

Below is the weekly report for the week ending today, November 10th, 2023.

City Manager's Highlights

1. Staff completed and submitted the City's appeal to the Delaware Population Consortium's adoption of their 2023 population projections. The current adopted projections continue to memorialize the undercount in the City's population from the 2020 Census attributed to the University's closure of their campus due to COVID three weeks prior to Census day and do not have the City recovering its 15-19 and 20-24 population until 2045 when UD's enrollment for the Newark campus currently is 1.5% above its pre-COVID enrollment. We have contacted our local state legislators to inform them of the issue and our concerns. Representative Romer, Senator Sokola, Representative Osienski, and Representative Baumbach have agreed to support us with our appeal.
2. Director Bensley and I met with Representative Romer, Director of the State Housing Authority, Eugene Young, and New Castle County's General Manager of Community Services, Carrie Casey to discuss housing challenges and potential areas for cooperation and coordination. Eugene and Carrie were excited to hear about the work that Newark has done on housing over the last 12 months between the zoning updates to BB/RA, the fast-track approval process and waived fees for affordable housing projects, and the inclusionary zoning work that is currently underway.

Based on what we heard from Mr. Young, it was clear that he and the Governor's team are going to take a more aggressive stance toward housing issues now that the statewide housing needs assessment is complete. While the report hasn't been released yet, an executive summary is available and can be found here:

https://www.destatehousing.com/FormsAndInformation/Publications/2023_housing_needs_executive.pdf I think we should expect to see action out of the Governor's office this year on housing.

Items for Newsletters:

1. **Fall Leaf Collection:** Fall leaf collection is underway and we are beginning to see the bulk of the leaves come down. **Residents are encouraged to place small piles in their yard waste cart for collection every Wednesday except for Thanksgiving week. We expect to be able to make rounds of the whole City roughly every 2 weeks until mid-December.** 'Leaving' the leaves on the grass and mulching them with the lawn mower is also a great option that provides nutrients for your lawn.
2. **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. **We are working with Communications to send postcards to all water customers in order to increase participation ahead of our next drawing in December.**

3. **City newsletter:** To sign up for the City's email newsletter, [click here](#).

Facilities and Purchasing

1. Purchasing:
 - a. CPPO Jeff Martindale has scheduled the discussed bid waive criterium code addition on upcoming council agendas (first reading will be 11/13). If there are any questions related to this change, please reach out to Jeff.
2. Facilities:
 - a. Paving has begun for phase 2 of the City Hall parking lot reconfiguration plan. Phase 2 should finish around Thanksgiving and the whole project should finish by early December.
 - b. Replacement of the broken atrium window was completed this Friday, November 10th.
 - c. Purchase orders have been issued for replacing failing portions of the PD roof and the full replacement of the metal cornice around the building. Both projects should be finished in Q1 of 2024.

Public Works

1. ADA Transition (Curb Ramp Replacement) Plan: Our contractor is completing the final ramp of the contract on Veteran's Lane near City Hall. Punchlist items are being compiled for the contractor to complete before our final signoff, but we will consider this contract complete by Nov. 17.

Police

1. On Saturday, October 28th, NPD participated in the annual DEA Prescription Drug Takeback event. Following the event, NPD turned over 315 pounds of medication and narcotics to the DEA for destruction.
2. On Monday, October 30th, Lt. Bolden and Captain Rieger attended a DeIDOT planning meeting to discuss a strategy for improving traffic safety along the Delaware Avenue Cycle Track. NPD has requested funding from DeIDOT for an education/enforcement initiative and we are awaiting a response on that request. NPD with assistance from UDPD will be implementing a spring educational campaign in coordination with the arrival of warm weather and the return of students following winter break.
3. On Tuesday, October 31st, NPD Officers conducted high visibility patrols in the residential neighborhoods throughout the city. There were no Halloween/Trick or Treating related incidents during the evening.

4. On October 31st, M/Cpl. Morgan Menden and Cpl. Paige Klein were recognized by the Fusion Foundation as the Officers of the month. Both officers were nominated for their contributions to the Girls on the Run program at Downes Elementary School. Girls on the run is “a program designed to inspire girls to build confidence and other important life skills through dynamic, interactive lessons and physical activity.”
5. On Thursday, November 2nd, M/Cpl. Carter McKennon was recognized for his DUI enforcement efforts at an awards ceremony hosted by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), the Delaware Office of Highway Safety and State Farm. Over the past 5+ years, M/Cpl. McKennon has led the Newark Police Department in DUI arrests. His efforts have not only helped improve the safety of the roadways in Newark, but these arrests have also resulted in the seizure of multiple firearms and illegal narcotics.
6. On Saturday, November 4th, Sgt. Aaron Olicker, Cpl. Justin Roberts and Officer Kevin Conner represented Newark PD at the UD Ice Hockey’s annual First Responder Appreciation Night. The officers participated in a ceremonial puck drop at the beginning of the game.
7. On Thursday, November 9th, Lt. Fred Nelson along with Councilwoman Ford, and the Attorney General’s Office will meet again with the owners of the Red Roof Inn to address ongoing complaints from the community about the business.

Parks and Recreation

1. The Turkey Trot, Delaware’s oldest consecutively run road race, will be held on Saturday, November 18 with the 10K Run beginning at 9:00 a.m. and the 5K walk/run starting at 10:30 a.m. For more information, please visit WWW.NEWARKDE.GOV/PLAY
2. Parks Staff completed trail improvements and cutbacks in Redd Park.
3. Parks maintenance continues throughout the Newark Park system with leaf removal on court and playground areas and split rail fence repairs highlighting the list.
4. Management Staff conducted three interviews for the vacant Maintenance IV position .

Planning and Development

1. Land Use
 - a. Planning Commission met on November 7 where they adopted their 2023 annual report and began work on their 2024 work plan, which will continue to be discussed at their December 5 meeting.
 - b. The final Community Development/Revenue Sharing Advisory Committee meeting for 2023 was held on November 8. The Committee made its final recommendation for allocations for the Community Development Block Grant and the Revenue Sharing grants for the upcoming year. \$712,938 was requested by applicants for \$374,222 of funding between current year budgets and reallocation of program income. These recommendations will be scheduled on a Council agenda before the end of the year.

- c. Land Use and Code Enforcement staff participated in Tyler Enterprise Permitting and Licensing (EPL) implementation November 7-9. Staff are currently working with the project manager to complete questionnaires outlining each process that will be completed within the system and determining the appropriate workflows. This includes evaluating every process to determine areas where efficiencies can be found, duplicative efforts can be removed, and tasks that can be automated. The next EPL implementation sessions will be November 28-30.
 - d. Staff issued a comment letter for the most recent submission for the [Comprehensive Plan amendment, rezoning, minor subdivision and special use permit application for 515 Capitol Trail](#) on November 3.
 2. Code Enforcement
 - a. Staff finalized the draft of the 2021 International Property Maintenance Code updates, including rental permit fee revisions, and submitted them to Director Bensley for review. Staff will schedule a meeting with the Newark Landlords Association in the upcoming weeks to discuss the proposals with them in advance of bringing them forward to Council by the end of the year.
 - b. Nuisance property warning letters were issued to 728 Academy Street, 25 Benny Street, 17 East Cleveland Avenue, 51 East Park Place, 23 Hayden Way, 275 Peach Road, and 414 South College Avenue over the past two weeks. As the nuisance property ordinance will reach its 12-month mark on November 14, staff have also reviewed records to determine which properties will begin to have existing points moved out of their current 12-month count.
 - c. Staff issued a condemnation notice for 121 West Main Street after a truck hit the house leaving significant damage.
 - d. Permit applications for the exterior work on Fountainview buildings 2000 and 3000 have been submitted and will be completed on November 10. An inspector currently is performing walk-throughs three days a week to ensure that any issues are resolved promptly.
 3. Parking
 - a. Staff have begun preparation for parking permit renewals for 2024. As in 2023, local businesses will be given an exclusive renewal and purchase window ahead of permits being released to the general public.
 - b. Parking was complimentary for the Halloween Parade and Main Street Trick-or-Treat. Parking staff cleared Main Street for the event by putting signage out on kiosks the night before, programming Passport to not take payment and to show parade messaging and having Parking Ambassadors out on the street prior to the event to inform patrons. Two cars were towed off Main Street.

Finance

1. City Manager Coleman and Director Del Grande presented the 2024 Annual Operating Budget and the 2024-2028 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for consideration to Council on November 6th. Council approved both budgets, and staff are now putting the finishing touches on the budget documents and required revenue ordinances. We would like to thank our budget

team for all their work during the 2024 budget season. All budget documents are available on Budget Central: <https://newarkde.gov/1007/Budget-Central-2024>

2. IT will be completing Phase I of our Tyler Payments implementation by upgrading our cashiering software and merchant processor on our tax side of the house over the weekend. As a part of this project, with an estimated go live date before 12/31, the Citizen Self-Service portal will be upgraded to "Resident Access" and will update payments in real-time. "Resident Access," utilizing Tyler Payments, expands our services and offers citizens the ability to see up-to-date balance information on all open accounts and automatic payment scheduling options. Tyler Payments is Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI compliant), offers advanced payment options, including Apple Pay, and provides more in-depth reporting for our accounting team. Overall, this payment system provides a better customer experience to our residents and businesses. In addition, staff will be working over the weekend upgrading our Munis (tax) platform as well.
3. Representatives from DELL were in this week to help us with the implementation of our new virtual environment. There will be no impact to our user base.
4. Director Del Grande attended the DEMEC Board of Directors meeting at DEMEC on 11/9.
5. New Castle County notified the City to advise us that they fully accepted our Local Service Application for FY2025 (7/1/2024). There were no changes in the application from previous years. All City businesses and residents will continue to receive the same local service credit on their County tax bill as they have in years past.

Electric

1. I am pleased to report that the installation of a new aerial wire along Barksdale Road is complete. Our team has been working diligently to remove the older spacer cable, and we expect it to be finished in this area by the end of the day today, November 10th.
2. We have completed the installation of a new 35kV breaker, a transformer protection relay, and two overcurrent feeder protection relays at the Fremont substation. We have also installed a new Real-Time Automation Controller (RTAC), which replaces our old proprietary Digitalogic IGIN programming logic controllers (PLC's). The RTAC will enable us to move the Fremont substation from our old proprietary Digitalogic's Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system to our new Survelant SCADA system. Additionally, we identified and replaced a damaged underground primary cable on one of our distribution feeders.
3. We met this week with representatives from DEMEC and a consultant, Endurant Energy, to discuss potential utility scale battery solutions for our distribution grid. Endurant Energy specializes in developing, owning, and optimizing energy infrastructure solutions that are reliable, resilient, clean, and cost-effective. Battery storage systems for the distribution grid are designed to store electrical energy during periods of low demand and release it during high

demand. This can help balance the supply and demand of electricity, enhance grid reliability, and integrate renewable energy sources. During the meeting, we visited several substations, including the new substation site at the STAR campus, South Chapel substation, East Main Substation, and Fremont Substation. We also conducted a thorough analysis of the Bellevue Road area to determine if the batteries can help improve reliability to some of our largest commercial customers located on Bellevue Road.