

**REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 6, 2017**

Regular Meeting of the City Council was held in the City Council Chamber, Room 219, City Hall, on Monday evening, February 6, 2017.

CALL TO ORDER

Council President Ronald Cormier called the meeting to order at 7:30 o'clock p.m.

CALL OF THE ROLL

City Clerk Alan Agnelli called the Roll of Members. Eleven (11) Councillors were present including President Ronald Cormier and Councillors James Boone, Nathan Boudreau, Craig Cormier, Scott Graves, Karen Hardern, James Johnson, Marc Morgan, Paul Tassone, Matthew Vance, and James Walsh.

OPENING PRAYER

President Cormier led the Council in reciting the Opening Prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Cormier led the Council in reciting the "Pledge of Allegiance".

OPEN MEETING RECORDING & PUBLIC RECORDS ANNOUNCEMENT

President Cormier announced to the assembly that the Open Meeting Recording and Public Records Announcement is posted at the entrance to the Chamber, and that any person planning to record the meeting by any means should identify themselves.

READING & ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

On a motion by Councillor James Walsh and seconded by Councillor James Boone, it was voted viva voce, eleven (11) yeas, President Ronald Cormier and Councillors James Boone, Nathan Boudreau, Craig Cormier, Scott Graves, Karen Hardern, James Johnson, Marc Morgan, Paul Tassone, Matthew Vance, and James Walsh, to waive reading and to accept the Minutes of the January 17, 2017 Regular Meeting, as printed.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE MAYOR**STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS BY MAYOR MARK P. HAWKE**

Hello and thank you for tuning into the State of the City Address. My name is Mark Hawke and I'm fortunate enough to be the Mayor of the City of Gardner.

Once again this year we are taping this address for airing over our local cable access channel.

REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 6, 2017

Of course transcripts will be given to the Council, the media, and placed on the City's website, as has been done in the past. I truly want to try and reach as many people as possible and the feedback from airing this address on our local cable access channel the past couple of years has been tremendous.

Looking back at 2016, we find our share of success. After years and years of studies and paperwork, we finally see hard hats and construction vehicles cleaning up the property at the old Garbose Metal Recycling facility on Timpany Boulevard. This project has been in process for over ten (10) years. It is gratifying to see something finally happening on the site. The project would not have progressed to this point without the financial assistance from the Environmental Protection Agency, MassDevelopment and the Baker/Polito Administrations MassWorks grant of \$2 million. After the environmental cleanup is completed, the next step is redevelopment. While we don't know what the end use will be yet, I, for one, am thankful that we have been able to finally move the project along this far.

The City unveiled its new website in 2016. This is the first major upgrade to the site in almost nine (9) years. While our old site had won awards from an open government association, we are pleased that the new site is able to offer even more content. It's not that I don't want to see you visit us at City Hall, but we are striving to offer you everything that City Hall does on our website. This added convenience is good for our citizens and for our City as our virtual City Hall costs less than the bricks and mortar City Hall.

One of the most visual projects we completed was the new windows and doors at Elm Street School. This project, funded in part by the Massachusetts School Building Authority, has taken a stately educational facility and put a new energy efficient face on it. The building, by all accounts, looks great, is warmer during the winter months and the new windows have screens on them so we don't invite flies in during the warmer months.

Speaking of schools, the City took a major step in funding our school system in 2016. For the first time since Proposition 2 ½ went into effect, the City funded the school system at by more than \$300,000 over the mandated Net School Spending number. This prevented layoffs and kept class sizes manageable.

Also, for the first time since Proposition 2 ½ went into effect, the City did not raise taxes the full 2.5% allowed by law. The increase was 2.3%. While seemingly small, it is a step in a very positive direction and one I hope we will be able to maintain as we move forward.

In 2016 we have been able to continue the growth of the City's stabilization fund. This fund now stands at approximately \$2,250,000. The strength of our financials is reflected in our AA-bond rating. These combined factors save us money each and every time we borrow for various projects.

We also took the unprecedented steps of acquiring the old Movie Theatre and Maki Building (across from the Gardner Ale House) in our downtown. These acquisitions will remove two of the largest decaying blights on our downtown. While the old Movie Theatre will be made

REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 6, 2017

into a small park and large parking lot to help further the upper story redevelopment of our downtown, the Maki Building will be razed and marketed for redevelopment.

Perhaps one of the best days of 2016 came near the end of the year. For me, it was the day when we finally announced almost \$50,000 in awards from the Williams-Rockwell Educational Gift Fund. These awards represent about 78% of the interest earned from investing the proceeds from the sale of the Norman Rockwell painting "Willie Gillis in Convoy". The remaining interest was added back to the principal to be invested. The fund now stands at \$2 million and growing. This fund will give back to the Gardner Public School system for generations to come.

Of course not all the good news was limited to City projects. The private sector came up big in 2016 too. While it's hard to imagine Main Street without it, Cumberland Farms is only celebrating one (1) year in their new location. Beau Monde hair salon had its grand opening on Central Street, Heywood Urgent Care opened on Main Street, ACT Fastening Solutions celebrated their new 50,000 sq. ft. expansion with a ribbon cutting by Governor Baker, Maki Building Supply Center added to their compound with a new truss factory opening, Gardner Discount Furniture opened on Main Street, Hometown Barbers opened and joined Prestige Barbershop in drawing people to downtown along with Taco Rey Coliman. American Biomedical Center purchased the former Police Station building and moved their operations from Westminster to Gardner. CubeSmart opened up 100,000 sq. ft. of indoor storage in the former Simplex building and the Daniel M. Asquino Science Center was opened at Mount Wachusett Community College.

When you couple all of this together with the little things that not everybody notices, 2016 was a pretty good year. Some of the little things are the DPW coming up with new Bike Path repair stations because an employee saw one in another part of the state and made a couple of these stations for Gardner. Another example is that the City installed a dock at the City boat ramp on Kendall Pond so you can actually get a boat in the water now. These little things are what make the community of Gardner, just a little bit nicer to live, work, and play.

In looking ahead to 2017, from the City perspective, we have some exciting things on the horizon. In the early part of 2017 we will see the old Movie Theatre fall to the wrecking ball. While many will lament this loss, it is necessary as the building has been open to the elements for about a decade and the structural integrity was compromised. We hope to have a beautiful new park and parking lot take its place sometime in 2018.

The Maki Building, across from the Gardner Ale House will also fall to the same fate, sadly, due to the same reasons. The buildings structural integrity is beginning to become compromised. We are hopeful that this site will be redeveloped, and have had many fruitful conversations already.

The City of Gardner will also be taking strides to control energy costs through the efforts of Municipal Aggregation. Through this process the City will go to market with its aggregate electrical load and seek a better price. This process will happen this spring. As a resident,

REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 6, 2017

you do not need to do a thing. The changes will be reflected on your National Grid bill. We, of course, will push out a lot more information as the process culminates in the spring.

I've often talked about the incredible effort of our Department of Public Works in the rehabilitation of the City's parks and playgrounds. In addition to these improvements, 2017 will be adding a skate park and a dog park. These grant-funded amenities will add to our communities' offerings.

We will be having a Food Truck Festival in June in front of City Hall. This will add to our Experience Festival and Sidewalk Sale, Oktoberfest and Chair Luge, and winter tree lighting and activities. We are constantly looking to bring new faces to our City through these events.

Rear Main Street will finally be redeveloped courtesy of a MassWorks grant from the Baker- Polito administration. The spine road will connect Derby Drive to the Rite Aid development. The area will include parking and green space. The project will renew this former dilapidated brownfield industrial corridor.

For the past few years we have made an increased effort to invest in our school system. We have spent millions fixing the infrastructure, the buildings themselves. This includes new roofs at Gardner High School, Elm Street School and Waterford Street School. New boilers at Gardner High School and Gardner Middle School. New doors and windows at Gardner High School and Elm Street School and new science labs at Gardner High School.

However, we cannot stop there. While we closed one building from the 1800's, we are still utilizing another one. Waterford Street School was built on a swamp and is showing signs of poor craftsmanship. The City has not had a school built as an elementary school for as long as I can remember. We have re-used a High School, a Junior High School and another High School for our younger students. The City must continue to invest in itself if we wish others to invest in our City. We need a new school and I am confident that working with our state partners we will soon be the recipient of good news with regard to our application with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

In 2017 we will continue to invest in our school system, in our roadways, in our buildings, in our downtown and in ourselves. We have seen our past investments reap the benefits of private sector investments. We will continue this trend.

The State of our City is strong and our future is bright.

The Mayor concluded his abbreviated Address at 7:43 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 6, 2017

#9738

Reporting for the Finance Committee, Councillor James Walsh informed the Council that the Committee met with Mr. Coughlin, reviewed his qualifications, and then inquired as to whether his qualifications met the requirements imposed by City Code. He said that the Committee requested an opinion from the City Solicitor relative to required certifications for the position and consequently, the City Solicitor provided an opinion to the Council that confirmed that Mr. Coughlin's qualifications met City Code requirements.

Citing an e-mail from Gardner resident Wes Flis, Councillor James Boone said that Mr. Flis suggested that all department head positions should be posted both internally and externally. "I agree wholeheartedly," Councillor Boone said. He added that "it would be the proper and best thing to do," and commented that he has nothing against Mr. Coughlin, but that he would vote no on this confirmation.

Councillor Nathan Boudreau stated that over the past nearly four years, he has had the pleasure to work with Mr. Coughlin while a member of the Public Service Committee and has found him to be a bright person who has done a good job under the tutelage of former City Engineer Robert Hankinson. He trusts him to be able to perform the job with his training, he added.

Councillor Walsh stated that the question of posting the vacant position was raised in Committee as a result of Mr. Flis's correspondence, but that the City Council is not the appointing authority and that it is the Mayor's prerogative as to whether to post the vacancy.

On a motion by Councillor James Walsh and seconded by Councillor Marc Morgan, on recommendation of the Finance Committee, it was voted viva voce, ten (10) yeas, President Ronald Cormier and Councillors Nathan Boudreau, Craig Cormier, Scott Graves, Karen Hardern, James Johnson, Marc Morgan, Paul Tassone, Matthew Vance, and James Walsh; one (1) nay, Councillor James Boone, to confirm the following appointment received from the Mayor:

CHRISTOPHER COUGHLIN to the position of **CITY ENGINEER** for term expiring January 12, 2020.

Worcester, ss.

February 7, 2017

Then personally appeared **CHRISTOPHER COUGHLIN** and made oath that he would faithfully and impartially perform the duties of **CITY ENGINEER** according to law and the best of his abilities.

Before me,
/s/ Alan L. Agnelli, City Clerk



REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 6, 2017

#9739

On a motion by Councillor James Walsh and seconded by Councillor Marc Morgan, on recommendation of the Finance Committee, it was voted viva voce, eleven (11) yeas, President Ronald Cormier and Councillors James Boone, Nathan Boudreau, Craig Cormier, Scott Graves, Karen Hardern, James Johnson, Marc Morgan, Paul Tassone, Matthew Vance, and James Walsh, to confirm the following appointment received from the Mayor:

ERIC KNUDSEN to the position of **MEMBER, DISABILITY COMMISSION**, for term expiring January 12, 2020.

#9740

Reporting for the Finance Committee, Councillor James Walsh informed the Council that the proposed salary adjustment essentially reduces the compensation to the entry level rate under Grade 11. The current salary, he said, is a higher rate within the G-11 classification and that the Mayor proposed and the Finance Committee agreed to amend the ordinance to the lower rate reflecting the fact that the new Engineer is in his first year in the position.

On a motion by Councillor James Walsh and seconded by Councillor James Johnson, on recommendation of the Finance Committee, it was voted viva voce, eleven (11) yeas, President Ronald Cormier and Councillors James Boone, Nathan Boudreau, Craig Cormier, Scott Graves, Karen Hardern, James Johnson, Marc Morgan, Paul Tassone, Matthew Vance, and James Walsh, to Order the following Ordinance to First Printing:

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF THE CITY OF GARDNER, CHAPTER 171 THEREOF, ENTITLED "PERSONNEL," TO CHANGE THE COMPENSATION OF THE CITY ENGINEER.

Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Gardner as follows:

Section 1. Section 171-68 of Chapter 171, Personnel, Compensation Schedule 2, of the Code of the City of Gardner, is hereby amended to change the compensation of the City Engineer to read as follows:

A. Department Heads

01/17/17

City Engineer

Annual

\$80,262.72

Weekly

\$1,543.51

Section 2. Effective date.

This ordinance shall become effective on passage and publication as required by law.

First Printing – February 10, 2017

REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 6, 2017

#9741

Reporting for the Finance Committee, Councillor James Walsh informed the Council that Chapter 171, Article XVI, §171-66 of the City Code, provides “On or after January 1 of each odd-numbered year, the Finance Committee of the City Council shall report to the Council as a Committee of the Whole its recommendations for adjustment, if any, to the salaries of the Mayor and City Councillors.” He said that at its first meeting in January, the Finance Committee suggested that if the Mayor wanted to submit something in support on the topic, that he was welcome to do so, noting that the correspondence that the Mayor provided to the Finance Committee was presently before the Council. Councillor Walsh said that the Committee is not prepared to make a recommendation on the matter at this time, but wanted to make the Council aware that the Committee was complying with the Ordinance; therefore, the Finance Committee recommends that the measure be referred back for further study and report.

On a motion by Councillor James Walsh and seconded by Councillor Marc Morgan, on recommendation of the Finance Committee, it was voted *viva voce*, eleven (11) yeas, President Ronald Cormier and Councillors James Boone, Nathan Boudreau, Craig Cormier, Scott Graves, Karen Hardern, James Johnson, Marc Morgan, Paul Tassone, Matthew Vance, and James Walsh, to refer the Review of the Mayor’s Salary to the Finance Committee for further study and report.

#9742

Reporting for the Finance Committee, Councillor James Walsh informed the Council that as the Council’s designee to the Williams-Rockwell Educational Gift Fund Board of Trustees, he could report that the Fund’s investment portfolio was very successful, which was prepared by Raymond James and directed by Stephen Erickson. He noted that the Act establishing the fund requires that the Board of Trustees report to the School Committee and City Council the status of the Fund and that the Mayor’s correspondence accurately reflects the activities of the Fund for the first year.

On a motion by Councillor James Walsh and seconded by Councillor Marc Morgan, on recommendation of the Finance Committee, it was voted *viva voce*, eleven (11) yeas, President Ronald Cormier and Councillors James Boone, Nathan Boudreau, Craig Cormier, Scott Graves, Karen Hardern, James Johnson, Marc Morgan, Paul Tassone, Matthew Vance, and James Walsh, to place on file the Communication from the Mayor Relative to the Williams-Rockwell Educational Gift Fund.

REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 6, 2017

#9743

Reporting for the Finance Committee, Councillor James Walsh informed the Council that the Committee voted favorably to recommend sending the Ordinance to First Printing. He said that legislation was presented to the Council that would permit the establishment of a second Assistant City Clerk, which passed the City Council on August 3, 2015 and signed by the Mayor on August 10, 2015. The House of Representatives and Senate subsequently passed the legislation and it was signed by the Governor on January 4, 2017. The Ordinance before the Council is in conformity with the special Act, he said.

Councillor James Boone questioned the acronym "VIPS" listed on page 1 under "Supervision Given" on the Assistant Clerk Position Description. He asked for clarification and if it could be spelled out in the Position Description.

Councillor Walsh explained that the "VIPS" program involves retired persons who work on a part-time basis and receive a real estate tax credit, as partial compensation for services that they provide.

Mr. Boone said that if there is no opposition, then spell it out on the Position Description.

Councillor Walsh stated that "VIPS" it is not part of the Ordinance amendment.

On a motion by Councillor James Walsh and seconded by Councillor Marc Morgan, on recommendation of the Finance Committee, it was voted viva voce, nine (9) yeas, President Ronald Cormier and Councillors Craig Cormier, Scott Graves, Karen Hardern, James Johnson, Marc Morgan, Paul Tassone, Matthew Vance, and James Walsh; two (2) nays, Councillors James Boone and Nathan Boudreau, to Order the following Ordinance to First Printing:

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF THE CITY OF GARDNER, CHAPTER 160 THEREOF, ENTITLED "OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES," ARTICLE II, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK.

Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Gardner as follows:

Section 1. Section 160-2 of the Code of the City of Gardner is hereby amended to read as follows:

The Office of Assistant City Clerk is established. The City Clerk may appoint two Assistant City Clerks for terms of three years, subject to confirmation by the City Council, who shall be sworn to the faithful performance of duty and, in the absence of the City Clerk, may perform those duties and have the powers and be subject to the requirements and penalties applicable to that office. Nothing contained herein shall be construed to prevent the reappointment of an Assistant City Clerk upon the expiration of the term of office.



REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 6, 2017

Section 2. Section 160-3 Compensation, is amended to read as follows:

The salary of Assistant City Clerk shall be included in the ordinances designating salaries and wages for the City employees.

Section 3. Effective date.

This ordinance shall become effective on passage and publication as required by law.

First Printing – February 10, 2017

#9744

Reporting for the Finance Committee, Councillor James Walsh informed the Council that each year, the approval process for the Community Development Block Grant requires that the City Council pass a Resolution that includes a Plan of projects to be funded in the event that the grant is approved by the State. He cited the Projects List which includes CDBG funded projects and others requiring non-CDBG funds. He added that all projects are included in the FY2016-FY2019 Community Development Strategy.

Councillor Nathan Boudreau said that he “is very pro-CDBG” and asked, “Where is the Boys and Girls Gardner Club House?”

Mayor Hawke replied, “The Middle School.”

On a motion by Councillor James Walsh and seconded by Councillor Marc Morgan, on recommendation of the Finance Committee, it was voted viva voce, eleven (11) yeas, President Ronald Cormier and Councillors James Boone, Nathan Boudreau, Craig Cormier, Scott Graves, Karen Hardern, James Johnson, Marc Morgan, Paul Tassone, Matthew Vance, and James Walsh, to adopt the following Resolution:

FY 2017 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT

Mini-Entitlement Plan

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GARDNER AS FOLLOWS:

WHEREAS, the City council has reviewed the proposals prepared by the Department of Community Development and Planning for inclusion within the FY 2017 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Mini-Entitlement Plan; and

WHEREAS, the CDBG proposals seek funding for support of public social services, demolition, housing rehab, sign & facade, neighborhood facility renovation, planning, and associated administrative costs; and

WHEREAS, the activities proposed within the FY 2017 CDBG Mini-Entitlement Plan meet the priorities identified within the City’s 2016 Community Development Strategy, and the 2004 Community Development Plan; and



REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 6, 2017

WHEREAS, the City does not possess the bonding capacity or have the availability of funds to appropriate from its general budget to undertake such projects and reliance upon grant funds is required, and

WHEREAS, the City Council supports each of the activities as being consistent with the City's goal of promoting quality programs for its citizens;

NOW THEREFORE, the City Council hereby extends its support of each proposed activity and endorses the City's FY 2017 CDBG Mini-Entitlement Plan to be submitted to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Housing and Community Development.

<u>Group</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>CDBG \$'s</u>	<u>Non-CDBG \$'s</u>	<u>Total</u>
Community Development & Planning	Demolition. Demolish select parcels in the Target Areas	\$258,750.00	\$0.00	\$258,750.00
Community Development & Planning	PF Parks/Recreation. Design and Construction of a park to be located at the former Orpheum Theater site.	\$150,000.00	\$0.00	\$150,000.00
Community Development & Planning	PF Parking. Design and Construction of parking to be located at the former Orpheum Site	\$185,000.00	\$0.00	\$185,000.00
Community Development & Planning	Design. Rear Main Street infrastructure design.	\$95,000.00	\$0.00	\$95,000.00
Boys & Girls Club	Project Learn STEAM. Provide afterschool program for 30 LMI Gardner students at the Gardner Clubhouse.	\$5,000.00	\$55,000.00	\$60,000.00
NewVue (CDC)	Small Business Technical Assistance Program. Small business assistance services for 15 LMI Gardner residents.	\$7,500.00	\$10,000.00	\$17,500.00
	Administrative & Delivery costs.	\$123,750.00	\$18,765.00	\$142,515.00
	Sub-total	\$825,000.00	\$83,765.00	\$908,765.00

Presented to Mayor for Approval – February 7, 2017

Approved – February 7, 2017

MARK P. HAWKE, Mayor

#9745

Reporting for the Finance Committee, Councillor James Walsh informed the Council that the notice from the Contributory Retirement Board is one that the Council receives annually and which involves a decision by the Retirement Board affecting cost-of-living wage adjustments for retirees. It does not require Council approval and is only informational, he said.

**REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 6, 2017**

On a motion by Councillor James Walsh and seconded by Councillor Marc Morgan, on recommendation of the Finance Committee, it was voted viva voce, eleven (11) yeas, President Ronald Cormier and Councillors James Boone, Nathan Boudreau, Craig Cormier, Scott Graves, Karen Hardern, James Johnson, Marc Morgan, Paul Tassone, Matthew Vance, and James Walsh, to place on file the a Notice from the Gardner Contributory Retirement Board Relative to a Public Meeting to Consider Granting a Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) to retirees and survivors, effective July 1, 2017

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE****#9716**

Councillor Paul Tassone, Chairman of the Public Safety Committee, reported that the Council received correspondence from Mr. Brian Michaud requesting leave to withdraw his application for a Class 3 Motor Vehicle Junk License at 549 West Broadway.

On a motion by Councillor Paul Tassone and seconded by Councillor Karen Hardern, on request of Applicant Brian Michaud, it was voted viva voce, eleven (11) yeas, President Ronald Cormier and Councillors James Boone, Nathan Boudreau, Craig Cormier, Scott Graves, Karen Hardern, James Johnson, Marc Morgan, Paul Tassone, Matthew Vance, and James Walsh, to grant Mr. Michaud leave to withdraw his application for a Class 3 Motor Vehicle Junk License at 549 West Broadway.

PUBLIC WELFARE COMMITTEE

Councillor Marc Morgan, Chairman of the Public Welfare Committee, requested that the Committee be granted more time, as the Joint Public Hearing with the Planning Board on the proposed zoning amendment is scheduled for February 21. There being no objections, the Public Welfare Committee was granted more time to report on a Petition by GFA Federal Credit Union to Rezone a Single Parcel at 229 Parker Street from General Residential 3 to Commercial 2.

FINANCE COMMITTEE**#9737**

Reporting for the Finance Committee, Councillor James Walsh informed the Council that the Council appropriated \$99,444.13 from Free Cash to the Maki Building Purchase Account on December 19, 2016 and that the Mayor was subsequently informed by the Law Department that a further vote was needed to authorize the Mayor to make the purchase of the property from the Redevelopment Authority.



REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 6, 2017

On a motion by Councillor James Walsh and seconded by Councillor Marc Morgan, on recommendation of the Finance Committee, it was voted viva voce, eleven (11) yeas, President Ronald Cormier and Councillors James Boone, Nathan Boudreau, Craig Cormier, Scott Graves, Karen Hardern, James Johnson, Marc Morgan, Paul Tassone, Matthew Vance, and James Walsh, to adopt the following Measure:

**AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF GARDNER TO PURCHASE 57-67 PARKER STREET
FROM THE GARDNER REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

VOTED: To authorize the Mayor to purchase 57-67 Parker Street further identified on the City of Gardner Assessor's Map as MAP ID: M22-5-7 for \$99,444.13, from the Gardner Redevelopment Authority and upon such terms as the Mayor shall consider proper in accordance with this Vote.

Presented to Mayor for Approval – February 7, 2017

Approved – February 7, 2017

MARK P. HAWKE, Mayor

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

#9722

A Joint Public Hearing with the Planning Board will be scheduled with respect to the Petition by GFA Federal Credit Union to Rezone a Single Parcel at 229 Parker Street from General Residential 3 to Commercial 2.

#9736

On a motion by Councillor James Walsh and seconded by Councillor Craig Cormier, it was voted viva voce, eleven (11) yeas, President Ronald Cormier and Councillors James Boone, Nathan Boudreau, Craig Cormier, Scott Graves, Karen Hardern, James Johnson, Marc Morgan, Paul Tassone, Matthew Vance, and James Walsh, to pass the following Ordinance:

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF THE CITY OF GARDNER, CHAPTER 160 THEREOF, ENTITLED "OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES," BY CHANGING THE TERM OF APPOINTMENT FOR THE AGENT FOR THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION.

Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Gardner as follows:

Section 1. Section 160-18 of the Code of the City of Gardner is hereby amended by deleting the words "one year" and inserting in place thereof the words "three years."

Section 2. Effective date.

This ordinance shall become effective upon passage and publication as required by law.

**REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 6, 2017**

In City Council – January 17, 2017
Ordered Printed – January 17, 2017
First Printing – January 24, 2017
Ordinance Passed – February 6, 2017
Presented to Mayor for Approval – February 7, 2017
Approved – February 7, 2017
MARK P. HAWKE, Mayor
FINAL PRINTING – February 11, 2017

NEW BUSINESS

On a motion by Councillor Nathan Boudreau and seconded by Councillor James Johnson, it was voted viva voce, eleven (11) yeas, President Ronald Cormier and Councillors James Boone, Nathan Boudreau, Craig Cormier, Scott Graves, Karen Hardern, James Johnson, Marc Morgan, Paul Tassone, Matthew Vance, and James Walsh, to consider New Business.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMENTS

Councillors Paul Tassone and James Boone thanked Mayor Hawke for presenting his State of the City Address to the City Council.

Public Education

Councillor Paul Tassone, commenting on the Mayor's State of the City address, noted that spending above "Net School Spending" for "our public schools is essential and would like to see that continue as we move forward." He said that although the City is pursuing a new elementary school, "I firmly and wholeheartedly believe that we are only as good as the high school that we have to keep Gardner residents at Gardner High School." He said that he believes that "a state-of-the-art high school, albeit [costing] lots of money, would be a better investment for the future of Gardner." He concluded his remarks by suggesting that the City entertain regionalizing the City's schools with surrounding towns that are also struggling. "Then maybe we could come up with a high school like some of our neighbors," he added.

Councillor James Boone commended Councillor Tassone for addressing educational needs. He cited the importance of education in the City and said that the Council needs to do its best to make sure that the City continues to invest in its schools and "to do its best to improve everything."

Downtown Improvements and Real Estate Taxes

Councillor Boone stated that "the looks of the Downtown are going change for the better;" citing the removal of blighted buildings and that "the City is moving in the right direction."



REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 6, 2017

Mr. Boone also said that the Mayor “is doing his job by keeping real estate taxes in check,” adding that “It’s good that we did not go up by 2½%, although many homeowners did see substantial increases in real estate taxes.”

MedStar Ambulance

Councillor Marc Morgan requested that the Mayor consider terminating the City’s business relationship with MedStar, citing the company’s recent assessment of \$12.7M in fines and penalties. He said that such action “gives me pause to wonder what’s going on with the billing that occurred in that time frame in the City of Gardner,” adding “I just feel they have shown what kind of company they are and not, in my way, a good company and certainly would like to see them replaced.”

Roadway Treatment

Councillor James Walsh commented that notwithstanding limited snowfall, the City has had to treat the streets during the winter on a fairly frequent and recurring basis but with a new mixture of salts that he believes “has been met with good reviews.” He said that not only is it doing a very good job without the use of sand in keeping streets safer, but believes that its use provides for cleaner streets, as there is not an accumulation of sand on the roads. He noted that during a recent trip to Fitchburg during a dry day, the winds created cloud of dust, which Gardner has not experienced due to its road-treatment practices. He added that in Gardner, there will be a lot less to clean up in the spring.

CLOSING PRAYER

President Cormier led the Council in the Closing Prayer.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Councillor Nathan Boudreau and seconded by Councillor James Johnson, it was voted viva voce, eleven (11) yeas, President Ronald Cormier and Councillors James Boone, Nathan Boudreau, Craig Cormier, Scott Graves, Karen Hardern, James Johnson, Marc Morgan, Paul Tassone, Matthew Vance, and James Walsh, to adjourn at 8:10 o’clock p.m.

Accepted by the City Council: *February 21, 2017*