

MAYOR'S UPDATE
October 16, 2023
Mayor Sean R. Reardon

Israel:

The violence and atrocities taking place in Israel have been front of mind all week. I have been communicating regularly with Rabbi Alex Matthews of Congregation Ahavas Achim and checking on him and our Jewish friends and neighbors. Saturday CAA hosted a moving prayer service after Shabbat in Market Square. I know many of you were there and I thank you for that. The turnout from the community was amazing and Rabbi Matthews offered prayers for healing, comfort and peace. Please keep Israel and our Jewish community members in your thoughts as the violence continues half a world away. I join our Human Rights Commission in standing firmly against all kinds of hate, including antisemitism and Islamophobia, at home and abroad, and we support the cause of peace worldwide.

Streets and Sidewalks Plan:

We completed another successful year of street and sidewalk work around the city. DPS Director Wayne Amaral is putting his finishing touches on the revamped rolling 5yr Streets and Sidewalks Plan. We should have this into council by the end of the week. One of the big changes you will see is we are moving away from the firm ward-based schedule of alternating between wards 1,3,5 and 2,4,6. This city-wide approach will allow us to capture the streets in the original plan while addressing some of the most needed repairs sooner. We look forward to talking you through the new plan with updated, more accurate costs. This should help your discussion as we look at the proposed \$6M bond currently in committee.

We will also submit to Council an updated list of priority sidewalks and traffic safety projects to highlight areas we would like to address in the coming years. This includes intersections like at Colby Farm Lane and Low St and Kent and Merrimac and also new sidewalks on Rawson Ave and Moseley Ave to name a few.

HR Update and New COA Director:

I am happy to announce the hiring of Sara Landry as the new Council on Aging Director. She will start on November 6th, pending Council approval. Landry is currently Executive Director of Adult and Senior Programs at the Hobbs Community Center in Pelham, New Hampshire, where she has served since 2011. Prior to her work in Pelham, Landry served as the Director of the Senior Center in Londonderry, New Hampshire for 9 years. She has excellent experience in the field of elder affairs, and she will be able to hit the ground running here in Newburyport.

The Library Board of Directors will meet on Wednesday to interview the final candidate for our next library leader. The Head Librarian search had over 10 applicants which yielded three finalists for the position. Two finalists have since removed their names from consideration which leaves us with one strong candidate.

We are also beginning interviews for the two open engineering positions at DPS, and hope to bring some additional to this division soon.

Newburyport Recreation and Youth Services Department (NRYS):

The public hearing was held last week on an order to officially establish the Recreation and Youth Services Department, in accordance with Article 5, Section 5-1 of the Newburyport City Charter. The next Community Services Committee Meeting will take place on Tuesday October 24th. If approved the order should be on track to be sent back to the Council for its October 30th meeting.

Designs for the Newburyport Recreation and Youth Services Department are complete and we are now just waiting for final cost estimates.

Community Preservation Act Projects:

CPA project applications are due by December 15th to the Community Preservation Committee. Some past projects funded with CPA funds include NHS Stadium Restoration, Atkinson Common Rock Tower Restoration, resurfacing the recreation courts at Cashman Park and Atkinson Common, Downtown Lighting and more recently Market Landing Park and Bartlet Mall. There will be about \$1.2M new funds in available CPA funds this year.

Projects Update:

A few updates around the various projects currently going on in the city.

John F. Cutter Jr. Fire Station project:

The site subcontractor working on the fire station project is finishing excavating the trenches for the new building's footings, removing unsuitable bearing material and bringing in gravel fill. There has been more over-excavation than originally anticipated due to the unsuitable soils, including a large old stump/log/brush dump that was uncovered. The concrete contractor is following up by sequentially installing the concrete footings, and then installing the rebar for the concrete, and then installing the ICF (Insulated Concrete Forms) building blocks for the building's walls. These highly insulated forms will maximize the facility's energy efficiency, requiring much less energy to heat and cool and providing significant operational cost savings. The general contractor has lost a few weeks from the original schedule due to the significant number of rain days and other factors, but is currently still on schedule overall. We are also hosting a community meeting with the project team this week to address neighborhood disruptions caused by the construction. This will be Wednesday at 6pm by Zoom.

Central Waterfront Bulkhead Rehabilitation project:

The contractor is currently ahead of schedule on the Bulkhead Rehabilitation project. Since mobilization in mid-September, the contractor demolished the embayment's timber fender system; repaired the missing anchor bolts in the embayment; installed brackets on the embayment's old steel bulkhead; assembled and hung rebar mats in anticipation of the concrete infill; taken delivery of all of the FRP sheet piles for the project; and begun driving the FRP sheets in the embayment with the barge mounted crane. Another team has installed rebar

and formed and poured concrete for the higher elevation concrete bulkhead cap on the western tour boat side.

Two Universally Accessible Playgrounds:

The Lower Atkinson Playground began construction last week. DPS has been prepping the site and working closely with Engineering to ensure proper drainage as the playground is installed. Our awarded contractor, RAE Contracting out of Methuen began setting some of the equipment last week. We expect this process to take 2 weeks, and pending weather conditions, we expect the poured in place surfacing to be installed this season. This project is phase one of a larger master plan, which should remedy drainage, parking and safety issues at the park while vastly improving accessibility and enhancing ecological benefits.

Similarly, the universally accessible playground at the Bartlet Mall has been under construction for the past few weeks. SumCo Eco Contracting out of Peabody re-graded and seeded the northwest corner of the park in late September in preparation of the playground being installed this fall. Fencing installation has begun and will be completed once the equipment is in. We expect the equipment to be delivered late this week, and RAE Contracting, the same playground installer who is at Lower Atkinson, will move to Bartlet once they are finished at the Pioneer Fields. Once again, pending weather conditions, the poured in place surfacing will either be installed this fall or next spring. Kim Turner, Manager of Special Projects is managing both projects and we are thrilled to see these improvements in accessibility across our City.

Phillips Dr:

Water mains and services have been installed, tested, and running in parts of Drew St, parts of Philips, and all of Sullivan Dr. Drainage systems have been completely installed in Sullivan Dr, most of Drew, most of Ryan Rd, and some of Philips Dr. Paving operations for base course only will begin next week, Oct. 23, and will last about a week, for all of Sullivan, west and east entrances of Philips from Drew to Storey Ave, and Drew St from Hoyts Lane to #10 Drew. Water and drainage systems will then commence on Ryan and the remainder of Philips and Drew. Then roadway paving and sidewalks to complete the work. We are on schedule to complete the project by the end of summer next year.

Market Landing Park Expansion:

This project is currently on schedule with no major problems at this time. There have been a few minor change orders due to unexpected alignments of subsurface utilities or obstructions, but they are all within our construction contingency funding. The 40% culvert length is being installed at this time as previously discussed with the Council. The park and bulkhead contractors are both working well together on physical access and staging areas. Park work this fall focuses on the subsurface and base conditions. Work in the spring will focus on the final surface conditions.

Trick or Treat:

It is last time of year. Trick or Treat in Newburyport. I have three important dates to announce. We will be doing trick or treat at City Hall Thursday October 26th from 5:30-7pm, Downtown

Trick or Treat at participating businesses will be Friday October 27th from 4-5pm and City-Wide Trick or treating will be on Halloween Tuesday October 31st 5:30-7:30pm.

Mayor Sean Reardon