

Granite City Electric

Via E – mail

109 Cherry Street
Gardner, Massachusetts 01440
July 30, 2008

Dear Contest Sponsor,

I am writing on behalf of the Gardner Little League Inc., a 54 year old Chartered Little League of Little League Baseball Incorporated. We have some exciting news to share with you and hope we can participate in your contest.

For the past seven years we have been negotiating with the City of Gardner, MA for a two and one half acre parcel of land located in the very center of the city with high visibility along the Route 2 corridor and the gateway to the City's central business district. In the late 90's a fire destroyed an old furniture manufacturing facility contaminating the land and making it a registered brownfield's site subject to Mass DEP and the Federal EPA oversight for clean – up. In addition, there were several large liens on the property and including some 10 year's of back taxes and clean-up costs from the fire.

After much legal work, some new city ordinances allowing for the forgiving of back taxes for non – profits, extensive environmental testing, removal of oil tanks and professional design plans we now own the property and have a recorded deed!!!

This new field is truly our Field of Dreams for an economically hard hit community in Central Massachusetts. This new field will be in addition to our existing field which also has no lights. We are finding it extremely difficult to schedule our 35 teams and close to 500 youth who participate in our April to October program. We are the largest youth organization in the City with an active 20 member Board of Directors and a successful financial track record. We desperately want to play baseball “under the lights” but simply find it out of our reach for the foreseeable future without some help.

Our Little League Girl's softball team was State Champs in two of the past five years. We are in Massachusetts District 3 located in north Worcester County. Our boys Junior baseball program (ages 13 and 14) went to the State finals this past month. Our program is active, well run and growing. We see your logo on the Green Monster at Fenway Park every home game and know of your commitment to the communities in your service area. Out timetable for construction is Fall 2008.

Please consider our request and send us an application to participate further. We would love to honor Granite City Electric as one of our initial benefactors as we get started on our new field.

Very truly yours,

Stanford H. Hartshorn
Treasurer and Project Manager
Gardner Little League Incorporated

Once polluted site to become top-rate Little League field

By Danielle M. Williamson TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF

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GARDNER— Surrounded by young baseball and softball players, Mayor Mark P. Hawke sealed a long-negotiated deal yesterday that paves the way for the Gardner Little League to build a tournament-ready field on a former industrial site off Route 2.

The city has signed over the deed for 90-96 Mechanic St., the former home of L&Z Kamman Co., to the league. With the transfer, the U.S Environmental Protection Agency and state Department of Environmental Protection will absolve the city and the league of the \$670,000 lien on the property.

"This is one of the most complicated transactions in the city's history, but all liens are settled and the property is clean," said league treasurer Stanford Hartshorn III, who has advocated for a field at the site since 2001. "We are ready to develop."

Mr. Hartshorn said the league will develop the field in stages, as money allows. It should be finished within three years, at which point it is expected to draw many tournaments. The field will complement the league's field on Manca Drive, and will have lights and concessions.

"We feel the community will stand behind us, as evidenced by the 500 youth we have in the program," he said.

The signing yesterday was the culmination of efforts from the administrations of three mayors: Mr. Hawke, Gerald E. St. Hilaire and Daniel J. Kelley.

"We can't thank enough the present administration and the prior administrations that did the bulk of the behind-the-scenes work to see this happen," Mr. Hartshorn said.

The property, an overgrown field behind Burger King, was used as a furniture outlet and manufacturing plant by L&Z Kamman Co. until it was abandoned in 1991. A fire in 1998 leveled the building and created environmental hazards, which the EPA spent \$800,000 cleaning up.

The city took the property by tax title several years ago, Mr. Hawke explained, knowing that anyone who wanted to develop on the land would have to pay the \$670,000 lien, which is more than the property itself is worth.

"The EPA agreed if the property went to a nonprofit like the Little League, they'd release the lien," Mr. Hawke said.

In addition, Mr. Hawke said, current zoning laws would not allow for the erection of another factory similar to L&Z Kamman Co.

The lien on the property is also unattractive to developers and the city did not have much hope for selling the property, he explained.

"Would you rather look at kids playing baseball and softball, or would you rather look at a vacant, overgrown lot?" Mr. Hawke asked.

"This is good for the youth of the city."

There are no more environmental problems at the site, according to city officials and Mr. Hartshorn.

"I have three environmental studies to prove it," Mr. Hartshorn said.

Mark Hawke

Mayor, City of Gardner

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