

City Manager's Weekly Report

Department:

Administration - City Manager

Notable Notes:

City Manager:

There was no Council meeting this week but due to vehicle procurement challenges, we prepared a supplementary Council agenda item for the purchase of two SUVs for the Code Enforcement Division of Planning and Development. Lead times on new vehicles are extremely long and the two vehicles in question are either totally out of service due to an accident or over 20 years old and in desperate need of replacement due to high ongoing repair costs. When we find vehicles, we often need to move very fast to get commitments from dealerships or else the vehicle will be sold quickly. There are signs the vehicle market is improving slightly from the worst of last year, but we are still a long way off from where we were pre-pandemic, both in availability and price.

The legislators are back in session in Dover, and we have received many bills that have been introduced for review. Staff worked with our lobbyist team throughout the week to review and analyze potential impact on City operations and provided the information as appropriate to the lobbyists or legislators. I also answered a series of questions on our charter amendment from Representative Osienski.

I attended two IT related training sessions this week. The first was on the “My 311” report a concern program that will be rolled out as part of the City's new app later this year. It will replace our existing report a concern program with a more fully featured program that includes work order tracking and workflow management systems to help staff ensure all complaints are addressed and, when closed out, the petitioners are notified. The second training was on OneDrive and SharePoint functionality.

The remainder of the week was spent on general administrative tasks, debt collection efforts, and personnel related items.

Human Resources:

- The HR team have three postings going out this week, two externals and one internal only. The two external postings are for a Digital Records Management Coordinator and an Administrative Professional I. Both positions are full-time in the City Secretary's Office and close on February 17. The internal posting is for a Maintenance IV in the Water Division of PW&WR. This position fills a vacancy from a recent retirement and closes on Friday, February 3.
- We currently have two open postings. One for a Police Officer which will remain open through December 1, 2023. The other is for a Maintenance IV in the Sewer Division of PW&WR which will close on February 10.
- The internal only posting for an Administrative Professional I in PW&WR closed on Friday, January 13. An offer has been made and accepted by a current employee who will officially start in this new position on Monday, January 23.
- We have several postings in the pipeline for the remainder of January and February across all departments. These vacancies are due to resignations, internal promotion, and retirements.
- The HR team will continue to support the Newark PD with recruitment efforts in 2023 to hire new and certified police officers. We are hopeful to get new recruits into the March State Police Academy. Additionally, we will recruit for two new Communication Officers in the police department's 911 center in the coming weeks, both will be internal/external postings.
- HR will assist the Police Department in the promotional process for the rank of Captain and Lieutenant. The announcement will go out to eligible officers on Friday, January 20. Ms. Hardin will participate on the

interview panel along with the Chief and Deputy Chief.

- Ms. Hardin spent the majority of her time attending to personnel matters, legal cases, labor relations, assisting employees with pension questions, attending meetings and following up on emails and phone messages.
- The HR team will soon assist the Finance Department with preparations for the annual financial audit process.
- The rest of the week was spent continuing to transition Ms. Bradshaw into her new role as the full-time HR Administrator.

Purchasing/Facilities Maintenance:

Facilities:

- We had 120 new chairs delivered, which will replace the gray chairs in the Court hallway and Council Chamber. These will be set up by Council meeting Monday night.
- Capitol Office Furniture was in this week to look at City Secretary's Office and Public Works. We will soon install new furniture in both areas as part of the ongoing furniture refresh for City Hall.
- The carpenters painted the Mayor's Conference Room and Solicitor's Office this week as well ahead of furniture moving in City Secretary's Office to address the sinking slab issue noted last week.
- A formal schedule is in place now for the carpet replacement at City Hall and NPD. The project will start 3/6 and end 5/10, barring any delays.
- Facilities and Electric reviewed electrical needs ahead of trenching work in the atrium and the installation of a new atrium awning. The trenching is being done to bury wire associated with the new security technology before the floors are redone in February.
- A badge reader replacement plan is now in place for PD to address any additional readers failures between now and the full refresh in April. This will require us to temporarily remove less critical readers from City Hall, but will ensure continued security of the Police Department.

Purchasing/Grants:

- We were hopeful to hear on the status of our EV grant application this week. However, as of Friday morning, no notice has been received.
- CPPO Jeff Martindale is working with Rehoboth Beach on some purchasing policy questions they have as part of a policy overhaul they are going through with their new City Manager Laurence Christian.
- Mr. Martindale is also working with the towns of Milford and Townsend on their EV grant applications as well.

Communications:

Chief Communications Officer:

- Engagement on AskNewarkDE continues to increase. At this time, we're maintaining 700 users and our daily visits have decreased slightly from 75 to 69 unique visits. Most visited categories are:
 - o Newark News
 - o City Services
 - o Make a Payment
- Attended the STAR Rotary meeting, assigned to the committee responsible for planning the charter celebration in March.
- Participated in a meeting/training with Tyler Technologies on how to integrate the Report a Concern function on the app.
- Participated in a DVHT wellness seminar.
- Completed a draft letter for the Juneteenth funding request to be sent to JP Morgan Chase after consideration by the D&I Commission on Tuesday, January 24.
- Worked with DelDOT on the organization and preparation for the Elkton Road ribbon cutting.
- Wrote and distributed two press releases: parking rate increase and police chief promotion.

- Attended the NAWC board meeting to set goals and priorities for 2023.

Communications Assistant:

- Log Miss Utility tickets for Electric and PW&WR.
- Edit copy from various departments.
- Adding and updating InformMe customer information.
- Create and share content on social media.
- Working on Employee Wellness Committee projects including:
 - o Healthy Weight Challenge
 - o Steps/Walking Challenge
 - o Monthly lunch and learns supported by DVHT
 - o Wealth Building Wednesdays with Fulton Bank

Creative Designer & Web Specialist:

- Building signage and web graphics have been prepared for Payments and Utility Billing office closure for 1/24/2023.
- New parking rates and payment information have been added to the Hourly Parking webpage.
- On the Newark News section of the website, the Newark Police Department has posted a press release announcing a new police chief.
- Public meeting notices have been shared via InformMe.
- The City Council meeting audio recordings have been added to the website.
- The Newark News section of the website has been updated with the press release regarding the increase in parking rates effective Tuesday, January 17.
- Tickets from the RequestTracker website have been shared with the appropriate City department.
- Updates have been made to the Election Board Members webpage.

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

City Manager's Weekly Report

Department:

Alderman's Court

Notable Notes:

Alderman's Court held three court sessions from 1/12/23-1/18/23. These sessions included arraignments, trials, capias returns, and video hearings. Parking Ambassadors were here on Tuesday and Wednesday to handle any parking appeals in person.

Terri participated in a manager's meeting on 1/12/23.

The court processed 16 PBJ's for traffic violations and 4 Plea by Mails for criminal violations.

Activity or Project:

Payments and Court Sessions

Description:

From 1/12/23-1/18/23 Alderman's Court handled 32 arraignments, 48 trials, 9 capias returns, and 3 video hearings. The court collected a total of 284 parking payments of which 264 were paid online and 20 were paid at court. The court also collected criminal/traffic payments of which 103 were paid online and 10 were paid at court for a total of 113 criminal/traffic payments.

Status:	Completed
----------------	-----------

Expected Completion:	01-18-2023
-----------------------------	------------

Execution Status:	Completed
--------------------------	-----------

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:	
----------------	--

Expected Completion:	
-----------------------------	--

Execution Status:	
--------------------------	--

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:	
----------------	--

Expected Completion:	
-----------------------------	--

Execution Status:	
--------------------------	--

City Manager's Weekly Report

Department:

City Secretary and City Solicitor's Office

Notable Notes:

The week of 01/12/2023 – 01/18/2022

The legal team was in the office on the following days:

Bobby O'Neil – 01/12 for Court.

Danielle Mapp-Purcell, Paralegal, prepared the court docket for the February 3rd and fulfilled 11 discovery requests with 23 discovery requests remaining in process. Closed 4 FOIA requests. Circulated 3 FOIA requests to staff. Staffed Safety Committee meeting.

Recorder of Deeds:

- The Grove (Street Name Corrections) – circulated to staff, NCC Department of Land Use, Aetna, Comcast, NPD, and developer new instrument number
- 10&16 Benny Street Major Subdivision and Agreement – circulated to staff and developer

- 318 South College Avenue Minor Subdivision/Site Plan – circulated to staff and developer
- 29 West Park Place/0 South College Avenue – Sent to the Recorder of Deeds for recordation

Meetings and Minutes:

December 12th CC and December D&I edited

January 9th CC underway

January CAC on deck

January Meetings Update:

February BOA – Staff has received one application for the BOA and is awaiting replies to determine quorum for a February meeting.

Legislative Clerical Projects/Processes:

Vacancies remain for the various City boards. Council is actively engaged in filling positions, and staff have received a few applications which have been forwarded to Council. Networks students processed documents for scanning.

Scanning continues for all new documents processed within the department with back scanning completed as time allows. Modification continues upon discovery of duplicate documents – 68 documents created, 111 pages scanned, and 81 documents modified.

Council and Boards & Commissions agendas posted to the atrium and website.

Lien certificate requests processed during the past weeks are as follows:

- 11 received by attorneys and sent to Finance for processing.
 - 7 completed by City staff and returned to the processing attorney.
- 17 lien certificates have been processed for 2023.

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

City Manager's Weekly Report

Department:

Electric Department

Notable Notes:

Engineering met with UD about STAR again. UD personnel want to ensure that the energy needs for the site will be met in the future. UD shared that the rest of the site will be built up similarly to the current configuration and that the 2016 study saying the whole site will need 50MW is undercalculated. Knowing what we know now with tenants like Bloom and Chemours the site could use from 100 to 200MW. Another study will be commissioned after UD's long-term plans are finalized. UD is now amenable to having two substations on the site for distribution. The plans for the new substation at the old transfer station will have to change by moving some of the 12kV transformers to STAR and increasing the size of the 34kV transformers.

Engineering met with the developers of the new apartments and retail space to be built on the lot in front of the Chemours site on South College Avenue. Three routes to serve the site were discussed. Utilizing the existing pole line along the south side of the site was rejected. The provisional elevation view of the site revealed issues that the plan view obscured. At this time, the site will need three transformers, two fed underground from the back by Chemours, and the retail space in the front being fed from an aerial crossing over South College Avenue after moving an existing crossing to a different pole.

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

City Manager's Weekly Report

Department:

Finance Department

Notable Notes:

Delaware State Housing Authority updated the Mortgage Relief Program. To better serve Delaware homeowners, DSHA made updates to the Delaware Mortgage Relief Program, which include the following:

- Removing the requirement of 30-day mortgage delinquency. Homeowners who do not have a delinquent mortgage are now eligible to apply for the program.
- Offering future monthly mortgage payment assistance for up to 6 months in addition to mortgage reinstatement or imminent risk of delinquency.

- Increasing the total assistance amount available from \$40,000 to \$50,000 per household.
- Assistance can be used for tax delinquencies, chattel loan, land lease delinquencies, water and sewer utilities, HOA and condo fees, and homeowners insurance. <https://demortgagehelp.com/>.

The Accounting staff is actively working on our insurance renewals for 2023. We have successfully transitioned brokers from WillisTowersWatson to USI Insurance Services. Our current insurance policies end on March 31st. Staff plans on bringing our policy renewals to Council mid-March.

2022 Audit is underway. Preliminary field work for the annual financial statement audit is scheduled to begin Monday, January 30. Final fieldwork is scheduled for the end of March. The accounting team is working on year-end schedules for auditors as well as various year-end filings for IRS and contractual payroll adjustments in addition to normal daily work.

Utility rates were updated effective January 1 to reflect the new water and sewer rates that were approved by Council for 2023. The January bills will have duplicate lines that reflect consumption used before and after January 1.

Activity or Project:	
Description:	
Status:	
Expected Completion:	
Execution Status:	
Activity or Project:	
Description:	
Status:	
Expected Completion:	
Execution Status:	
Activity or Project:	
Description:	
Status:	
Expected Completion:	
Execution Status:	

City Manager's Weekly Report

Department: Parks and Recreation Department
Notable Notes: <p>Ballfield inspection was completed for several parks and plans prepared for spring use.</p> <p>Sent newsletters to volunteers and before and after school programs for upcoming programs and events.</p> <p>Reviewing staff and children’s files for annual inspection at Downes childcare program.</p> <p>Sent out a mailing to over 700 residents around Dickey Park regarding the new Community Garden.</p>

Completed trail maintenance at Rahway Park and Christina Valley Stream area.

Working on the new mowing contract for stormwater basins and the Newark Reservoir.

Cleared several trail blockages where trees had fallen across the trail.

Activity or Project:

Newark Employment and Volunteer

Description:

Newark Employment and Volunteer fair will be held on Saturday, January 21 from 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at the Newark Free library. Perspective employees ages 16 and older and/or volunteer ages 14 and older can come out to the Newark Free library to learn about opportunities in Newark. Eleven agencies will be in attendance including Newark Parks and Recreation, giving participants an opportunity to complete employee and volunteer applications right on site! For more information, please visit www.newarkde.gov/play for more information.

Status:	Not Started
Expected Completion:	01-21-2023
Execution Status:	On Track

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:	
Expected Completion:	
Execution Status:	

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:	
Expected Completion:	
Execution Status:	

City Manager's Weekly Report

Department:

Planning and Development Department

Notable Notes:

Director's Report
Projects

*Nuisance Properties Ordinance – Deputy Director Ramos-Velazquez, Code Enforcement Manager Petersen, Code Enforcement staff, and the City's consultant met on January 13th to continue work on the Nuisance Abatement Plan format and subsequently continued work on revisions. Per direction at the November 14th Council meeting, staff is to bring a Nuisance Abatement Plan format back to Council for review within 90 days. This is scheduled to be on the February 13th Council agenda.

*Downtown Newark Parking Plan Implementation – The proposed amendments to the downtown parking lot design requirements have their second reading scheduled for February 13th. Sales of parking permits continue to businesses only. All requested permits have been allocated to businesses who have been invoiced for payment. Any permits remaining as of February 1st will be sold to individuals who have requested them.

Staff completed reprogramming of parking kiosks with the new rates adopted by Council which took effect January 17th after the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day holiday. Staff also spent time updating related signage for reflecting the price increases.

*Property Maintenance Code Update – Deputy Director Ramos-Velazquez, Code Enforcement Manager Petersen, Code Enforcement staff, and the City’s consultant met on January 13th to continue review of the 2021 International Property Maintenance Code updates.

*Transportation Improvement District Implementation – The TID Working Group will be reconvened to review the comments of both Council and Planning Commission at their regularly scheduled February 8th meeting with the objective of voting on a final recommendation to be moved forward to Planning Commission at their March 7th meeting.

*EnerGov - Deputy Director Ramos-Velazquez met with a representative from Tyler Technologies regarding resuming the EnerGov project which had been paused during the department vacancies in 2022. EnerGov is a permitting software that will streamline project and permit processing for City staff and applicants, as well as provide a robust public facing product that will provide for more transparency in the development process for City residents.

Items of Interest

*Staff finalized and sent a Subdivision Advisory Committee comment letter to the applicant for the third submission for the project located at 65 South Chapel Street. This application for a rezoning and major subdivision by site plan approval would construct a six story, 189-unit apartment building if approved.

*Property Maintenance staff issued a condemnation notice for the Super One Motel at 268 East Main Street on January 17th with demolition to commence within 60 days. The demolition permit application has been submitted.

Meetings (Attended by Land Use, Code Enforcement, and Parking)

*Director Bensley attended the National League of Cities Housing Supply Symposium on January 12th to get information on new models for affordable housing in other areas of the country.

*Director Bensley and Deputy Director Ramos-Velazquez participated in the Economic Enhancement Committee meeting for The Newark Partnership on January 17th.

*Fire Protection Specialist Reese attended a tabletop with the UD STAR Campus for a disaster emergency drill. He also attended the UD Drake update and Compass complex meeting.

*Lead Code Enforcement Officer Poole attended the UD ECUP (East Campus Utility Upgrade Project) preconstruction meeting.

Land Use

*Deed Transfer Affidavits: 5

*Building Permit Reviews: 6

*Senior Planner Fortner is completing his review of the Special Use Permit application for 141 East Main Street for a “Arcade and Fun Zone” as an Indoor Commercial Recreation use. The application will be on the Council agenda for February 13th. In addition, Senior Planner Fortner is working on a report for 62 North Chapel Street for a change in the design that was approved by Council. The applicant would like to change the design proposed to allow the addition of balconies and to change the roof line.

*Senior Planner Fortner is working on a housing report and presentation for the February 7th Planning Commission meeting. The presentation is to give background and analysis on housing in Newark, based on the Rental Housing Needs Assessment (2016 & 2017), the Rental Housing Workgroup (2020), and the Statewide Analysis to Impediments to Fair Housing (2020), as well as additional research. The presentation is to establish the framework to begin implementing the Rental Housing Workgroup’s Plan approved by Council, focusing on ordinances such as Inclusionary Zoning.

*Community Planner Higgins worked to secure a contractor for mold remediation at 389 Stafford Avenue.

*Community Planner Higgins compiled all Unicity Bus crash details from January 6th and sent them to the Director and Finance for further processing.

*Community Planner Higgins and Senior Planner Fortner completed all purchase requisitions for all Revenue Sharing recipients.

Code Enforcement Projects

- *127 The Grove (Compass Apartments): Walkthroughs in Building 2.
- *The Grove (Building I): Preconstruction meeting and footings have begun.
- *UD Drake Lab Addition: Exterior stairs and ramp poured, fire lane/pedestrian walkway nearly complete and temporary generator installation is in progress.
- *UD Building X (McKinley Lab Replacement): Slab section 3 poured, foundation wall waterproofing still in progress.
- *UD Perkins: Above ceiling, waiting on some 3rd party inspections. Close to being finalized.
- *94 East Main Street (Green Mansion): (Apartments): Lower level to 2nd floor HVAC and plumbing are complete.
- *18 Country Club Drive (Fairfield Apartments): Roof shingles on fire damaged area are installed.
- *The Vero: Final inspections are in progress; parking lot striping complete and interior punch list work is in progress.
- *100 Discovery Boulevard (UD Star Tower): 9th floor fit out.

Property Maintenance

- *Complaints: 21
- *Violations: 4
- *Citations: 8
- *Inspections: 42

Items of Interest Code Enforcement and Property Maintenance

- *Fire Protection Specialist Reese completed plan reviews for the following fire alarm/sprinkler projects:
 - *UD Drake Lab: Review hydraulic calculations due to changes.
 - *94 East Main Street (Green Mansion): Hood system exhaust plans reviewed.
- *37 Madison Drive – animal welfare check and property maintenance inspection requested from the Newark PD.
- *Dumpster at Thorn Flats moved to a single location and not being maintained, bags of trash piling up outside.

Certificate of Completions/Occupancies Issued:

- *1001 Compass Way: Final CC and 82 final CO's.

Parking

- *Residential Permits Distributed: 10
- *Municipal Lot Permits Sold: 04
- *Citations Issued: 513
- *Online Appeals Answered: 38
- *Immobilized Vehicles: 03
- *Towed Vehicles: 0

Projects

- *PT-Parking Ambassador interviews have been setup for January 26th & 27th.
- *Staff worked on License Plate Recognition devices. One device is currently down due to networking issues and a tech has been assigned to look at it on Thursday, January 19th.
- *Staff went through current side-mounted printer stock and found fixes for some technical and hardware issues; ones that could not be fixed were scheduled to be sent back for repair if under warranty.

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:	
Expected Completion:	
Execution Status:	

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:	
Expected Completion:	
Execution Status:	

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:	
Expected Completion:	
Execution Status:	

City Manager's Weekly Report

Department:

Police Department

Notable Notes:

Patrol Division:

- On Friday, January 13th, 2023, at approximately 1251 hours, officers were conducting a follow up investigation into burglaries that occurred on Papermill Road this past week. While in the area, officers observed a male suspect walking who was known to be wanted on five (5) active capiases. When the male suspect observed the officers, he locked himself in a vacant garage for a short period before officers were able to take him into custody. Officers recovered stolen property from several of the burglaries which occurred over the past week. The male was committed on \$6,527 secured and \$2,500 cash bail. As a result of the recovered stolen property, additional charges are pending.
- On Saturday, January 14th, 2023, at approximately 0710 hours officers responded to the area of 45 East Main Street for the report that a male was seated in a vehicle that was not his own. Upon arrival contact was made with the male suspect who was highly intoxicated on a combination of alcohol and marijuana and had entered a female's unoccupied vehicle on Main Street. The male was cited for Tampering with a Motor Vehicle, Public Intoxication, and he was referred to UDPD for Student Judicial Review.
- On Monday, January 16th, 2023, at approximately 2355 hours, officers conducted a vehicle stop for a non-moving violation on a gold Chevrolet Tahoe while on South College Avenue. During the stop, officers located heroin and marijuana within the vehicle. The operator was charged with Possession of a Controlled Substance, Possession of Marijuana (Civil), and the non-moving traffic violation.
- On Tuesday, January 17th, 2023, at approximately 2113 hours, a patrol officer conducted a motor vehicle stop on a green Dodge Ram on Welsh Tract Road. When the truck came to a stop, the passenger fled into the woods. The operator was issued multiple traffic summonses and the vehicle towed from the scene. Warrants were obtained for the male suspect who fled for Resisting Arrest and Crossing at Other than A Crosswalk.

Special Enforcement Division:

- During the week, members of the Traffic Unit will be conducting training on motor vehicle code for a newly hired sworn police officer from the State of New York. Traffic Unit officers also attended a bicycle task force meeting with the Planning Department on Wednesday, January 18th. The unit will conduct enforcement at various locations throughout the city.
- All members of the Special Operations Unit have been reassigned to the Patrol Division due to staffing

shortages.

Auxiliary Services Division:

- Capt. Van Campen continues to deploy and train officers on the new Axon Body Worn Cameras. NPD was awarded grant funding under the EDIE and SALLE grant programs to support upgrades in technology and equipment as well as funding towards overtime and drug investigations.

Administration Division:

- Members of the Administration unit continue to finalize 2022 year-end reports. The 2023 police officer hiring process is now open. Anyone interested can visit <https://newarkde.gov/898/Career-Opportunities---Police-Officer> for more information on NPD's hiring process and how to apply.

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

City Manager's Weekly Report

Department:

Public Works and Water Resources Department

Notable Notes:

Staff and our consultant are working to evaluate the storm sewer along Academy Street near Kells Avenue. The pipe is primarily corrugated metal pipe (CMP) and is deteriorated. We expect to repair or replace this pipe within the next year, and we are looking at all options for replacement or removal. As part of this plan, we will be evaluating the capacity of the pipes to verify the size is appropriate.

The City has several variable message boards, which are the signs that you typically see on the side of the road warning of upcoming events or road closures. When these signs are not deployed for work, they are available to put out in strategic locations to address a local issue or make announcements. In recent months, the PW&WR Department has used them to alert people of job openings in the City, and the police have used them to remind folks to lock their car doors, etc. If Council members would like to utilize these signs for community events, etc., please reach out to Public Works and we will evaluate the availability and deploy the signs as necessary.

Notices of intent (NOI) for State Revolving Fund (SRF) funding in 2023 are due to the state on February 15. While we have not begun our official budgeting process, we will evaluate our needs for water, sewer, and stormwater projects over the next several years and submit based on that need. Submission of an NOI is imperative to secure funding, but in no way obligates us to follow through with the funding request. We will prepare a presentation on all current and proposed funding through the SRF program with the budget process for 2024.

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status:

Activity or Project:

Description:

Status:

Expected Completion:

Execution Status: