

Mayor and Council,

Below is this week's weekly report. As a reminder, the City is closed tomorrow in observance of the Good Friday holiday.

Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Have a great weekend!

General

1. There was an incident at Newark Charter School that resulted in a police response. More information can be found in the Newark PD's press release here: [Investigation of Threats of Violence at Newark Charter High School – Newark Police Public Information \(newarkdepolicepress.com\)](http://newarkdepolicepress.com)
2. Staff are finishing up the final touches on an electronic report a concern system for City services. When complete, it will be available on the City's website and through the City's smartphone app, AskNewarkDE which is available for free on in both Apple and Google's app stores. This program will allow people to log complaints about services, report potholes and power outages, along with many other categories, quickly and efficiently without the need to call City Hall. Complaints will be delivered electronically to the respective departments 24 hours a day. This should help alleviate long hold times during power outages like we experienced this past weekend.

Planning and Development

1. Staff issued a ten-day extension to Fountainview for moisture remediation in the 3000 building, which included conditions to be met in order to receive an additional extension. Active demolition of the water damaged areas in the third and fourth floors is underway with the second and first floors being packed up where contracted and prepared for demolition. The primary contractor for the condo association and the majority of the owners held a meeting for residents on Saturday, April 1. At that meeting the contractor estimated four weeks at the current pace of work for overall moisture removal and demolition work in the building. The City sent letters to all unit owners on Friday, March 24 outlining the steps that each unit owner needed to take to be able to reoccupy each unit. As those items are complete and submitted, the City will be working to ensure that there is a fire-safe egress from the units to allow for them to be reoccupied.
2. The Planning Commission endorsed the proposed affordable housing related code changes associated with the Newark Housing Authority's development project. These will now move back to Council in ordinance form for final approval.
3. Fairfield Apartments: City code allows work to stop for up to 90 days before a violation can be issued, a number we have yet to hit. For reference, Newark has reduced this from what is

included in the International Building Code of 180 days. Going lower than 90 creates a situation where regular project delays, like waiting on an insurance determination, may end up triggering violations. Staff are discussing potential code revisions that would help us avoid protracted issues like this in the future without unintentionally creating a situation where we have to cite people experiencing regular delays.

City Secretary

1. The replacement administrative professional has been selected and will start mid-month. This position has been vacant for some time now and staff are looking forward to being back at full strength in the office. The digital records coordinator position remains open, however.
2. The Council organizational meeting scheduled for 4/20. Council's first regular meeting will be on 4/24

Purchasing

1. The first draft of an updated purchasing manual is complete and with Finance and the City Manager for review.

Public Works

1. Repairs are underway at the windy hills tank (expected to be complete within the next 1.5 weeks).
2. PWWR will mail a project profile sheet early next week to the Evergreen community in advance of booster station work expected to start at the end of this month. The booster station is located in the small building on the south side of the entrance road.

Police

1. The NPD officially lost an officer with 4 years' experience to the Department of Homeland Security after receiving their two-weeks' notice this week. We knew this was a possibility but it will make getting back to full strength more difficult. This said, we have hired another certified officer this week from Pennsylvania. She will attend the next available police academy.
2. The recently ordered Ford Lightning EV was delivered on 4/6. As a reminder, this is an addition to the fleet and is intended as a pilot for using electric vehicles in police patrol. It will be several weeks until the vehicle is fully upfitted for use as a patrol vehicle, but we believe it may be the first patrol EV in Delaware and we intend to do a press release when it goes into service.
3. NPD met with DeIDOT and their consultants to discuss the I-95 interchange project and potential impacts to police activity.

Parks and Recreation

1. We had a large amount of tree damage in town during the storm on Saturday. Staff spent significant time this week responding to resident concerns, inspecting parks for dangerous trees, and removing fallen/damaged trees and branches.
2. We are having trouble finding seasonal employees for parks maintenance. So far we have scheduled 6 interviews and none of the applicants showed up for the mutually scheduled

interview. We have another scheduled for later in the day on Thursday the 6th. If we don't have some success soon, we will likely need to investigate using a temp agency, something we have done in the past when in a similar situation.

3. Staff continue to prepare for the Memorial Day parade.

Facilities

1. We have received 4 of the 6 EV Charging stations that were ordered as part of our Energize DE grant. We anticipate the remaining 2 will be delivered soon. The electric department will install the chargers as their schedule permits.
2. Tinting of the remaining lower windows in the atrium was completed this week. Lighting and cove base molding are the last remaining items and should be completed in the next month.
3. The carpet installation on the second floor of City Hall is progressing nicely and ahead of schedule.

Finance

1. The City's auditors are here this week.
2. Two RFP's closed this week and are under review, Council Chamber AV and Master Lease agreement.
3. Staff meeting next week to discuss potential changes to the 2024 budget process based on feedback we received this past fall during the 2023 budget process.

Electric

1. We had 6 broken poles during the storm this past Saturday. According to electric department staff, this is the most poles we have lost in one storm in at least the last 20 years. During the peak of the storm we had around 900 customers out of power but most were restored quickly with only a small handful out of power for closer to 24 hours.
2. On Tuesday, we had a larger outage that affected Main Street and larger swaths of the west side of town. The cause was determined to be a faulty lightning arrestor. Due to an existing failed transformer at this substation that is waiting on insurance to replace, it was more difficult to identify the faulty arrestor which contributed to the length of the outage.