

MAYOR'S UPDATE
January 31, 2022
Mayor Sean R. Reardon

Winter Operations:

Thank you to our DPS department for their hard work during the storm on Saturday. We were fully staffed and worked for over 24 hours straight to keep the roads clear. I went out with the DPS in the middle of the storm and it was near white out conditions. National Grid reported zero power outages in Newburyport and we tallied over 16 inches of snow. The Mayor's Office, DPS, Police and Fire continued to keep the public up to date throughout the day through the city website and social media. DPS will continue to work cleaning up downtown the next few days, and the Building Department will be assessing storm damage and taking action where needed.

Plum Island:

We went door to door on Friday to talk to some Plum Island residents who were in the 75th to 69th Reservation Terrace neighborhood where we were concerned about the flooding. A few decided to ride out the storm but many decided to get off the island. The bottom of 75th and 73rd street got the most water. Again, the stone structure and coir bags held up and did their job which is to dissipate the energy of the waves coming ashore. The Army Core of Engineers dredge is still scheduled to go out to bid March 1st.

Thank You:

A big thank you to the residents of Newburyport. Thank you for staying home this weekend and staying off the roads. We got the word out early Friday and we only had to tow 15 cars late Friday night and early Saturday morning. I am told this number is usually well over 30. We will continue to work on getting communications out to residents effectively.

COVID-19 –City Update:

We continue to be mindful of our management of COVID-19. Indoor mask mandate is still in effect. COVID numbers in the area continue to go down. The City's test positivity rate has decreased from 16.2% on January 13th to 13.1% on January 27th, and is lower than the State's rate of 15.3%.

Staffing Update:

We are in the process of looking for a new Health Director and a Director of IT. The IT Director should be posted by tomorrow and the Health Director is already garnering interest and we will start that interview process this week. We are also down a few positions in the water department so I am working closely with HR on the best way to promote these openings.

Mayor's Office – Hiring Update

Chief of Staff Andrew Levine and Executive Assistant Christine Jackson are now seasoned veterans after their time in their new roles respectively. We also plan on making an offer to a part-time Manager of Special Projects role that will report to the Mayor's Office. This position will round out my team and allow us to move projects forward this year.

57 Low Street:

I am looking forward to the vote on purchasing this property tonight after almost a year of reviewing this location. My preference is for Newburyport Youth Services to end up at this location and we will

start the process of exploring that option with engineering in the coming weeks as we complete the process of purchasing the building through DCAMM.

ARPA

The ARPA Ad Hoc Committee will meet on Thursday afternoon to continue the discussion of how best to use funds from the American Rescue Plan Act. The Final Rule on the State and Local Recovery Funds issued by the Department of the Treasury in January 2022 provides significant flexibility to municipalities to use the funds to replace lost revenue and to spend on normal government services, if desired.

Assessors Office

The deadline for taxpayers to file abatement applications regarding real estate and personal property assessments is Tuesday, February 1, 2022 at 4:00pm. At this point, the Assessors Department will have 90 days to follow up with applicants.

Planning Department

Revised plans were submitted this week for the newest 40R Smart Growth District development along Route One. The Planning Board will be looking to finalize plans and special conditions associated with this project at Wednesday night's meeting. This project would bring 92 units, 25% of which will be affordable, and all of which will, as rental units, count towards Newburyport's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI).

Board of Health

The Board of Health is working to stay on top of the changing COVID-19 guidelines and continues to provide the Mayor's office updated case counts and pertinent information. The Lower Merrimack Valley Regional Collaborative is holding an additional vaccine clinic today that ends at 8:30pm. The Board of Health will discuss the mask mandate at their February meeting on 2/17, as the current mandate is set to expire on February 28th.