

Mayor and Council,

Below is the weekly report for the week ending today, June 16th, 2023. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Have a great weekend!

City Manager's Highlights

1. New student orientation at UD runs from June 20th through July 19th. Newark will strive to have representatives from the police department and other operating departments at orientation when possible, but due to the long schedule we will not make all dates.
2. We submitted a grant application this week to the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) grant program, a grant made possible by the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. We worked with the Grant Assistance Program which is a state funded grant assistance program hosted by UD to complete the application. Our application was for just shy of \$750k and, if it is awarded, will be used to install infrastructure for up to 17 public charging stations in total, 11 funded by the grant, in 5 locations across the City.
3. For Newsletters:
 - a. As we celebrate the Juneteenth Holiday on Monday June 19, Refuse Collection will be modified the week of June 19 as follows: Refuse normally collected on Monday, June 19 will be collected on Tuesday, June 20. Refuse normally collected on Tuesday, June 20 will be collected on Wednesday, June 21. There will be no "Green Wednesday" yard waste collection on Wednesday, June 21. Recycling will be collected on your normal day.
 - b. Public works applied for and received a grant from the Delaware Bicycle Council last year for a planning and engineering study of Chrysler Avenue to review potential safety improvements and potential stormwater upgrades. As part of that process, we are planning a community outreach and walkthrough on June 27 from 4pm-6pm. We will be directly notifying Chrysler residents and sending invites to interested parties and council members.
 - c. DSHA held a meeting with participating lenders on Wednesday to announce four new programs designed to increase access to homeownership in Delaware. Now, whether a homebuyer is purchasing their first or next home, DSHA offers mortgage products that can make the dream of homeownership a reality.
 - i. The four programs are:
 1. Smart Start Home Loan: A first mortgage loan formally known as "DSHA unassisted". Interest rates will be priced daily and will be at or below current market rates. Program available for conventional and government loans.

2. Home Sweet Home Program (Temporary): A zero-interest forgivable second loan of \$12,000 to be used for down payment and closing cost assistance for homebuyers purchasing a home with a maximum sales price of \$285,000.00 or less.
 3. Delaware Diamonds Home Loan (Temporary): This is a zero-interest forgivable second loan of \$15,000 to be used for down payment and closing cost assistance. This program will be eligible to current “essential workers” who live in the state of Delaware with an occupation in the following fields: Education System, Medical Field, First Responders, Grocery Store Employees, General, and Wholesale Merchandise Retailers, and Veterans.
 4. First State Home Loan Program – FKA Preferred Plus: This is a zero-interest 2nd loan. Formerly known as “Preferred Plus,” it will provide a 4% down payment and closing cost assistance loan based on the 1st mortgage final loan amount. The principal will be deferred until the following events: refinance, sales, transfer of title, and the property is no longer the borrower(s) primary residence (whichever comes first).
 - ii. These programs will officially open on Thursday, June 15.
- d. DEMEC advised Newark this week of new home energy rebates available from the US Department of Energy under programs included in the Inflation Reduction Act. More information can be found here: <https://www.energy.gov/scep/home-energy-rebate-programs> The rebates are as follows:
- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| i. Battery Storage Installation | 30% |
| ii. Geothermal Heating Installation | 30% |
| iii. Electric Panel | \$600 |
| iv. Electric Vehicle Charger | \$1,000 |
| v. New Electric Vehicle | \$7,500 |
| vi. Used Electric Vehicle | \$4,000 |
| vii. Heat Pump Air Conditioner/Heater | \$2,000 |
| viii. Heat Pump Water Heater | \$2,000 |
| ix. Rooftop Solar Installation | 30% |
| x. Weatherization | \$1,200 |

Planning and Development

1. Planning and Code Enforcement staff attended a meeting of the Fountainview Condo Association to provide information on the current status of the City’s involvement in their restoration project and unrelated damage found during restoration efforts associated with the sprinkler main failure earlier this year.
2. Planning staff are working to finalize Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) paperwork for year-end and preparing application packets for next year.

3. We have been advised by Fairfield Apartments that June 20th is now the anticipated completion date for windows installation.

Finance and IT

1. All departments have provided feedback on the My 311 “report a concern” system that is going to be added to the AskNewark smart phone app shortly. IT will coordinate training on the management dashboard next. Once the new features have been added to the app we will commence another social media push to get people to sign up for the app. We have recently begun using the app to push notifications for electric outages. This has been well received so far.
2. Staff continue to work on the 2024 budget ahead of the initial round of departmental hearings in July.

Public Works

1. Algae removal at Hillside Park was successful. Public Works will work with the contractor on a maintenance plan to prevent another algae bloom moving forward.
2. We have experienced the first instances of water meter batteries dying in large water meters now that we are 10 years out from the smart meter project. The Water division has begun ordering replacement meter registers and will replace them as they fail. We will use this opportunity to perform general meter maintenance on the meters as appropriate.
3. DeIDOT has a contractor mobilizing to S. College on or about June 19th to repair a collapsed storm sewer located on the southbound lane, immediately south of the Delaware Ave intersection. This work will require the closure and detour of the southbound lane between Delaware Ave and Kent Way. Southbound South College will be closed starting June 19th for approximately 3-4 weeks. This work has been coordinated with the University of Delaware and Aetna. Signage has been posted at the site.
4. Curb work on East Park Place will continue into the week of June 19, expected to finish up on or about June 23. Milling and paving operations will follow but have not been scheduled at this time.

Electric

1. Field staff are working to proactively repair hot spots in the system that were identified as part of our infrared survey earlier this year.
2. Our electricians performed testing of transformers at the Phillips substation.

3. Engineering worked with our consultant to perform hot oil cleaning of circuit breaker at Kershaw Substation. We have maintenance for one more circuit breaker to go.
4. Engineering and field crews are working with Delmarva Power on make ready work to allow them to replace 4 poles on Cleveland Avenue.
5. We have had four small outages this week and all four were due to squirrels.
6. Engineering met with the developer for the Mill at White Clay to discuss ongoing and remaining electrical installations associated with their work.

Police

1. At a ceremony on Monday evening, June 12, 2023, the Newark Rotary Club recognized Cpl. Casey Rivers as their 2023 Officer of the Year. Cpl. Rivers was nominated for his work over the past year on several significant drug cases and his work field training new officers. NPD thanks the Newark Rotary Club for this recognition, their continued support of our agency, and their contributions to our community.
2. On Tuesday evening, June 13, 2023, M/Cpl. William Anderson was recognized by the University of Delaware Police Department at their annual promotion and awards ceremony. M/Cpl. Anderson received a UDPD Departmental Commendation for his work assisting the University of Delaware Police Department and the FBI on a cyberstalking, wire fraud and money laundering investigation involving a former UD Student.
3. On Thursday evening, June 15th, Mayor Markham and City Manager Coleman joined Chief Farrall, NPD Command Staff and officers at the New Castle County Police graduation ceremony to celebrate the graduation of Officers Joshua Marrero, Taquill Reed, and Ethan Ritchie. In the coming days, NPD's newest officers will begin an intensive field training program and we look forward to their future contributions to our agency and community.
4. On June 23, 2023, at 6pm NPD will host their next Fishing with First Responders Event. The event will be held at Hillside Park and pre-registration is required. This event is open to all ages and registration can be scheduled through the Newark Parks & Recreation website.

Parks and Recreation

1. Parks maintenance staff continue to work to clean up storm damage from the severe thunderstorms earlier this year.

2. A contractor working for the Parks Department performed invasive plant removal in the meadow at Hillside Park. As the meadow continues to develop, the need for maintenance of this nature will diminish over time.
3. Staff installed a new canoe ramp at Rttenhouse Park ahead of camp this summer.
4. Interviews were completed this week for a customer service representative to fill a vacancy created by the retirement of the Parks Department CSR. An offer was made and accepted.

Facilities and purchasing

1. We are in the final extension year of the existing lobbyist contract with Armitage Dechane. Staff has notified our current lobbyist and will begin work on an updated RFP which will be advertised this fall, so we are ready to go ahead of the next year in this legislative session.