

MAYOR'S UPDATE
May 27, 2022
Mayor Sean R. Reardon

Memorial Day:

Thank you to everyone that was able to take part in the Memorial Day Ceremony at City Hall. It was a beautiful and meaningful day and as always Kevin Hunt, our Director of Veteran Services, did a great job. We also honored Newburyport resident and WWII Veteran George Roaf with a proclamation and Kevin Hunt with a commendation for his 15 years as Veteran Services Director. It was great to see so many Newburyporters honoring and remembering those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our great nation.

5YR Streets and Sidewalks Plan:

Road Work is finishing up across Wards 1, 3, and 5. All the paving should be done by the end of June and the bulk of the street paving will be done by June 10th having reached 22 streets total. We also will be able to pave Ferry Road which was not on the 5YR Plan list but is a continuation of the work that was done by National Grid to install a new line. This will be paid for with funds from the Whittier Bridge project account which currently has \$450K. Thank you again for partnering with my office to get this important infrastructure work started in the City. The DPS will next focus on the sidewalk work to get completed this year and planning for the Year 2 streets to be paved in wards 2, 4, and 6.

59 Low Street and NYS:

A quick update on NYS at 59 Low Street. First thank you for approving the funding need to engage EGA architects. This is important work that will provide us with a design concept and cost analysis. The first meeting took place this past week and the work should take 4-6 weeks. Last week the Conservation Commission passed the Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA) which determined a new wetlands line for the property which has now been set for three years. Wetlands are actually moving back toward the far end of the property giving us even more developable land for NYS.

From the Library:

I have some exciting news. We have a new Head Librarian! After an extensive search which narrowed the field down to two very qualified finalists, Sara Kelso, currently the Assistant Head Librarian, was chosen by the NPL Board of Directors. I am excited for Sara to take over for Giselle Stevens who is retiring at the beginning of July. Giselle has been a wonderful mentor for Sara and I am excited to see where she takes our amazing Library. We will now work on posting the Assistant Head Librarian position. Sara's appointment will come before the Council in their next meeting.

From the Health Department:

The Health Department is working on an Environmental Protection Agency Healthy Communities Grant Program for CSO notification with Lowell, Tewksbury, Dracut, Lawrence, Andover, North Andover, Haverhill, Groveland, Methuen, Newbury, West Newbury, Amesbury, Salisbury, Newburyport, and Merrimac. Containing CSOs (Combined Sewer Overflows) is critical for protecting the water quality of the Merrimack River, and we look forward to collaborating on this project.

From Recycling, Energy and Sustainability:

We are happy to announce the 2022 Rain Water Barrel Program from the Great American Rain Barrel. Rain Barrels are available for purchase by residents at the discounted price of \$79.00. To learn more about benefits of a rain barrel please check out the City website under the Sustainability department.

From Finance:

The Finance Department has completed the settlement of the \$8.0M bond issuance to pay costs of the Phillips Drive and West End Fire Station projects. It was good to get this locked in as rates will likely continue to rise in response to high inflation. We look forward to seeing both projects move forward shortly.

CPC Projects:

There are two big projects that have been recommended for bonding by the Community Preservation Committee. The Market Landing Expansion project and the Bartlet Mall Frog Pond Restoration project are two bookends to our downtown. Both deserve our full attention and support for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that, by combining these two bonds, the City will save money on fees and interest rates. As you know, the Community Preservation Act funds are required to be spent on open space, recreation, historic preservation and affordable housing projects. They are a way for communities like ours to get some very large projects done in a condensed timeframe without needing to increase the tax burden on our residents. The dollars will be taken from future allocations of CPA funds over the next 15 years, allowing us to commit to make a major investment in the future of our parks and open space while limiting the annual fiscal impact.

Bartlet Mall is our City's most historic park; it is our original town common that dates back to the 1600's, before Newburyport was Newburyport. I remember canoe tipping competitions at the Mall when I was growing up, but cannot imagine partaking in that type of activity today, due to how toxic the water has become. It has fallen victim to decades of deferred maintenance and it's time to stop passing the buck and be the generation that finally repairs the Frog Pond once and for all. Imagine the Mall as a destination at the head of State Street, where kids and adults can paddle around and enjoy the beauty of this park.

The second bond that is recommended by the CPC is the Market Landing expansion. While Bartlet Mall can be considered a project that repairs an existing asset, Market Landing is an opportunity to further beautify and expand the green space along our riverfront. It can be a destination for tourists and residents alike, supporting a wide array of activities and events and boosting the vibrancy of our downtown, all while contributing to the resiliency of our City. The two projects really go hand-in-hand, as the defining open spaces that frame both ends of State Street, representing both our history and where we are going as a community. I look forward to seeing both these bond orders passed by the City Council.

National Gun Violence Awareness Day

Friday is National Gun Violence Awareness Day and I will be reading a proclamation from the steps of City Hall at 1130am. We will also have a few speakers who have been affected by gun violence and we will be honoring the victims of last week's Uvalde TX school shooting. I encourage everyone to wear

orange on Friday. Many of the downtown businesses as well as City Hall will be distributing free orange bracelets throughout the week.

Mayor Sean Reardon