

**GARDNER PLANNING BOARD  
ANNUAL REPORT  
Fiscal Year 2009  
Robert L. Hubbard, Director**

The Planning Board's primary responsibility is regulating the subdivision of land and the laying out and construction of ways in subdivisions. The Rules And Regulations Governing The Subdivision of Land guide the review and approval of applications to subdivide land and install public infrastructure. The Planning Board also has authority to prepare plans of resources, possibilities and needs of the City and to make recommendations to the City Council.

In addition, the Planning Board enforces the Site Plan Review section of the City's Zoning Ordinance and serves as the Special Permit Granting Authority under the Zoning Ordinance for Infill Development, Planned Unit Developments, Water Supply Protection District, Open Space Residential Developments and the Development Overlay District. The Planning Board has primary responsibility for keeping the Zoning Ordinance up to date subject to approval by the Mayor and City Council.

The members of the Planning Board are appointed by the Mayor subject to confirmation by the City Council. They are:

- Allen L. Gross            Chairman
- Robert J. Bettez, Sr.   Vice Chairman
- Laura M. Casker
- Peter J. Sabettini
- Mark J. Schafron

Mr. Gross represents the Gardner Planning Board on the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission.

The Planning Board is assisted by Robert L. Hubbard, Director of Community Development and Planning; Robert Hankinson, City Engineer; and Terri Hillman, Administrative Assistant. Mr. Hubbard and Mr. Hankinson represent the Gardner Planning Board on the Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee.

Rules And Regulations Governing The Subdivision of Land, Rules Governing Special Permits, and Rules Governing Site Plan Review are available on the City's web site – [www.gardner-ma.gov](http://www.gardner-ma.gov), including all the relevant application forms and information on filing same.

The Planning Board generally meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 7 PM on the second floor of City Hall's Manca Annex. Meetings are recorded for later broadcast over the City's cable television station.

### **Expedited Permitting Districts**

The Massachusetts Interagency Permitting Board approved the designation of the Summit Industrial Park, the S. Bent mill site and the Rear Main Street Corridor as Priority Development Sites for expedited permitting under MGL 43D on September 24, 2008. MGL 43D allows local governments to designate preferred development locations where projects are eligible for local development permits within 180 days of application. As part of the approval the State also awarded the City a \$60,000 technical assistance grant to support the design of parking and street improvements in the Rear Main Street Corridor.

### **Land Development Guidebook**

A final draft of the Land Development Guidebook was presented to the Planning Board in June. The Guidebook will help developers navigate the permitting process related to land-based developments in the City. The Land Development Guidebook is available at [http://www.gardner-ma.gov/Pages/GardnerMA\\_BComm/Planning/dev\\_final.pdf](http://www.gardner-ma.gov/Pages/GardnerMA_BComm/Planning/dev_final.pdf). Relating to land development, the Guidebook identifies the various boards and departments; explains the review and approval process for each of the most commonly required permits including the expedited permitting provisions in MGL 43D; and lists contact names and numbers as well as flow-charts and timelines for issuing permits.

### **S. Bent Mill Reuse Plan**

A reuse plan for the City-owned, 20+ acre S. Bent mill complex was endorsed by the Planning Board in October 2008. The plan's objective is job creation and increasing the City's tax base. The plan established guidelines for reuse and specific activities aimed at achieving the plan's objective.

### **Applications**

The following applications were approved:

- Development Overlay District I – Lisciotti Development for 354 Main & 369 Pine Streets. City Council voted approval on August 4, 2008.
- Development Overlay District I – Norm Worrick, corner Main and Pine Street. City Council voted approval on August 4, 2008.
- Garlock Printing and Converting Corp., 77 Industrial Rowe. Request to build an addition to the existing building was approved.
- Heywood Hospital, 242 Green Street. Special Permit for an acute care building addition and Special Permit to construct a three-story addition were approved.

### **Applications Withdrawn**

The following applications which were under review in FY 2008 were withdrawn by the applicants:

- Ellshell Properties, corner of Timpany Blvd. and Union Street – site plan for retail development.
- Mahoney Brook Estates Subdivision off Betty Spring Road – 9 lot subdivision.
- Shawn Avenue – request for acceptance as a public way.

### **Extension Requests**

The following extensions were approved:

- Blue Heron at Parker Pond, 525 Parker Street. The developer requested and was granted a 2-year extension (to May 7, 2011) of the Special Permit issued in May 2007 for this 54-unit condominium project. Demolition work started within the required time but construction has been delayed due to current economic conditions.
- Laitinen Drive Extension. The developer requested and was granted an extension of time to August 2, 2010 to complete the required work on the subdivision approved in May 2006. The remaining items - the final coat of blacktop for the road and the planting of trees - have been delayed due to the economic situation in the housing market.

### **Adjudicatory Hearings**

The City Council adopted the provisions of MGL Chapter 39, section 23D for adjudicatory hearings. If members miss one session of a public hearing and want to vote on said issue, they must complete a form and view the video recording of the missed session.

### **Zoning Amendments**

The Planning Board recommended that the City Council adopt an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance Section 415 Table of Uses, Prohibited Industrial Uses, subsection 85 – Match manufacture and Inorganic Fertilizer manufacture thereby allowing the Department of Community Development & Planning to move forward with an RFP seeking the development of a food waste composting facility at the S. Bent mill complex. The City Council approved the amendment on March 16, 2009.

### **Other Activities**

The Massachusetts Biotechnology Council awarded the City a Bronze rating as a BioReady Community on April 30, 2009. A key factor in the award is the zoning ordinance provision allowing Scientific or Research Laboratory uses by Special Permit.

Mr. Hubbard presented a training session titled *Introduction to Economic Development* for the 2009 Citizen Planner Training Collaborative Workshop series at the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission in Fitchburg.

The Gardner Redevelopment Authority provided funds for Planning Board members to attend sessions of the Citizen Planners Training Collaborative workshops.