

**MAYOR'S UPDATE**  
**March 11, 2024**  
**Mayor Sean R. Reardon**

**Reverend Helen Murgida:**

I want to thank those of you that attended Rev. Helen Murgida's vigil/community healing event on Thursday. This gathering took place just over a week after Rev. Helen's tragic death on the night of the State of the City. It was meaningful to come together, lean on each other and remember all the good Helen did in our community and her impact in the world. Reverend Rebecca has been a great partner as the city continues to deal with their grief from that night.

**State of the City/2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Public and Community Service Awards:**

The State of the City Address took place here at City Hall on Wednesday February 28<sup>th</sup>. In the speech I looked back at 5 days from the past year that were significant here in Newburyport. I also touched on Whittier, ongoing projects, new department heads, housing, infrastructure, and city initiatives we hope to accomplish this year. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Public and Community Service Awards also took place the same night. We had a great group that was honored. The Individual Service Award honorees were Paula Estey, Jim McCarthy and Nicole DeRosa. The Public Service Award honorees were Stephen Bergholm, Tarah MacGregor and Dani Sinclair. The Youth Service Honorees were Jackson and Isla DeVivo and the Screening Room was recognized with the Business Service Award.

**Mental Health Task Force:**

The Mental Health Task Force convened last week to discuss the Mental Health Needs Assessment report the city received from the Institute for Community Health. This report will be posted on the city website. The next steps will include convening a larger Mental Health Task Force by opening the group up to more interested residents. The next meeting will be to set up goals and action items for this larger group.

**Whittier Update:**

The first Whittier Regional Task Force meeting took place on Wednesday March 6<sup>th</sup> here at City Hall. Ward 4 Councilor Ben Harman and I attended for Newburyport. Only one municipality was missing and I am told Merrimac will be sure to attend the next meeting which will be April 3<sup>rd</sup> in Amesbury. This group will primarily work to amend the 1967 Regional Agreement and we had a great first discussion.

**Senior Community Center:**

There will be a fun St. Patrick's Day themed event planned for Wednesday, March 13<sup>th</sup> from noon to 2pm with live Irish music and Irish step dancers.

**Mayor Gayden W. Morrill Charitable Foundation:**

The Morrill Foundation donates annually to the City of Newburyport's parks spaces with the goal to beautify the City. Last year, after meeting with the Parks Commission and the Administration, the Foundation's Board opted to allocate their annual contribution of \$110K to the Bartlet Mall restoration project. They are specifically directing their funds toward the granite edging, but have indicated they would amend the directive toward the greater restoration project if needed. Even though this project is on pause, the Foundation still wants to support this initiative. We believe this donation may act as leverage toward gaining other grants and private donations to see this project through and would encourage the Council to accept this gift this evening.

**Recreation and Youth Services:**

The Spring and Summer Activity Guide is out for Newburyport Recreation and Youth Services. Sign up begins on Wednesday March 13<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. Scholarships and payment plans are available. Plan ahead and be ready to go at 6pm this Wednesday.

**Rec Center at 59 Low Street:**

The City Council's Community Services Committee will discuss the proposed Rec Center at 59 Low Street on March 18<sup>th</sup>. The first meeting went very well with lots of thoughtful discussion. This meeting will focus more on funding, cost estimates and the parcel of land. Finance Director Ethan Manning and the Assistant City Engineer, Diane Gagnon will be in attendance. We continue to look for funding opportunities for this project and hope to move this project forward.

**Marquand Lane:**

We heard from a number of residents on Marquand Drive today about significant drainage and flooding issues. DPS met with some of these residents this morning and I will plan to visit as well. DPS will let me know about options for helping to mitigate these issues tomorrow morning.

**Lower Atkinson Safety Project**

The transfer for ARPA funds for the Lower Atkinson Safety Project is in your packet this week. I have worked with Council President Cameron on reconvening the ARPA Ad Hoc Committee this session, which will include members of the Administration and Councillors Harman, Preston, and McCauley. We look forward to having their review of our proposed plans for the remaining ARPA funds. Our plan is to use some ARPA funds along with CPA funds to complete these important improvements at Lower Atkinson Common this year, and there will still be significant funding available for other City priorities. ARPA funding must be allocated by the end of this calendar year.

**Congressionally Directed Spending:**

We received an exciting call from Senator Warren this morning. The City was awarded \$883,000 that will go towards protecting our water supply. My office applied for this last year and just received the good news today. These funds will help support the next stage of design for our Indian Hill Raw Water Interconnect Project. I am thankful to the Senator for making these calls personally and for all the work on federal delegation does on behalf of Newburyport.

**Mayor Sean Reardon**