

Mayor and Council,

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

Have a great weekend!

City Manager's Highlights

1. The CAC approved a "Super Rebate" program at the May CAC meeting, which compliments Efficiency Smart's rebate program for Energy Star-certified window air conditioning units. Efficiency Smart provides \$50 rebates for window air conditioners up to a maximum of 4 units per household. The CAC's super rebate adds \$100 to the \$50 Efficiency Smart rebate for a maximum of \$150 per unit. The CAC's program caps at 2 units per household, however. The CAC contributed \$10,000 to the Super Rebate program, which will allow for 50-100 total rebates. The intent is to push this program out in June as the weather gets warmer.

The Super Rebate program for window air conditioners is meant to serve as a pilot program for additional supplemental rebates in the future. If there is success with window air conditioning units, staff will discuss expanding the program in 2024 for other appliances eligible for Efficiency Smart rebates to make converting to more efficient models financially feasible for Newark residents.

2. Chief Human Resources Officer Hardin is scheduled to go out on maternity leave next week. Marta Pacheco, our HR administrator, will be taking on many of Devan's responsibilities while she is out on leave.
3. The TNP held their May board meeting this past Tuesday which City Manager Coleman attended along with Mayor Markham. At this meeting the board reviewed their proposed FY 24 budget and approved their first round of mini grant awards.
4. We held our annual bike to work day celebration this Friday morning. We held it at "Mentor's Circle" again this year between the Morris Library and Hulihan Hall on UD's campus. Thank you to UD for hosting again and also thank you to everyone who helps put this event on each year.
5. Our Memorial Day parade is this Sunday at 2:00. Similar to prior years, a ceremony will be held on the north side of Memorial Hall on the UD's north green beforehand.
6. George DeBenedictis joined our team this past Monday as our new code enforcement manager following the departure of Stephanie Petersen earlier this spring. George is a Delaware native and previously worked for the town of Smyrna and Kent County performing similar roles in

building inspection and plan review. Please join me in welcoming George to the team if you see him.

7. The application period for business parking permits is open. In response to feedback following the price increase this year we have rolled out a pilot program for businesses that will allow them to pay for the permits monthly over the 6 months instead of all up front. We will review how well the program works, and evaluate whether to continue or expand this program toward the end of the period.
8. Directors Filasky and Bensley met with City Manager Coleman and Albert Shields from UD to discuss DelDOT's initial alternatives for the South College Gateway project which is currently anticipated to stretch from Welsh Tract Road north to Main Street along South College Avenue. There was very strong alignment between City and UD staff with regard to the need to greatly improve pedestrian and cyclist safety. This is especially so between the railroad and Rt. 4 where we anticipate bike and pedestrian crossing traffic will greatly increase as STAR campus develops in the coming years.
9. UDon't Need It? (UDNI) annual student move out program begins this Saturday May 20 on the STAR Campus. Details and schedule can be found at: <https://newarkde.gov/836/UDont-Need-It-Student-Move-Out-Program>

Purchasing and Facilities

1. The facilities team worked with our door and gate security company to convert the reservoir gate over to the same card access system as our main city buildings. It has been on a legacy system that was specific to the water department previously, and this move will improve efficiency by combining them to one system.
2. Floor repairs in the office building at the Field Operations Complex were completed this week.
3. Staff have prepared a draft recommendation for changes to purchasing thresholds for RFP's and Council purchasing approval based on feedback we received from Council this past Monday night.
4. The Council Chamber AV RFP contract agreement has been sent to the selected contractor, Lerro. Lerro indicated a 12-week lead time for materials and a two-week construction period. At this point we anticipate the project will be completed in September or October of this year.
5. Two invitations for bids are scheduled to be advertised this week. The first is for the PFAS removal project at the South Wellfield Water Treatment Plant and the second is the City Hall parking lot and police security update project.

6. Staff is working on a federal electric vehicle charging grant with the Grant Assistance Program group out of UD that is funded by the state to assist municipalities access federal infrastructure program money. The grant program has a \$500k project minimum.
7. Staff met with Energize Delaware and their new Executive Director, Drew Slater (previously the Public Advocate for Delaware) to discuss potential opportunities to work together in the future.

Public Works

1. Annual Street Contract: Our street contractor continued curb removal and replacement at Beagle Club Way, Dickey Park and Caldwell Place and began Madison Drive on Tuesday, 5/16. Curb work at Beagle Club Way is anticipated to be completed within one week. Curb work at Caldwell Place is anticipated to be completed by Thursday, 5/19. Curb work will begin on Pennwood Street and Del Grove Avenue on Monday May 22. We expect the paving crew to begin street milling and paving in approximately 4 weeks. Notices will be distributed ahead of any work starting.
2. Confined space entry training with our consultant Teksolve was held this week for field staff. Teksolve is going to review and provide feedback on our draft safety manual section on confined spaces next. We plan to hold annual training moving forward once we get the initial round of training complete.
3. UD Civil and Environmental Engineering recently acquired an autonomous vessel (roughly 6 feet long) outfitted with a variety of sensors including a sonar. In early 2023, UD reached out to PWWR to see if the City would allow the department to test that in a controlled environment (i.e. reservoir vs open ocean). Last week UD and dignitaries of the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers successfully tested the operation of the vessel within the Newark Reservoir. In the fall, UD would like to do a full test with all the sensors installed. It's possible that the fall test session could provide the City with an updated bathymetric map of the reservoir.
4. Director Filasky took a potential generator maintenance consultant to visit all of our water and sewer generators to prepare a plan to address deferred maintenance on our generators.
5. Public works staff held our regular quarterly meeting with UD's planning and development team this week.
6. The state regulation that mandates we implement a formal plan for Backflow prevention and cross connection control in our water utility becomes effective in February 2024. Staff is working on a plan that will bring us into compliance with the pending regulation. It is worth noting that this is going to have a financial impact on water customers if they don't already have the required equipment in place.
7. Deputy Director Robinson is working with a contractor to get pricing to physically remove the excess algae at Hillside Park. We have a plan to address the algae moving forward but are concerned that if we kill the existing algae, the large mass will result in low dissolved oxygen as it

biodegrades on the pond bottom. Removing as much as we can beforehand will help minimize those concerns.

Police

1. During the week, several Newark PD staff officers assisted two police agencies with promotional oral boards. From Monday, May 15th through Wednesday, May 17th, Captain Scott Rieger assisted Dover Police Department and on Tuesday, May 16th, Lt. Greg D'Elia assisted Middletown Police Department with their oral boards.
2. On Wednesday, May 17, 2023, Detective Paige Klein, and Officer Ryan Parker were recognized at the 11th Annual Sudden Cardiac Arrest Reunion. The reunion is hosted by the New Castle County Department of Public Safety, Emergency Medical Services Division, and serves as an opportunity to reunite first responders with patients whom they saved following a sudden cardiac arrest event. First responders are provided with a commendation ribbon to be worn on their uniforms. Detective Klein and Officer Parker are the latest of several NPD officers who have been previously recognized during this ceremony.
3. On Thursday, May 18, 2023, Sgt. Aaron Olicker participated in a Safety and Security Panel at the Virtual Career Exploration Fair for 8th graders at Las Americas Aspira Academy.
4. On Friday, May 19, 2023, Cpl. Craig Maurer (retired) and M/Cpl. Paul Lawrence (retired) were recognized at the U.S. Attorney's Office 2023 Law Enforcement Award Ceremony. The two officers were recognized for their outstanding work on a significant drug trafficking investigation while assigned as Task Force Officers assigned to the Drug Enforcement Administration.
5. On Saturday, May 20, 2023, Cpl. Corey Spencer and K9 Luto will participate in the Rally for Our First Responders event at Hudson Fields in Milton. The K9 team will represent Newark PD and will conduct a K9 demonstration during the event.

Parks and Recreation

1. Staff continued to work on preparation items necessary ahead of the opening of the George Wilson Center and Dickey Park pools.
2. We have four major events this week: Bike to Work Day, Parks on Draft, the Spring Concert Series, and the Memorial Day parade which all required significant staff time and set us slightly further behind with mowing operations.
3. Parks on Draft will be held this Friday and Saturday in Handloff Park from 3-8PM both days. Iron Hill is our restaurant partner this year.
4. Grass has been growing very fast and we have continued to have difficulty hiring seasonal parks staff so we have fallen behind. We have a few additional seasonal employees coming on board shortly.

5. We are fully staffed up for summer camps but are still accepting volunteer applications.

Planning and Development

1. Staff spent time working on the Healthy Homes grant program that we are looking to partner with New Castle County on. NCC is planning to tackle 30+ homes in Newark. NCC is looking for Newark to contribute up to \$2000 per project as matching funds which looks to be a good leveraging opportunity for our CDBG home improvement funds.
2. Staff met with DART and Via, the app contractor for DART Connect Newark, to develop a plan for virtual bus stop locations. DART also notified us that they are now planning to start with 4 busses instead of the original plan which only included two. They also indicated that once Unicity ends service, DART will add that bus into the service as well, bringing the bus total to 5. The plan is to have a bus stop within a half mile of all residents and no further than a quarter mile in areas with higher concentrations of older residents. Additional bus stops can be added later as needed based on demand.
3. We have received the FEMA application for the Rodeway property which is the first step for a potential redevelopment of this property. The initial plan shown to the City calls for the hotel to be removed and replaced with a Dash In convenience store with a car wash.
4. Staff has spent time this week developing a path forward for the Parking Advisory Committee that includes a plan for orientation of the appointed committee members and education on the state of current and past parking related efforts.
5. A stop work order has been issued to Fountainview because they have not filed for necessary permits related to demolition work that was started without permits.
6. Briar Creek North has started construction on four new houses. Staff are working with the contractor to address ADA deficiencies around the central mailbox location.
7. The Green Mansion Hotel has received a temporary certificate of occupancy to allow staff to begin training ahead of their scheduled opening on May 23rd. City staff are working with the developer to make sure the final life safety items are properly addressed to allow them to hit their target opening date.
8. We held our first meeting with property owners and tenants regarding the Nuisance Property ordinance. UD's office of student conduct participated because the tenants are UD undergraduate students and were helpful in the discussion.

Finance and IT

1. Council approved the master lease agreement on Monday night and staff are working with the selected vendor to schedule a closing date. We are currently looking to close the week of June 6th.
2. Customer service staff and director Del Grande attended customer service training at DEMEC this week as part of an ongoing customer service certificate program.
3. Student move-in and move-outs have begun. We process around 2500 account transfers over the move out period which is a large strain on staff and may result in longer than usual call queue times.
4. IT staff is working to schedule Tyler 311 training with directors. Tyler 311 is our new report a concern program that will be added to the City's app and website. We anticipate roll out within the next month.

Electric

1. We have a line crew assisting AT&T with work on Elkton Road associated with a fiber upgrade project.
2. Engineering is working with the developer for 132 East Main Street project to address issues related to maintenance of service to Chipotle during construction along with relocation of the electric line that crosses Lot 4 and will be impacted by construction. We are taking this opportunity to develop initial plans for the installation of electric vehicle charging stations in Lot 4 as well.
3. Line crews have spent time at The Grove performing work related to the project. This will continue into next week. This week's work is associated with the intersection work at Library and Wyoming Road and next week will be the pad sites along the extension of Delaware Avenue through to Marrow's Road.