contract compliance, and directly managed the home improvement program. She explained the CDBG Program ran by fiscal year and revealed that the City received \$286,913 from HUD via the County for July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021. She

noted the programs and funding formulas remained the same so the next version of the budget would include the revised numbers.

Ms. Gray continued that the Department administered the Unicity bus service to provide free bus transportation to Newark residents via agreements with the Delaware Transit Corporation and UD which included service from three buses. The City maintained the buses and reported requirements to the Delaware Transit Corporation while UD operated the buses. Per the agreement with UD, the operation of the Unicity buses was in conjunction with the UD bus system, so the bus operations were suspended in mid-March due to COVID. She noted the UD bus system would resume on September 1, 2020 and run through November 20, 2020 on a limited schedule, but the Unicity service would be delayed because staff needed to install COVID measures per CDC guidelines. She revealed that the City worked with UD over the summer to merge the three routes into one loop to better serve customers and attract new riders with a more efficient service. Staff estimated a savings of \$35,000 in contractual services for revising the route, but she would provide Council a solid number at a future meeting.

The Chair opened the table to discussion from Council.

Ms. Hughes had no questions.

Mr. Hamilton thanked staff for their presentation. He asked why sick pay was estimated to rise 15.1% on page 29. Mr. Del Grande replied that the contracts stipulated that when employees accrued over 700 hours of sick leave, the City purchased the excess at one hour for every three hours. He admitted it could be more than 700 hours, but said as the sick leave balance grew, the sick pay changed accordingly. He added it was a calculation determined by the Finance Office. Mr. Coleman confirmed it was an accrual of 90 days. Mr. Hamilton asked if staff estimated a larger buyback because employees did not use sick time and Mr. Del Grande confirmed the Finance team estimated the percentage based on the current leave balances with the expected yearly accrual.

Mr. Hamilton referred to comments on creating more efficiencies, using reserves, and raising revenue. He asked if the City paid \$5,000 per month for Lot 7, saw a return on investment, and wanted to know the duration of the lease. Mr. Coleman believed it was a 12-month lease with options to renew. He stated before UD shutdown in the spring, the revenue more than covered the expenses for the lot. He admitted staff only had a few days of results from on-street Main Street parking revenue since paid parking was just reinstated but believed the free 15-minute parking considerably impacted the paid lot parking. Mr. Howard pointed that the lease expense was covered in January, February, and into March until the City offered free parking on Main Street, and reported that staff saw an increase in parking revenues since paid parking was reinstated and were confident to finish the year strong. Mr. Coleman noted results depended on how long UD remained in session with students required to attend classes because UD reduced the bus systems and now only offered free parking in the satellite lots. He noted students could choose to park in the satellite lots to use the buses, bike, or opt to park in a more convenient spot for their classes. He didn't expect the spring semester to be better than fall based on a potential vaccine and the Country's performance and noted the next few weeks would be a good blueprint for staff to use to forecast. Mr. Hamilton reminded the City's lots filled up faster because the City did not match UD's rates and if they remained below UD's fees, students would always use lots intended for customers and the City would continue to lose revenue. He admitted it was not the proper time to raise the fees but reiterated it was lost revenue.

Mr. Hamilton noted that that personnel stayed the same, but Parking lost a grade 3 and added a grade 10 for an additional \$10,000 and asked Mr. Howard about the change. Mr. Coleman explained the change was the result of an appeal based on the job duties performed by the person and the job description in the job contract. Mr. Hamilton asked if there were hard numbers available for Unicity bus usage and ridership under normal circumstances. Ms. Gray noted staff could estimate costs for Unicity once the route was finalized. She replied that per CDC guidelines, Unicity had to maintain social distancing but believed it was possible to fit five or six people after roping off seats to limit ridership. She noted the riders were counted and could be compared to last year's totals at the end of the semester. Mr. Hamilton recalled raising permits fees for Code Enforcement and asked if the fees would be included in the revenue projections and what result she anticipated. Ms. Gray explained the fee increases were on the permit application side, not on the Code side and she anticipated that the results would be robust and in line with last year. Ms. Peterson tracked the number of permit applications received, number of permits issued, and the collected fees on a monthly basis and admitted the shutdown briefly impacted activities but the numbers were on track with last year. She revealed the YTD for 2020 was 1,327 permits with fees collected totaling over \$826,000 while last year, the Department had \$979,000. Mr. Hamilton hoped the extra 48 parking spots helped revenue and appreciated the work done. Ms. Gray added staff created a table of construction projects with anticipated completion dates in 2021, a list of in-house projects that

would go before the Planning Commission and Council over the year, and a list of approved CIP projects slated to begin in 2021. Mr. Hamilton reminded of the discussion to add impact fees into the 2021 budget and hoped to address them on a future agenda.

Mr. McDermott asked Ms. Gray about the overtime increase of \$10,000 on page 22 and Ms. Gray replied the amount was the anticipated overtime estimated for the project mentioned in her reply to Mr. Hamilton. Mr. McDermott said his goal was to ensure no one lost employment and asked for the breakdown of consulting fees after \$35,000 for the Traffic Safety Committee. Ms. Gray replied the other \$75,000 was proposed for Planning Services for pre-approved consultants to help process lower level permitting. She noted the Land Use Division was responsible for reviewing higher level land use activities as well as all permits and that all permits that came before Code Enforcement also had to be reviewed by a single Planning staffer. To avoid a backlog, Planning requested the services of a consulting firm.

Mr. McDermott asked for clarification on transportation and Ms. Gray replied it was the Transportation Improvement District and was in the Comp Plan V to help the City develop a transportation improvement district in conjunction with DelDOT. Mr. McDermott asked about contractual services mentioned on page 28 under Code Enforcement for \$120,000. Ms. Peterson believed the amount was to help gap the work from when an employee retired, and a new hire joined in plan reviews and inspections. Mr. McDermott asked why there was an anticipated increase and Ms. Gray said she would have to research. Mr. McDermott pointed to the 48% increase in "other charges" on page 28 and asked for clarification and Ms. Peterson replied that she would research it. Mr. Coleman believed it was an allocation via Finance and Mr. Del Grande confirmed it was an allocation process and included insurance, IT, and in-house contractual. Ms. Gray referred to Mr. McDermott's question of contractual services and replied the breakdown was listed on page 31. Ms. Gray explained the contractual services were indirect costs and Mr. Del Grande confirmed they were all allocations from the Finance Office for auto insurance and workers comp insurance. Mr. McDermott asked for clarification of "other wages" for \$54,000 on page 26 and Mr. Del Grande informed Mr. McDermott the breakdown was in the presentation and included overtime, service awards, sick pay, overtime, uniform allowance, and device reimbursements. Mr. McDermott referred to page 47 with \$87,000 for kiosk installation asked if it was possible to push the project to 2022. Mr. Howard wanted to check the number and repeated Parking saved a substantial amount in 2020 and only had to complete Kent Way and Amstel Avenue in order to finish the project. Mr. Coleman reframed Mr. McDermott's question and asked if there was additional expense to the City if the project was pushed by a year. Mr. Mulvanity revealed there would be some expenses and explained the single space meters were more costly than the kiosks because of subscriptions. He shared that staff believed it was possible to complete the project with 8 kiosks instead of 10 and admitted there would be a cost to not completing the project, but he was unable to give an estimate. Mr. McDermott wanted to consider any cost-cutting avenues including pushing projects versus laying off employees.

Mr. Horning pointed to projects completed over the year and thanked residents who took part. He thought it was important to complete projects and implement resident suggestions in order to respect their time and engagement in the City. He pointed to page 21 and understood the City was saving money so the intern program was reduced and suggested a UD program to help students gain practical experience. He understood the designations under management positions were contractual increases and were in place to prevent managers from making less than subordinates and Mr. Coleman confirmed that all of the City's collective bargaining agreements had step increases for employees and also had negotiated COLAs so different unions progressed at different rates. He noted that management could receive between -2% and +6% based on performance year to year and any change in the COLA scale required Council action. Mr. Horning pointed to subvention on page 24 and asked if Aetna requested additional funding and Mr. Coleman stated Aetna did not make a specific request but staff converted three of the apartment units across the Academy Street station to their free accounts because students resided there. Mr. Del Grande added that the City was still at \$174,246 for Aetna Hose and Ladder and another \$3,000 for the Newark Ambulance and was unchanged from 2020. He continued that Aetna indicated they wanted consideration for impact fees and revealed the City also contributed \$60,000 in free utilities above the cash amount.

Mr. Horning pointed to page 43 and asked for clarification on the increase in casualty insurance and Mr. Del Grande replied it was part of the allocation process from the Finance Office and was either based upon staffing or body count. He noted it was usually a 1% or 2% from the previous year. Mr. Horning asked for clarification on the building and equipment rental increase of \$8,000 on page 43 and Mr. Del Grande explained it was for lot and space rentals in the parking group. Mr. Horning pointed to page 52 for CDBG and noted the substantial decreases of \$30,000 and \$15,000 and asked if the COVID Relief Funds impacted the numbers. Mr. Del Grande explained the contractual services line of \$368,828 included the COVID CARES Act funds received for 2020.

There was no public comment and the Chair returned the discussion to the table.

Mr. Horning asked Ms. Gray if staff required more direction and Ms. Gray was satisfied.

7. 3-B. FY2021 PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT BUDGET PRESENTATION – PARKS AND RECREATION DIRECTOR (30 MINUTES)

1:36:41

Mr. Spadafino presented the Parks and Recreation 2021 budget. He explained the Division was divided by recreation and parks maintenance. He began that there were changes to the 6685 and 6690 accounts (Before and After School Care and Self-supporting Programs) which were up \$6,000 in each line item due to the minimum wage increase in October. He noted the budget was completed considering normal circumstances, as if it was running a full year of programs from January through December 31, 2021. He explained if it was not possible to run some programs, expenses would be reduced in materials and supplies and other areas.

Mr. Spadafino continued to page 12 with the 7000 accounts for materials and supplies. Staff anticipated a reduction for Parks Maintenance of \$9,155 due to a one-time expense last year of a Parks trailer and new netting at Handloff Park's Field 1. He also noted a reduction of \$13,000 in Island Beautification because the project was stagnant for four years and he hoped to revisit it in the future. He moved to page 13, Contracted Services, and noted the high number of storms with tree damage in recent months. He explained that staff included \$6,500 for tree removal but, after speaking with Public Works Director Tim Filasky, staff added an additional \$5,000 in order to complete all the tree work together under one-line item for contracted services. He noted the Parks Superintendent was a certified arborist and oversaw all the tree contracts and explained \$7,500 was set aside to close roads to safely complete tree work. Self-Supporting Programs included \$2,500 intended for required background checks for part-time camp and before and aftercare staff.

Mr. Spadafino informed that the Special Parks Fund funds were from programs or activities in different line items where staff brought in funding to support the Fund. He noted Beautification stemmed from the Island Beautification program (\$16,000 in 2020) and would be used to manage the traffic islands throughout the City. He explained Community Donations from Parks came from sponsorships through events like the Harvest Festival and was earmarked for donations for park improvements, to help support recreation activities, and rentals for different events. He pointed out the funds were non-taxpayer dollars.

Mr. Spadafino moved onto CIP projects beginning on page 21 and reminded Council of the resolution to support more grant funding applications for park signage. He explained the Olan Thomas sidewalk improvement was moved out from 2022 to 2023 and informed staff was trying to secure grant funding for the project. He stated the Handloff Park Trail was slated for 2024 but was a popular area so staff proposed a crush and run trail and explained the ADA Compliance projects in 2021 would help with connectivity to the pavilions, play features, and parking lots throughout the park system. He then described how the purchase of the track loader/mini-skid steerer in 2022 would help staff with trail improvements, playground installation, and snow removal on sidewalks and trails. He explained that when COVID hit, Parks put all of the projects on hold to help support the budget and noted that staff had already purchased new picnic benches for the Lumbrook Park Pavilion but the rest of the project was pushed out to 2022. He continued that the Redd Park Trail improvements could likely be done through grants and would connect Redd Park and the Newark Reservoir Trails to Paper Mill Road near the Thompson Station intersection to grant easy access to the State's Tri-Valley Trail. If grant funding was not formally approved, the project would be deferred. He clarified there was a senior living project scheduled for construction in the area under the County and the City had an agreement with the developer to have an access from their property to Redd Park. He described the Iron Glen Park was on Elkton Road, before the Maryland line, and the master plan would not be finished until the Elkton Road project was completed. He then described that various hard surface facility improvements were pushed out to save \$185,000 in 2020 but staff reevaluated every year to determine the proper timeline for rehabilitation projects. He informed that the Kershaw Park project was pushed out from 2021 to 2023 and staff would apply for grant funding to create a shortcut from Paper Mill Road to the Pomeroy Trail to create a path to Kershaw Park. He stated Old Paper Mill Park was slated for \$600,000 in both 2021 and 2022 but was pushed out to 2024 and 2025 to help support the budget. Staff tried to replace older play equipment yearly and performed playground safety inspections to replace as needed. He said that the equipment was in working order and well within the required safety standards of the National Playground Safety Institute. He noted the City had 236 pieces of play equipment throughout the park system, so staff kept money in the budget for necessary repairs or replacements.

Mr. Spadafino admitted 2020 was a challenging year and highlighted the Division's accomplishments as installing the new online registration software system, installing air condition at the

George Wilson Center, implementing various Parks on Draft events throughout the summer, handling all coronavirus mandated safety guidelines which included removal and replacement of basketball rims and tennis nets, closing and reopening of the playgrounds and working on designs for updating the signage. He said staff was sending out bids and picking designs in order to begin work immediately upon receipt of grant funds. He explained that staff power-washed the tennis courts at Lumbrook and Fairfield because of mold which created slick, hazardous surfaces. Staff also completed a reforestation project at Redd Park and would consider adding another area depending on available tree widths. He credited the Recreation staff for organizing camps to meet COVID guidelines, updating the emergency actions plans for special events in cooperation with Newark PD and other agencies, completing a COVID-19 Camp Procedures Guide and Communicable Disease Plan for the summer camps as per recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control, American Camp Association and the Delaware Division of Public Health.

The Chair opened the table to comments from Council.

Ms. Hughes had no questions.

Mr. Hamilton thanked Mr. Spadafino for the presentation and thought pushing projects back was a smart move. He noted the map on page 35 of the budget was unclear and Mr. Spadafino replied he would distribute better renditions. Mr. Spadafino explained staff did not move past the concept plan for the master plan because the plan was pushed out to 2024 and the public could not be involved because of COVID. Mr. Hamilton asked if the name of the new park had been revealed and Mr. Spadafino said the winning name would be announced in 2021 when staff could organize a ribbon cutting ceremony. Mr. Hamilton noted the Reservoir Trail was the most heavily used trail in the State and shared that visitors were parking on the grass, so it was dangerous to access the head of the trail. He asked that staff better monitor the area and asked to consider charging for City Park passes for non-residents because he estimated a third of the visitors were from Maryland. Mr. Spadafino replied that the City did not have a Ranger force or designated control system to monitor the lots. He understood Mr. Hamilton's concern but thought it would put more pressure on the Parking Staff and Newark PD to implement and asked if he was referring to a hangtag. Mr. Hamilton said he was speaking about a license plate reader and thought there were low cost ways to implement a system that could help alleviate the debt and help pay for additional facilities. He commended Mr. Spadafino for putting off projects to help trim costs.

Mr. Coleman interjected that it was possible to use the license plate readers and staff considered doing a similar program downtown where Newark utility customers could register and receive a discount on downtown parking meters. He suggested there could be a similar program for the parks if a kiosk or parking zone were created at the park parking lots. He admitted there would be cost associated but was feasible with the current program. Mr. Hamilton saw it as lost revenue and said it would not negatively impact residents and should be considered.

Mr. McDermott thanked Mr. Spadafino for making safety issues a priority in the parks and for making them ADA compliant. He supported Mr. Hamilton's suggested on parking.

Mr. Horning said that Dr. Bancroft appreciated the detailed presentation and the team's work.

Mr. Horning asked if the park signage was almost entirely paid for with grant funding and Mr. Spadafino confirmed. Mr. Horning noted the projects were pushed out and appreciated the planning and thought staff put into the additional improvements in the out-years. He echoed Mr. McDermott's points about safety and ADA compliance and noted it was important for all residents to have access to the City's amenities. Mr. Horning asked if the ADA sidewalk at Fairfield Park was evening out the grade and Mr. Spadafino replied there was a plan to add an asphalt path between the handicap parking spots to get to the basketball courts, pavilion, and playground area. Mr. Horning appreciated the ongoing maintenance and thought it was important as a safety measure. He asked for clarification of the prior authorized funding of \$91,000 for the Old Paper Mill Park improvements in 2021. Mr. Spadafino replied it was for the updated masterplan and that once approved, staff hoped to construct the parking lot first to alleviate the parking pressure at the Reservoir. He admitted there would be more stormwater work than anticipated and could potentially exceed budgeted estimates. He said staff would work on the numbers to get the parking lot constructed. Mr. Horning saw the parking lot a near term need and asked if staff would return with updates in 2021. Mr. Spadafino confirmed and said staff preferred to construct a lot that would fit needs for the park in 2024 versus constructing a temporary lot that would need to be ripped up in the future. He reiterated staff was still considering how the lot would be built and the necessary stormwater constructs. Mr. Horning pointed to page 39, Vehicle Replacement Program, and asked if the 2009 Ford F50 was ahead of the recommended mileage replacement and Mr. Spadafino revealed the vehicle was scheduled for replacement in 2020 but staff delayed because of COVID after the Fleet Management Director confirmed staff could use it for another year. Mr. Spadafino also noted another vehicle was

scheduled for replacement in 2021 but staff pushed it to 2022. Mr. Horning credited Fleet Maintenance for their work and Mr. Spadafino confirmed that staff always deferred to Fleet's recommendation.

There were no public comments and the Chair returned the discussion to the table.

Mr. Horning agreed with Mr. Hamilton on the parking at the parks and thought it would be simpler to handle with a kiosk.

8. 4. ITEMS SUBMITTED FOR PUBLISHED AGENDA:

A. Council Members: None

9. Meeting adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

Renee K. Bensley, CMC
Director of Legislative Services
City Secretary

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