

MAYOR'S UPDATE
April 8, 2024
Mayor Sean R. Reardon

Storm Clean Up:

The city continues to clean up from the Nor'easter that hit the city on last Thursday. The storm brought higher than normal tides, wind and a tremendous amount of precipitation which was a mix of rain and snow. We saw downed trees all over the city and we had a culvert collapse on Hale Street which DPS is working on scheduling for repair. Their current timeline is that it will be repaired in the next five to ten days. I want to extend a big thank you to the DPS for working around the clock to clear roads and to clean up to all public safety departments for their work during the storm.

Marshal Murray:

Marshal Murray has decided to retire after serving the City for 30 years, the last 8 years as City Marshal. His last day will be May 10th. I want to thank him for his many years of service to his department and the City. In your packet you will see the names of the 9-member committee that will screen candidates for the open Marshal position. Frank Cousins and Donna Drelick will lead this search which is similar to the process we just went through for Fire Chief.

Whittier/NECC Partnership:

The Healey-Driscoll administration, Northern Essex Community College (NECC) and Whittier Regional Voc-Tech announce last week that they are exploring a shared campus partnership. There is still a lot of questions to answer but I am cautiously optimistic. NECC has the space to accommodate an expansion and the community college/technical school model is one that is in practice all across the county. I am told the 11 cities and towns that feed into Whittier will be involved in the process every step of the way. This should not impact the Whittier Task Force which met for the second time last week, and I thank Councillor Ben Harman for attending. Any path forward for Whittier should start with a new and improved regional agreement.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds:

Also in your packet tonight is our recommendations for the City's remaining ARPA funds. The Mayor's ARPA Ad Hoc Committee met last week and have made recommendations on how the remaining funds should be spent. Our conversations covered many topics and we focused our attention on projects that could be completed with these funds, starting with the Lower Atkinson Safety project but also including Phillips Drive, a Marquand Lane study and funding for streets and sidewalks.

Port Rec at 59 Low Street:

The Community Services committee of the City Council met last week to discuss Port Rec located at 59 Low Street. They spent the majority of the conversation hearing from Finance Director Ethan Manning. We are close to submitting our financial plan for the project and we encourage all community members to reach out to city council and let them know how you feel about the project.

Artichoke Spillway Field Trip:

In January of this year, we informed you about a minor breach of the Lower Artichoke Dam that occurred during the January 13th flooding. Members of the public have been interested in learning more about this event and what City efforts are taking place to mitigate future occurrences. Members of the Council also wanted to hear more about the City's efforts and see the work being done at the Lower

Artichoke. The Mayor's Office, together with DPS and the Resiliency Committee, are organizing a public presentation and visit to the Lower Artichoke to provide more information to the community.

On April 24th, there will be a presentation and Q&A at 2pm at the Senior Community Center that will include an overview of the City's water supply and reservoir protection efforts. We will follow this meeting with a visit to the Lower Artichoke Dam so that DPS staff can show members of the public and the Council the site and describe the mitigation work in more detail. There will be transportation to the site in order to accommodate the group. We will plan to cap the number of participants in the site visit to 50, and we will open this up to the broader community shortly.

MRBA South Jetty Study Presentation:

The US Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) presented their findings of a study on the south jetty this past Friday to the Merrimack River Beach Alliance. This study was funded with a \$240,000 congressionally directed spending earmark secured by Senators Warren and Markey. The ACOE presented four alternatives of projects that could be done on the jetty. They are recommending the third alternative, under which the objective is to allow sediment bypassing only during moderate to extreme events. Alternative 3 has a positive impact to Reservation Terrace, a lower negative impact to the channel, and a neutral impact to the seaside of the South Jetty. Predicted impacts along Newbury Beach are negligible considering the larger area. Senator Tarr's office will be setting up a meeting with the ACOE to go a little deeper into the details of this plan.

New MeVA Routes:

New MeVa bus routes start today. I want to thank Noah Berger and his team at MeVa for all their work on the new routes. The new routes will improve service to Anna Jaques Hospital, Downtown Newburyport and the Commuter Rail Station. It is still free to ride.

Mission Sox

City Hall will be a sox box location for Mission Sox, an organization started by students Jackson and Isla DeVivo. The sox box will be in the lobby from Tuesday, April 9th – April 26th. Please donate a new pair of socks in any size, color, or style for those in need. Other sox box locations will be at all Newburyport schools, the Immaculate Conception Church, the Senior Community Center and the Newburyport Public Library.

Mayor Sean Reardon