

This report highlights the activities of the Gardner Redevelopment Authority (GRA) during calendar year 2011.

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.

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 that covers one half 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 and to manage projects supporting job creation and expanding the City's tax base.

Wind Turbine

Tighe & Bond presented the City of Gardner Wind Turbine Feasibility Study dated January 2011 and subsequently the related Wind Turbine Feasibility Study – Business Planning report dated October 2011. The Feasibility Study was funded by a \$50,000 grant from the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center through its wind incentive program. The Feasibility Study recommended the City pursue the development of a wind turbine on land owned by the GRA in the Summit Industrial Park. Based on information in the Feasibility Study, it would be beneficial to further study and design and construction of a single turbine in the 1.5 to 1.65 MW range. The turbine should have a hub height between 70 and 80 meters.

The Business Plan concluded that if the City/GRA has the capacity to fund the project, it would be most advantageous to own the project and target generation to the City's electricity demand. If the City/GRA is able to secure an agreement where an off-taker bought power at 9 cents or more per kWh, it will be more economical for the City/GRA to install the largest wind turbine possible on the site. If the City/GRA are not able to fund the capital expense of the project, the Private Developer scenario is advisable.

The GRA informed the City that bringing a private developer on board and receiving payment from the project in the form of a land lease, a Power Purchase Agreement and tax payments, or some combination of the above, is the more attractive option for the GRA.

The next step is to apply for Design and Construction grant funding from the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center.

Solar Photovoltaic

In August 2011, the City of Gardner received a grant award under the Commonwealth's Green Communities Program in the amount of \$201,600. A portion of that grant, \$16,800, is dedicated to develop a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) solicitation for the development of ground-mounted solar PV facilities in one or more locations. One of those locations is land owned by the GRA in the Summit Industrial Park. The solicitation of bids under the RFQ is expected in early 2012.

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.

Steven Smith – Façade Renderings

Steven Smith, a student at the Boston Architectural School, was contracted to provide façade renderings of the Cinema Theater building on Parker Street which would be useful when talking to prospective developers. Mr. Smith presented two different renderings for the building. One is with Classic detailing which keeps the front façade of the building so that it fits in with the classic streetscape. The second rendering was a Contemporary version of the building which would involve demolishing the present building.

Urban Renewal

Official notification was received in August from the Department of Housing and Community Development that the Gardner Urban Renewal Plan submission was approved. The Plan paves the way for improvement and significant changes to the heart of the City. For the long-term results of the Plan to be realized, it will require state, local and private investment. This Plan outlines the City's vision of what it hopes to accomplish over 25 years. Developers looking to build in the City will have a clearer idea of what will best fit in various areas of downtown and surrounding neighborhoods and commercial districts.

A Police Station Study Committee was formed to work on plans for a new police station within the Urban Renewal Area (URA). Construction began on a 60,000+ SF Price Chopper Supermarket in the URA supported by a \$500,000 MassWorks grant to the City of Gardner for installation of two traffic control signals.

Mill Street Corridor

In February 2011 the City, in partnership with the GRA and the Urban Land Institute's Technical Assistance Program, convened a one-day workshop to consider options for redevelopment of the Mill Street Corridor (MSC). The ULI report recommended preparation of an Urban Renewal Plan to direct the redevelopment of the MSC. To this end, the GRA committed \$15,000 as a local match for a grant application submitted by MassDevelopment to the US Economic Development Administration's Local Technical Assistance Program. MassDevelopment provided the City of Gardner a loan in the amount of \$35,000 that was also used as a match for the EDA grant. In October, the EDA awarded the MassDevelopment and the City of Gardner a grant in the amount of \$50,000. The planning work, with consulting support from BSC Group, kicked off in December with a well attended public forum.

The City Council voted in December 2011 to declare surplus for the purpose of conveyance to the GRA the former Garbose Metal property located at the corner of Timpany Boulevard and Mill Street. Prior to the City conveying the land to the GRA, a Phase I Environmental Assessment will be completed.

10-12 Willow Street

A vacant, derelict building at 10-12 Willow Street was offered for sale. As the building was listed as "to be acquired" in the Urban Renewal Plan, the GRA voted to purchase the building for the expressed purpose to have it demolished. After negotiations, the purchase was finalized in November and demolition should take place in early 2012.

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.

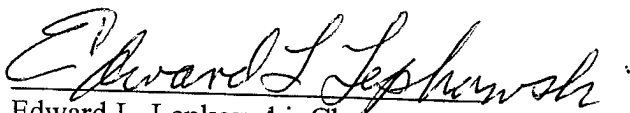
Memberships

- 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.

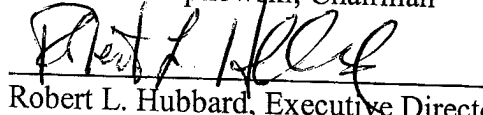
Robert Hubbard continues to serve as Treasurer of the MEDC (Massachusetts Economic Development Council), and Trevor Beauregard is a Board Member-at-large. The MEDC is an association of economic development professionals in Massachusetts.

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