

Mayor and Council,

Below is the weekly report for the week ending today, August 11, 2023. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Have a great weekend!

### **City Manager's Highlights**

1. In accordance with Council's stated priorities, staff finalized language this week for an ordinance that would create a Volunteer Fire Service Assistance Fund and corresponding building permit fee to match the fee that is levied by the same name by New Castle County. 100% of the revenue from this fee, should it be approved, would be distributed to Aetna Hose Hook and Ladder. It is my goal to have this on the August 28<sup>th</sup> agenda for first reading with second reading on September 11<sup>th</sup>.
2. Parks and Recreation has received 19 phone calls from residents about tree issues throughout our parks since Monday's storm. Currently, we have identified 26 trees that need removal or clearing of trails and active areas. Some of this tree work is being completed in house and others by our tree contractor. As a result, some trail and parks areas will be closed until the trees are cleared.

### **Items for Newsletters**

1. **Free Water for a Year initiative:** Newark Water customers are encouraged to complete the online survey at this link: <https://newarkde.gov/lead> to enter a sweepstakes for free water for a year, up to \$1000 value! The data collected will help complete a required inventory of service lines and reduce operating costs for the water utility. Please share with your newsletters and mailing lists.
2. **Street Paving – Penwood Street and Del Grove Avenue:** Paving is underway on Penwood Street and Del Grove Avenue and scheduled to be completed on by August 18.
3. **Fall parks and Recreation Activity Guide:** The Fall parks and Recreation Activity Guide will be available on the City's website and delivered electronically to our mailing list on Monday, August 21.
4. **DART Connect Newark:** We are excited to announce that DART Connect Newark launched on Monday, August 7 with a media event at Main Towers. Information regarding this revolutionary new transportation service can be found at <https://dartfirststate.com/Programs/dartconnect/>.

## Public Works

1. Arbour Park Tank Painting Advertisement: PWWR has applied for a permit through DNREC to remove lead paint and repaint our Arbour Park Water Tank. It has been publicly advertised by DNREC at the following link. <https://dnrec.alpha.delaware.gov/public-notices/reg-1102-permit-application-city-of-newark/> . The permit requirements will be added to the contract when advertised for bid, expected in early fall.
2. Citywide Water Valve Maintenance Contract: PWWR will utilize a contractor to perform routine maintenance on most valves in our water system over the next 2 months, beginning the week of August 28. A small crew will perform the work with utility vehicles and traffic control where needed. There should be little to no disruption of service and residents can call PWWR if they have any concerns or questions.

## Parks and Recreation

1. Parks and Receptions staff spent time working to organize the Downes and West Park Elementary Schools Before and After School Care programs. This includes staff orientation and completing all State licensing requirements and student and parent information packets.
2. Mowing of parks and maintenance of horticulture areas continues to be a focus throughout the park system due to rapid growth from recent rainfall.

## Planning and Development

1. Land Use:
  - a. DART Connect launched on Monday, August 7 with a media event at Main Towers. Education sessions were held at the Newark Senior Center and at Main Towers on Friday, August 4 with over 90 residents attending to get information about the new program and to get assistance with using the DART Connect apps. Information regarding this new service can be found at <https://dartfirststate.com/Programs/dartconnect/>.
  - b. Staff completed and posted the agenda and packet items for the August 15 Planning Commission meeting, which can be found here: <https://newarkde.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/7747>. Items on the agenda include the minor subdivision and three special use permits for the proposed gas station/convenience store at 1105 Elkton Road, clarifying amendments to front and side yard setbacks in the BB zone and a presentation and discussion on inclusionary zoning. The inclusionary zoning discussion is also slated to be on Council's agenda at the August 21 meeting.
  - c. Extensive time was spent preparing for the kickoff of implementation for Tyler Enterprise Permitting and Licensing (EPL), formerly known as EnerGov. The vendor will be on site August 15-17 for the initial project kickoff, so staff assigned to the project will have limited availability those three days. There is a 12 month implementation plan and staff who have been assigned to the project have been told to expect to devote 6-10 workdays per month to the project.

2. Code Enforcement:

- a. Staff was informed that the contractor and the insurance company for Fountainview have reached an agreement on the contract pricing and that the contractor has enough information to start the processing of permits and beginning stages of the project. Additionally, staff met onsite with an assessor from New Castle County on August 3 to review the potential for lowering the assessment on the damaged building to provide relief on the tax bills for those residents. Staff also attended meetings with Fountainview residents on August 4 and 9 to respond to questions regarding the ongoing recovery efforts. Staff has also been working with contacts in state and county agencies to follow potential leads for assistance for displaced residents.
- b. Staff worked with the developer and contractor for 132-138 East Main Street to finalize the demolition plan for the existing structure. Demolition should begin next week.
- c. Tenant fit-out permits were approved for Funtivity Arcade and Fun Center (141 East Main Street) and First State Urgent Vet (301 Louviers Drive).

3. Parking:

- a. Repaving in Lot #3 related to the Hyatt Place/apartments (formerly known as the Green Mansion) project was completed with parking blocks and striping added for parking stalls.
- b. Staff worked to get final pricing for several T2-related purchases, including a new License Plate Reader and new parking citation printers, to be presented to Council at their August 21 meeting.

## Finance

1. Staff has worked with departments to assemble a draft of the full 2024 budget. Finance Director Del Grande and City Manager Coleman will present an overview to City Council at their regularly scheduled meeting on Monday the 14<sup>th</sup>.
2. The April and May financial reports are complete and will be on the consent agenda of the August 21<sup>st</sup> City Council meeting.
3. The 2022 financial audit has been completed. The auditors will be at the August 21<sup>st</sup> City Council meeting to present the results along with staff from the Finance Department.
4. We received our annual PILOT payment from the State this week. As a reminder, our PILOT payment was increased to \$450,000 this year from \$400,000 in years past.

## Electric

1. We completed the utility changeover on East Park Place that was described in last week's weekly report.
2. The weekend storm caused minor issues on South Chapel Street near the Farm Lane area. This impacted 35 customers out for an hour.

3. During Monday's storm, a tree fell on solar panels at Reservoir solar park. This caused damage to a couple of panels and the fence. Staff have contacted our vendor for both the solar installation and the fence to schedule repairs.
4. We sent two engineers to the Eaton Experience Center, a training facility at one of our equipment manufacturers, for two days of training. Eaton makes equipment that we use in our automatic restoration system that allows us to more quickly restore power during outages.
5. A snake caused damage to the 35kv recloser that feeds the Fremont substation. We are working on replacing the damaged recloser.
6. Engineering worked with a technician for CYME, our electrical engineering system model provider, to address some of the issues with our model.
7. Engineering is working on a fault current study for the University associated with a new building.