

MAYOR'S UPDATE
May 22, 2023
Mayor Sean R. Reardon

Opportunity Way Explosion Update:

I had a meeting with the attorneys and plant manager for PCI/Seqens last week to get an update. This was my first contact with the company since the explosion on May 4th. PCI has brought in an outside company to manage the site. They are now exploring how to safely take apart what's left of the building and they are working closely with Building Commissioner Greg Earls. We also asked about the current employees of the company and learned that they are all still getting paid. We will continue these check-ins in the coming weeks. PCI brought in a third party to conduct their investigation. OSHA and the State Fire Marshal have also opened investigations into the explosion.

Pride Flag Raising and Pride Parade:

Governor Maura Healey will be coming to Newburyport on Friday June 2nd for the raising of the Pride flag. The brief ceremony will begin at 4pm. The Pride flag will be flown at City Hall for the month of June. The City's Pride Parade will take place the next day, Saturday June 3rd at 12pm. We have been working closely with Marshal Murray to ensure everyone has a safe and fun day.

Newburyport Public Library

I want to offer my sincere thanks to Head Librarian Sara Kelso for all her work to improve the position of the Public Library during her tenure. Her last official day is June 7th, and I will be working with the other members of the Library Board of Directors to begin the search process for the next Head Librarian. I am working on the plans for interim leadership at this time, in consultation with Library staff and the Board. We wish Sara the best for the future.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

The City's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy has been completed and is attached in your packet as a communication. I want to thank consultant Karl Seidman and his team from Civic Moxie for all their work in creating this document. They will be happy to discuss it with you at a future meeting should you be interested. I also want to thank the Steering Committee that helped guide this process and everyone who participated in interviews and focus groups. The report identified many opportunities for increased efforts that can help grow the city's economy and improve quality of life outcomes for the community. I have already adopted one of their recommendations, which is to create the position of an economic development manager. We look forward to advancing the rest of their recommendations in the coming years.

Bartlet Mall:

The Bartlet Mall restoration project is moving along very well. Manager of Special Projects Kim Turner has been working with Aqueous and GEI Consultants and a Notice of Intent was filed earlier this month with the Conservation Commission and DEP. Permitting continues to move forward in a positive direction. You can expect an update presentation in June as we seek to

close the loop on the bond order, which required a presentation of the final plan to the Council for approval. We anticipate the project to break ground in early fall of this year.

Cutter West End Fire Station:

The City received three bids for construction of the new John F. Cutter Jr. Fire Station on 4/26/23 and subsequently contracted with the low bidder Construction Dynamics, Inc. of Clinton, MA. The low bid was exactly on target with the design team's updated cost estimates and the City's approved budget for the project. The contractor has very good references, and the City issued a Notice to Proceed and hosted a pre-construction meeting on 5/16/23 to begin discussing the practicalities of setting up a comprehensive document management system, sharing CAD files, logistics planning, scheduling, etc. The Fire Department anticipates moving out of the old facility around the beginning of June, and the general contractor anticipates mobilizing to the site the week of June 19, 2023. The contractor has 15 months to complete the project by the summer of 2024.

Newburyport Youth Services 59 Low St:

We have finalized our contract with EGA Architects, and they have been re-engaged to continue their work from last summer on 59 Low St. NYS Director Andi Egmont and Kim Turner had a kickoff meeting with EGA last week, and the team will continue to meet weekly as the project moves through Design Development. A Building Committee is being set up with members of City staff from DPS, Planning, NYS and the Mayor's office, as well as two community members to review plans and provide input. We will keep the residents and the Council informed as plans solidify on this important community project.

Central Waterfront Bulkhead:

The City has executed grant agreements with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), and the state Seaport Economic Council (SEC) to support the Central Waterfront Bulkhead Rehabilitation project. The project has been publicly advertised and bids from general contractors are expected on June 1, 2023. At this point, the City anticipates work commencing after Labor Day in September 2023, and finishing construction by June 2024.

Playgrounds and Courts:

Kim Turner issued 4 IFBs (Invitation For Bids) over the past couple months and we have successfully awarded contracts for 2 playgrounds and 2 court projects. The Lower Atkinson Common Playground and Bartlet Mall Playground will be the City's first universally accessible playgrounds and we are thrilled that both will be under construction during the end of the summer into the early fall. We will be working with RAE Contracting out of Methuen for both installations, using playground equipment from ME O'Brien & Sons. The two court resurfacing projects at Upper Atkinson Tennis courts and Cashman Park multi-sport and basketball courts will get underway in July. We will be working with Sports Tek out of Beverly for both court projects. Residents should be aware that, while the contractor will work as quickly as they can, resurfacing is extremely weather-dependent, and therefore residents should expect access

limitations throughout the month of July. My office will keep you informed on timing as groundbreaking dates approach.

Human Rights Commission Peace Prize Awards:

The annual Human Rights Commission Peace Prize Awards will be presented on Thursday, May 25th in the City Hall Auditorium at 6pm. Peace Prize Awards will be given to two students nominated by faculty and staff from area schools as well as two adults from the community nominated by peers.

Memorial Day:

We will have having our Memorial Day parade and ceremony on Monday May 29th. We'll gather up at CVS at 10:30am and process down to City Hall to arrive at 11:00am. We will then continue the parade down to the waterfront and then on to the Veterans Cemetery.

Mayor Sean Reardon