

Mayor and Council,

Below is this week's weekly report. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Have a great weekend!

### **General**

1. On Friday morning when staff arrived at the municipal building we were greeted by a very strong odor of burning oil. Facilities was able to identify the source as the oil reservoir in the elevator. It appears that there was a motor/pump malfunction, and the motor was stuck on for long enough that it began to smoke the oil. Facilities cut the power to the elevator, so the risk of fire has been eliminated. That said, the fumes were strong enough that as a safety precaution I closed the building and have requested all staff work from home that would otherwise work throughout the day inside the building. The facilities team is currently airing out the building and we have an elevator repair company scheduled to come to evaluate and make repairs this afternoon. Facilities indicated that they would attempt to remove the burnt oil from the reservoir while we wait for the elevator company. They have also opened windows throughout the building and will place the HVAC system on circulate with 100% outside air now that the building has been cleared out. We have sent out an InformMe message for those who have signed up for City alerts, have signage posted at the building, and have posted information to our social media accounts alerting the public of the closure.
2. Staff is working on a preliminary bond bill request similar to the request we submitted last year that resulted in a \$2MM grant. We are going to again request approximately \$2MM for capital related work. We anticipate the state will receive many requests this year and it will be a more competitive year for grant requests, especially with other requests for the Newark area like New Castle County's project to rebuild the Newark Library.
3. We have made an offer to a candidate for a sewer flusher truck operator in public works and a Bailiff in court. We are also working on the skills portion of our interviews for two positions in the City Secretary's office.
4. We held a meeting of the pension committee this week. At the meeting we received presentations on pension performance by our fund manager, Vanguard, our investment consultant, DT Investments, and our actuary, Milliman.

### **Planning**

1. Building 3000 at Fountainview experienced a leak in a sprinkler pipe that caused the entire building to be condemned on Wednesday, 3/15. This condemned 64 units and displaced approximately 120 residents. Staff has worked with the condo association and their contractors to restore power and domestic water to 32 of the 64 units as of Thursday afternoon. Either the sprinkler system or the fire alarm will need to be functional for residents to return to the 32 rooms that again have power or else a 24 hour a day fire watch will be required. Staff will

continue to work with the condo association to evaluate the more heavily damaged units to determine when their residents will be able to move back in.

2. Code enforcement will have staff in this weekend to respond to property maintenance issues related to St. Patty's Day celebrations.
3. Parking staff met with councilman Suchanec this week to discuss operations and plans to track and monitor performance metrics following the recent fee and fine changes.

### **Public Works**

1. The Water Infrastructure Advisory Council (WIAC) met this week and our projects on the Notice of Intent (NOI) were approved along with the principal forgiveness grant for the PFAS removal project at the South Well Field water treatment plant.
2. The EPA has released a draft of their proposed PFAS standard. They have set the allowable level at 4 parts per trillion which is equal to the current technological testing limit for the compounds. This means that if you can detect it with a test it is too high. While we commend the EPA for more aggressively regulating these compounds, staff has concerns that the chosen level will be unaffordable for many water utilities across the country absent considerable federal grant funding. We also have concerns that there doesn't seem to be any push to prevent more of these compounds from entering the environment through limits on production and the ability to use these compounds in consumer products. By their nature they will continue to build up in the environment, leaving more and more contaminants for water utilities to remove. We anticipate this new regulatory level will result in the need to add PFAS removal equipment at the Curtis treatment plant which will likely cost more than \$12 million, with annual operating costs of several hundred thousand dollars. All of this expense will need to be recovered through increased water rates.
3. Green Mansion entrance reconstruction: Lang Development's contractor will be closing the sidewalk in front of Green Mansion from Friday, 3/24 to Friday, 3/31 to reconstruct the commercial entrances to the site and bring them into compliance with DeDOT standards and the approved DeDOT Entrance Plans. A pedestrian detour has been reviewed and approved for this work.
4. Abby Court Sewer Lateral Installation: Lang Development is tentatively scheduled to install a new sewer lateral from the existing Abby Court building (164 East Main Street) to our existing sewer main on Choate Street. This work is planned for the week of 3/27 and will require the temporary closure of Choate Street at the Main Street intersection until the sewer tie-in is substantially complete. Parking will be restricted on Choate Street to allow for residents/students to enter and exit at New Street. South Main detour at Park Place to make repair at gas patch
5. W. Main Street/ S. Main Street Mill and Paving: Delmarva Power (Exelon) will be mobilizing their contractor to complete the permanent restoration on the south lane of Main Street at the approach to S. Main Street (near the Deer Park). The work includes milling, paving, and restriping of the left turn lane. This will require the closure of the left turning lane off Main to S. Main. The contractor will be detouring vehicles from Main Street up to Hillside Road, to Apple Road, and back to S. Main Street. No trucks will be permitted on Hillside Road. There will be a separate truck detour that sends trucks down South College to Christina Parkway and back to Elkton Road.

6. South Chapel Street ADA Improvements: As part of the City's ADA Transition Plan, the Public Works and Water Resources Department has contracted with Jaquez Concrete to remove and replace nine (9) curb ramps between Lovett Avenue and East Park Place. To minimize the impact to pedestrians, we are scheduling this work to be completed during UD spring break, Monday, 3/27 - Friday, 3/31 (weather permitting). PWWR has coordinated this work with the University. Mini excavator has been delivered
7. Staff has begun a pothole patching push city-wide this week now that hotmix plat is open again. Please let us know if you have potholes you would like patched.

### **Police**

1. We have the one year review of our CALEA accreditation this spring, April 7<sup>th</sup> through April 16<sup>th</sup>. They review approximately 1/4<sup>th</sup> of our standards for police and communications.
2. We held 4 police officer interviews this week, two of which will proceed to the next step in the process.
3. Carpet replacement is moving along well.
4. We are looking to schedule a promotion ceremony for May. We will advertise the date once it is set and would appreciate the attendance of any council members who are available.
5. St Patrick's Day is this Friday. The NPD will be fully staffed and has been coordinating as appropriate with UDPD and the City's property maintenance team.

### **Parks and Recreation**

1. There will be an Arbor Day reforestation event at Karpinski Park on Friday April 28<sup>th</sup>. We will advertise soon for volunteers.
2. The annual Community Clean up is scheduled for Saturday April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 9 to noon. We will advertise soon for volunteers.
3. The annual egg hunt is scheduled for April 1<sup>st</sup> at the Carpenter Recreation Area at White Clay Creek State Park.

### **Facilities**

1. Carpet replacement in NPD is still progressing slightly ahead of schedule.
2. Facilities met with Electric and Parks to discuss charging infrastructure for the new electric mowers and equipment purchased for Parks and Recreation under the Energize DE grant award.

### **Finance**

1. We performed several commercial utility account disconnects this week for accounts that were significantly behind in payments.
2. Staff performed a review of our commercial utility deposits and returned commercial deposits for accounts in good standing that are over 3 years old.
3. We have completed and advertised a RFP for a master lease agreement this week. The master agreement will streamline the lease agreement process for new vehicle purchases.

### **Electric**

1. The high winds this week have caused some outages this week. Our automatic recloser system has proved its worth, turning what would have been a very large outage into a 7-minute outage.