

CITY OF GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING OF MARCH 11, 2026

The Economic Committee and Community Development meeting was called to order by Councillor Elizabeth Kazinskas at 8:00 AM in the City Council Chamber, Room 219, City Hall.

Economic and Development Committee Member Councillor Dana Heath Hardern was also present. Councillor Karen Hardern was absent.

Also present were Economic and Community Development Director Jason Stevens, Assistant Economic and Community Development Director Amy Yuhasz, and City Clerk Titi Siriphan.

I. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

On a motion made by Councillor Dana Heath and seconded by Councillor Elizabeth Kazinskas, it was voted to waive the reading of the minutes and accept the minutes of February 13, 2026.

2 yeas, motion passes.

II. FIRST TIME ON THE AGENDA

There were no new items for this meeting.

III. IN SUBCOMMITTEE

#11454 - A Report on the Investigation of the Maki Park Project.

Councillor Elizabeth Kazinskas stated that there is nothing further to report as they are waiting for the weather to get nice to finish the final touches.

Director Jason Stevens reported that only two items remain: installation of a handicapped-accessible table and some landscaping work. He stated that the contractor, Busy Bee Construction, is expected to schedule the work soon, noting the remaining work should take approximately one day to complete, after which the project will be finished.

This item will remain with the committee until project completion.

#11746 - Upcoming Community Development Projects.

Director Jason Stevens submitted a resolution of authorized funds.

**A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE REDEPLOYMENT OF PRIOR
AUTHORIZED FUNDS**

WHEREAS, The Council has previously approved Item 11499, allowing an appropriation to support the Rear Main Street Redevelopment Project in the amount of \$800,000.00; and

WHEREAS, The stated purpose of this appropriation was to cover expenses related to the remedy of certain subsurface conditions; and

WHEREAS, The cost for that remedy have come in under budget; and

WHEREAS, The final estimate for electrical work is in excess of original projections;

NOW THEREFORE, the City Council hereby offers its consent and approval for prior

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authorized spending to be used to cover the increased cost of electrical work.

George Tyros, City Council President
On Behalf of the City Council of the City of Gardner

Councillor Elizabeth Kazinskas clarified that the resolution referenced is included in the meeting packet; however, the supporting background information was not part of the packet and was being presented for context. She stated that the documentation should be submitted to the Clerk for inclusion in the meeting record and incorporated into a future packet.

Councillor Kazinskas noted that the matter relates to ongoing community development projects, including the Rear Main Street project, and explained that the resolution will be referred to the Finance Committee because it involves financial matters before moving to the full Council for action. She suggested that the department compile the supporting documentation into a report or packet outlining the timeline, funding sources, project changes, and related correspondence, including communications with National Grid and Fuss & O'Neill, to provide clarity for the Council and the public. She stated that a clear summary of the costs, timeline, and project changes would assist Council members in reviewing the matter and understanding the need for the proposed resolution.

This item will remain on the agenda.

#11773 - FY2026 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Steering Committee Recommendations.

Councillor Elizabeth Kazinskas stated that this item was on their previous agenda and that this is the second meeting for this item.

Assistant Community Development Director Amy Yuhasz submitted the proposed schedule to develop the application, attached. Director Yuhasz will be submitting a resolution to the full council stating that the city authorizes the application to be submitted.

On a motion made by Councillor Elizabeth Kazinskas and seconded by Councillor Dana Heath, it was voted to recommend approval of the item to the Council for the April 6, 2026 Regular City Council meeting.

2 yeas, motion passes.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Councillor Karen Hardern and seconded by Councillor Elizabeth Kazinskas, it was voted to adjourn at 8:51 a.m.

Proposed FFY2026 CDBG Mini-Entitlement Application Schedule

Completed	Date	Task
√	Tuesday, November 25, 2025 CDBG Steering Committee Meeting	Review proposed FFY2026 application schedule
√	Friday, December 5, 2025	Prepare post for website, add address to ad Send legal ad for RFP to paper by 3 p.m.
√	Wednesday, December 10, 2025	Publish ad for FFY2026 RFP in Gardner News, post on website and JS to send email to Councilors/St. Paul's/MVOC
√	Thursday, December 18, 2025@11	Conduct application training for potential applicants
√	Tuesday, December 30, 2025	Send legal ad to paper for 1/20 1/27 public hearings – publish on 1/6
√	Thursday, January 8, 2026	Responses to RFP due by 4 p.m.
√	Monday, January 5, 2025	Submit current FY22-25 Community Development Strategy to EOHLC (required submittal due 2 weeks prior to public forum where CDS is presented)
√	Tuesday, January 20, 2026 CDBG Steering Committee Meeting	Public Hearing: Initial review of proposals Review FY22-26 Community Development Strategy
√	Tuesday, February 17, 2026	Application available from EOHLC
√	Tuesday, February 24, 2026 CDBG Steering Committee Meeting	Public Hearing: Continued review of proposals Review FY22-26 Community Development Strategy
√	Tuesday, February 24, 2026 (submitted on 2/24)	Submit required list of proposed activities to EOHLC (within a week of application availability)
√	Wednesday, February 25, 2026	Economic and Community Development Standing Committee: FY2026 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Steering Committee Recommendations
√	Friday, February 27, 2026 (submitted 2/26 and approved 3/4)	Submit timely expenditure waiver request to EOHLC if the following are not met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% of all FY2022-23 funds drawn in EOHLC's grant management system • 40% of all FY2024 drawn in EOHLC's grant management system
√	Wednesday, March 11, 2026	Economic and Community Development Standing Committee: FY2026 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Steering Committee Recommendations
	Tuesday, March 24, 2026	Public Hearing: Final review of application
	Monday, April 6, 2026	Present proposed projects to City Council – obtain resolution to endorse application
	Tuesday, April 7, 2026	Obtain Mayor Nicholson's signature on application forms and certifications
	Friday, April 10, 2026 (4/21 deadline)	Submit application to EOHLC through the new grants management system

Summary of Applications Received for FFY2026 Funds				
Agency	Project Description	FY2026 Recommendation	FY2022-23 Reallocation	FY2025 Reallocation
Public Social Services				
Gardner Community Action Committee, Inc.	New full time Coordinator position to manage front-line emergency needs of Gardner residents seeking assistance	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$30,000.00
Gardner School Department, Athletic Program	Athletic scholarship program to cover full athletic user fees for low- and moderate-income students	\$0.00	\$9,000.00	\$6,000.00
St. Paul's Episcopal Church	Laundry Love program to pay for the costs to use washers and dryers at a local laundromat with 20-30 individuals served per month	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,500.00
Voices of Truth Corporation	Domestic violence prevention and survivor support including planning and coordination/Task Force meetings, workshops, supplies and printing, community awareness, social media, staff training, one-time utility assistance and refreshments	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$15,000.00
Infrastructure Improvements				
City of Gardner, Dept. of Community Development and Planning	Downtown Phase 6, City Hall Ave, between Connors and Pleasant Street, includes new curb cuts, crosswalks, sidewalks, curbing, and street lighting	\$753,764.00	\$0.00	\$70,500.00
Program Administration	Costs necessary for the administration of the CDBG program, including salary and fringe benefits and other items needed in support of office overhead	\$121,236.00	\$0.00	\$14,000.00
Total		\$875,000.00	\$9,000.00	\$140,000.00
Available Funds*		\$1,024,000.00		
* Available funds includes \$875,000 from FY2026, \$90,000 from FY2025 School St. School pathway design, \$50,000 from Gardner Emergency Housing Mission's homelessness prevention project and \$9,000 from FY2022-23.				