



City News & Information

The Board of Health will now be posting information as it becomes available for the following topics:

- Trash Pick Up
- Food Recalls

The 2007 Annual Report is now available.

Upcoming Events

- May 8 - History of Brewing Beer
6pm Gardner Museum
- May 9-11 - GALA Spring Art Show
Senior Center, Gardner
- May 22 - Summer Up Program
Fundraiser
4-6pm Best Western Royal Plaza
Hotel, Fitchburg
- May 25 - Vietnam Veterans of
America Motorcycle Run & BBQ
12pm, Gardner Fish & Gun Club
- May 28 - Visions in Verse
Poetry paired with Art Program
6:30pm, Levi Heywood Library
- June 7 - Gardner Museum Annual
Yard Sale, 28 Pearl St 9-1
- June 10 - September 28 - Gardner
Museum Woodcarvers exhibit
- June 14 - Molly Bish Kids Expo
Mount Wachusett Community College

From the desk of Mayor Hawke

In keeping with my pledge of establishing a quarterly newsletter, I am pleased to be distributing the first of many Mayoral Newsletters. It will serve as a means to notify the residents of Gardner about upcoming community events, departmental information and city news.

MART Maintenance Facility on Schedule

The MART Maintenance Facility being constructed across from Rome Furniture on Main Street is on schedule and should be completed this summer. The new facility, located very close to the former railroad station, will allow MART to have a maintenance area and storage facility in Gardner, as well as have a positive impact on the community by redeveloping a brownfield site.

The facility is being constructed with an eye toward the future. If our efforts are successful and in bringing the train back to Gardner, the facility will be easily transformed into a railway station.

Speaking of the train, Congressman Olver obtained a grant for the study of a future regional transit station at the former Wachusett Station near Route 2 and Route 31 on the Westminster/Fitchburg line. The study will also include a look at sites between Shirley and Littleton and the possibility of expanding the Fitchburg to Boston Commuter Rail Line westward for approximately four miles toward Old Wachusett Station. This is an expansion of a study done previously which indicated that the Fitchburg line was in poor condition and in need of major upgrades before expansion back to Gardner could occur.

The Arts in Gardner

As a fan and promoter of the Arts, I was delighted to attend and see such a strong turnout for the Greater Gardner Artists Association (GGAA) Spring Art Show held April 18-20 in the Boland Room at Heywood Wakefield. Opening night was attended by well over 100 people and artwork displayed was amazing. The event was taped by Athol-Orange TV and will be replayed on WGET Channel 8 in Gardner.

The Gardner Area League of Artists (GALA) will be holding their Spring Art Show May 9-11 at the Senior Center on Pleasant Street. This event is always well attended and will showcase even more terrific pieces of art. I hope to see you there.

I have opened the walls of the Mayor's office to artists to display their works. We have rotated the pieces a couple of times and all the pieces are for sale. Feel free to stop by and take a look at some of the incredible talent we have locally.

You may remember that during my campaign for office I had the windows of my campaign headquarters (formerly Pendleton Printers) displaying local artwork. White Dog Printing has now moved into the space, but the right side of the storefront will still display local art work.

I have repeatedly told the tale of the "Hidden Economy". The "Hidden Economy" is a phrase coined to describe the effect the arts have in a local economy. By way of an example, I received a phone call on a Sunday morning from the GGCA. They told me that a couple from Boston was in Gardner furniture shopping. They had lunch at the Blue Moon Diner and took a walk through the Downtown. They noticed the paintings in the window and called the number listed because they loved one of the paintings. I went right down and let the GGAA President and the

couple from Boston into the building and they bought the painting.

If any of you have ever been to Turners Falls and the Bridge of Flowers, there is a beautiful little Artists Co-op in their downtown. People travel from all over to see the Bridge and visit the Co-op. This is a hidden draw of the arts. I have spoken with state officials at the Mass Cultural Council and they are very interested in assisting me and the artists to realize an expansion of the arts in Gardner.

We have a lot of artistic talent in Gardner. The Gardner Public Schools recently held an Art Show displaying their talents. These were students of all ages and the quality of work was fantastic.

One final note, May 28th at the Levi Heywood Library, Visions in Verse will hold a program that matches poetry with selected works of art from local artists.

Vacant Buildings

I, like many of you, are tired of seeing the vacant buildings in downtown and around Gardner. Many of these buildings are owned by out-of-town owners that don't seem to care about the effect their buildings have on our community. In order to better deal with such buildings, I formed a task force consisting of the Building Inspector, Health Director, City Planner, Fire Chief, Police Chief, City Solicitor and myself. The task force was charged with crafting ordinances to give the City a viable means of dealing with vacant and abandoned buildings.

The new ordinances were presented to the City Council on May 5 for their review. The ordinances consist of an ordinance defining and addressing nuisances throughout the City such as overgrowth, disrepair of buildings, and accumulations of trash and debris. Another ordinance addresses the public safety issues inherent with abandoned and vacant buildings. This ordinance institutes a system of registration for these buildings. Amendments to other ordinances allow the City a means of establishing fees and fines for non-compliance.

These ordinances were crafted after reviewing similar ordinances from around the state and country. The intent of the new ordinances and amendments to existing ordinances is to make building owners accountable for the state of their buildings. Vacant, abandoned and/or nuisance buildings and properties pose a danger to the community and reduce real estate values of surrounding properties. We are working together to address these issues in a pro-active manner.

100 Days and Counting

There was a story in the Telegram and The Gardner News regarding my first 100 days in office. The stories related some of the success and tribulations of the first couple months of my term of office.

I am happy to report we have had several good things happening. Through the gracious financial support of the Gardner Industrial Foundation and the Gardner Redevelopment Authority we were able to hire the City's first Economic Development Coordinator. We have also expanded the offerings and information on the City's website (www.gardner-ma.gov). I've established this newsletter to keep the citizenry better informed. I've met with the Governor on several occasions to advocate for various projects in Gardner. The Lt. Governor will be visiting Gardner at the end of May to listen to concerns of various business leaders. We've established a cooperative working relationship with area Cities and Towns.

There is too much to list, but I am proud of what we have accomplished in such a short time. I say WE, because it is a cooperative effort on behalf of all City and State officials, Department Heads and employees that work together for the residents of Gardner.

I promise to relentlessly continue advocating for Gardner and the North Central Region as a whole. We will be seeing a good deal of development in the future and I look forward to keeping all of you informed of some of the exciting projects on the horizon.

Sincerely,



Mark P. Hawke

Mayor

email: mayor@gardner-ma.gov