

This report highlights the activities of the Gardner Redevelopment Authority (GRA) during calendar year 2012.

The GRA was established in 1965 under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 121B for the purpose of engaging in urban renewal projects or other work authorized under 121B and that is in the public interest. The GRA has been an ally with the City in matters ranging from the redevelopment of the properties on Mill Street to the management of the Summit Industrial Park.

### **GRA Membership**

The members of the GRA are:

Edward L. Lepkowski, Chairman  
Ronald F. Cormier, Vice Chairman  
Cleo E. Monette, Treasurer  
Timothy J. Horrigan, Clerk  
Paul G. Tassone, State Appointed Member  
Robert L. Hubbard, Executive Director

### **Economic Development Coordinator**

The GRA renewed grant funding to the City of Gardner to cover part of the salary of the Economic Development Coordinator, Trevor Beauregard. Mr. Beauregard continues to provide a single point of contact for business support services including the Economic Development website - [www.grow.gardner-ma.gov](http://www.grow.gardner-ma.gov) and to manage projects supporting job creation and expanding the City's tax base.

### **Wind Turbine / Solar PV**

The GRA continues to investigate the feasibility of erecting a wind turbine at the end of Suffolk Lane in the Summit Industrial Park. The Mass Department of Public Health recently released a study that indicates there are no health concerns related to wind turbines. However, there is a need to be cognizant of potential impact relating to the acoustics generated by wind turbines. To this end, the GRA received a \$15,000 grant from the Massachusetts Clean Energy Technology Center (MassCEC) in September 2012 to conduct an acoustic study. A temporary meteorological tower was erected in December. A report is expected in February 2013.

### **Mill Street Corridor**

The Mill Street Corridor Urban Renewal Plan was approved by the GRA in August 2012. The Plan was approved by the Gardner Planning Board in September and the City Council in October. The Plan was submitted to the Department of Housing and Community Development in December 2012. The overall goal of the Plan is to create a

framework for the redevelopment of the Mill Street Corridor currently dominated by derelict mill buildings and contaminated, blighted open areas. The Plan is available at [www.gardner-ma.gov/Pages/GardnerMA\\_CommDev/draftmillurp.pdf](http://www.gardner-ma.gov/Pages/GardnerMA_CommDev/draftmillurp.pdf). The GRA thanks BSC Group, particularly Russell Burke, for guiding us through plan preparation and approval.

The City Council granted approval for Mayor Hawke to convey the former Garbose Metal Company property located at 155 Mill Street and the property at 140 South Main Street to the GRA pursuant to MGL Chapter 121B, Section 23 (a). Site control will allow the GRA to proceed with mitigation of contaminated soils and groundwater at both properties. In November, MassDevelopment awarded the GRA a grant in the amount of \$500,000 to assist with the clean-up. Total cost of the clean-up is estimated between \$1.5 and \$2 million.

### **Solar Photovoltaic**

City signed a Solar Development Agreement with Borrego Solar Systems, Inc. for the City owned site off West Street. This agreement will serve as a model for an agreement between Borrego and the GRA for the identified Solar PV site in the Summit Industrial Park.

### **Grow Gardner Fund (GGF)**

The GGF's outstanding loan to the Gardner Ale House is current and the brew pub/restaurant continues to do well in its downtown location. The Ale House also continues to contribute to downtown revitalization and hosted several community events during the year.

### **Gardner Downtown Urban Renewal Plan**

Design work is nearly complete for the new police station. The City acquired all four properties needed to accommodate the new station and all but one tenant has been relocated.

Price Chopper Supermarket in Nichols Square was completed and the grand opening held in August 2012. MassWorks granted \$500,000 to the City for installation of two traffic control signals in support of this project. All work except punch list items was completed in December.

The vacant, derelict two story building at 10-12 Willow Street was purchased in November 2011. The property was targeted in the URP for acquisition and demolition to make way for improvements to Willow Street. Demolition is expected during the first quarter of next year.

### **140 South Main Street**

The property was taken by the City for failure to pay real estate taxes in March 2010. In June the City conveyed the property to the GRA in order to maximize cleanup resources and facilitate redevelopment of the property once cleanup is complete. Formerly a gas station and oil storage facility, the property is known to have serious environmental issue.

With financial support from MassDevelopment, the GRA hired Weston & Sampson to assess the environmental issues and prepare a remediation plan. Environmental testing and assessments were completed in late 2012. A remediation plan is expected in early 2013. The GRA anticipates submitting an application to the City's EPA funded revolving loan fund to finance some or all of the mitigation.

### **Summit Industrial Park**

Park tenants have long complained about inadequate internet service from Verizon. Comcast and the GRA made arrangements for Comcast to use an existing underground conduit system that previously accommodated the City's fire alarm system (which is now wireless) to install fiber optic cables throughout Park. The Comcast fiber optic system is expected to go live in the first quarter of next year. This communications upgrade will help not only existing businesses in the Park but also help with marketing vacant lots.

### **Johnny Appleseed Publication**

The GRA continued to pay for advertisements in the Johnny Appleseed Publication promoting Gardner as a great place to live, work, shop and recreate. The magazine is published in the spring and fall, and lists the many activities taking place in North Worcester County communities located along Route 2.

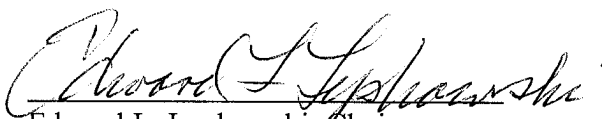
### **Memberships**


Massachusetts Economic Development Council  
Northeastern Economic Developers Association  
Massachusetts Association of Planning Directors  
American Planning Association  
Greater Gardner Community Development Corporation  
Greater Gardner Chamber of Commerce  
Gardner Square Two, Inc.

Robert Hubbard continued to serve as Treasurer of the MEDC (Massachusetts Economic Development Council), and Trevor Beauregard serves as a Board Member-at-large. The MEDC is an association of economic development professionals in Massachusetts.

The GRA's efforts on behalf of the City of Gardner would not have been possible without support from Mayor Mark Hawke; Trevor Beauregard, Economic Development Coordinator; Terri Hillman, Administrative Assistant; Jennifer Dymek, Grants Administrator; Katie Fucile, Financial Manager; and Robert Hankinson, City Engineer.

## **GARDNER REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

  
Edward L. Lepkowski, Chairman

  
Robert L. Hubbard, Executive Director