

GARDNER REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

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Annual Report – 2009

This report highlights the activities of the Gardner Redevelopment Authority (GRA) during calendar year 2009 (January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2009).

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
Robert L. Hubbard, Executive Director

James Murphy, a member of the GRA since 1992, resigned on September 1, 2009 due to health concerns. The members elected him “Member Emeritus of the Gardner Redevelopment Authority” and presented him with a plaque. He passed away on November 5, 2009.

G. Albert Anderson was appointed the State Member of the Gardner Redevelopment Authority on August 10, 2000. He served in this capacity until his resignation due to family obligations on November 4, 2009.

Mayor Hawke has recommended to the Department of Housing and Community Development that Paul G. Tassone be appointed the State Member of the GRA.

Economic Development Coordinator

The City hired Trevor Beauregard in May to be the Economic Development Coordinator. As a result of the proactive commitment of Mayor Mark Hawke, the City’s Economic Development Office was established in early 2008 through a partnership with the GRA, the Greater Gardner Industrial Foundation, and the City. The office offers a variety of resources and technical assistance for businesses looking to relocate, expand and remain in the City.

Trevor developed an Economic Development website - www.grow.gardner-ma.gov that offers much helpful information. It is linked to the City of Gardner’s website. The GRA paid for the Virtual Town Hall Service Agreement to develop the Economic Development website.

Gardner 4 Business

The GRA did not renew the contract with Open4Business (j4b) because of the new Economic Development website.

Summit Industrial Park

The GRA supported the City's efforts to establish Priority Development Sites under MGL 43D making potential projects located within the preferred development locations eligible for expedited local permitting. One of the Priority Development Sites approved by the Massachusetts Interagency Permitting Board is the GRA's Summit Industrial Park.

New England Peptide LLC (NEP), a local life sciences company located in the Summit Industrial Park, contacted the GRA about their need for additional space to accommodate expanding operations. Mayor Hawke arranged a tour of NEP's facilities for staff from the Massachusetts Life Science Initiative. Discussions followed the tour about possible ways the Initiative could support NEP's expansion. The Mayor and the GRA are committed to working with NEP and the Life Science Initiative to assure that expansion happens in the Summit Industrial Park.

East Gardner Industrial Park

The GRA sold approximately 14 acres in the East Gardner Industrial Park to Glen Maki, Specialty Wholesale Supply Corp. Mr. Maki plans to add a single story addition to an existing two-story manufacturing facility. The existing facility was constructed in 1999 for a vinyl window manufacturing operation. Since that time, Specialty Wholesale's product supply line has expanded to include vinyl fencing, railing, interior and exterior doors, hardwoods and custom hardwood millwork. The proposed addition will allow the expansion and improvement of production and the manufacture of wooden trusses.

Greater Gardner Community Development Corporation

Recent obligations associated with 246-248 Central Street were completed in September 2009. The GRA is grateful to Dawn Paddock, Director of DHCD's Bureau of Relocation, for her assistance.

Wind Turbine

In January 2009, the City of Gardner in conjunction with the GRA submitted a Municipal Wind (MW) Turbine Site Survey Application to the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MTC) requesting assistance in evaluating property in the Summit Industrial Park owned by the GRA for community-scale wind development potential. MTC approved the application and DNV Global Energy Concepts, Inc. (DNV-GEC) conducted a site visit in October. The preliminary survey report by DNV-GEC concluded that the wind resource at the site is likely good enough to support a wind project and recommended the site for further evaluation.

In November 2009, the City and the GRA submitted an application to the Massachusetts Renewable Energy Trust for funding through the Commonwealth Wind Incentive Program to conduct a more detailed feasibility study for a MW-scale wind turbine as part of the City's ongoing efforts to become a Green Community. The City contracted with Tighe & Bond to provide consulting services.

Grow Gardner Fund (GGF)

The GGF's (Grow Gardner Fund) outstanding loan to the Gardner Ale House is current and the 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.

A company located in Cambridge inquired about financial help from GGF to purchase a building in Gardner. Grow America, New York, denied the loan request. Ultimately, the company signed a lease so that operations could continue in a rental building in Gardner.

Urban Renewal

GRA members continue their participation in the Urban Renewal Plan Steering Committee. This included advocating for use of CDGB FY09 funds to complete the plan.

S. Bent Property

In February 2009 the GRA purchased a rail spur belonging to the Boston & Main Corporation that services the former S. Bent mill complex in support of the City's ongoing efforts to redevelop the 20+ acre site. The GRA also engaged Szoc Surveyors to prepare a boundary survey of the S. Bent property. The survey and plan of land was completed in March 2009.

Billboard Maintenance

The five-year agreement with the Greater Gardner Furniture Outlets to cover routine maintenance for the advertising billboard facing Rte. 2 and located in the East Gardner Industrial Park expired on June 30, 2009. The agreement will be renegotiated as repairs become necessary.

Johnny Appleseed Publication

The GRA paid for semi-annual advertisements in the Johnny Appleseed Publication promoting Gardner as a great place to live, work, shop and recreate.

MWCC 4th Annual Business Plan Competition

The GRA was recognized for participating in Mount Wachusett Community College's 4th Annual Business Plan Competition. The GRA was a sponsor of the event; however, no Gardner company was included in the prize winners.

Memberships

- Massachusetts Economic Development Council (MEDC)
- Northeastern Economic Developers Association (NEDA)
- Massachusetts Association of Planning Directors (MAPD)
- American Planning Association (APA)
- Greater Gardner Community Development Corporation (CDC)
- Greater Gardner Chamber of Commerce
- Gardner Square Two, Inc.

R. Hubbard served as Treasurer of the MEDC in 2009. The MEDC is a professional association of economic development professionals in Massachusetts.

Other

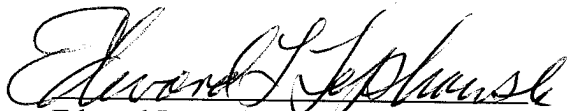
R. Hubbard, Executive Director, attended and reported on the following meetings:

- APA Annual Conference, Minneapolis
- MEDC Meetings – 5 meetings
 - Wareham, Boston, Worcester, Holyoke and Lexington
- NEDA Annual Conference, Philadelphia
- Urban Renewal Planning Committee Meetings, Gardner
- Department of Housing and Community Development, Boston

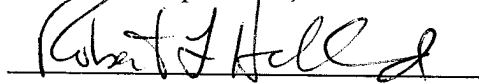
GRA members attended and supported civic events hosted by the Greater Gardner Chamber of Commerce, Community Development Corporation, Gardner Square Two, and Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School. The GRA supported Professional Development for staff members at several of the above conferences, and also supported professional development for members of the City of Gardner Planning Board and staff members of the Department of Community Development and Planning.

The GRA's efforts on behalf of the City of Gardner would not have been possible without support from Mayor Hawke; Representative Bob Rice; Trevor Beauregard, Economic Development Coordinator; Bob Hankinson, City Engineer; Terri Hillman, Administrative Assistant; Jennifer Dymek, Grants Administrator; Dick Reynolds, Building Commissioner; Richard Turcotte, Conservation Agent; Judy Seppala, GIS Admin/AutoCAD; Bernie Sullivan, Health Director; James Garrison and Henri Sans, Greater Gardner Industrial Foundation; and Jim Cruikshank, Executive Director, CDC.

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Edward L. Lepkowski, Chairman



Robert L. Hubbard, Executive Director