



Woburn
Redevelopment
Authority



Woburn Redevelopment Authority

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

P.O. Box 72
Woburn, Massachusetts 01801
(781) 897-5817



Overview

The Woburn Redevelopment Authority (WRA) is an independent municipal urban renewal authority established by the City of Woburn in 1961, in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 121B. The WRA functions as the City's community development agency, under an agreement with the City of Woburn executed in July of 2000. During its existence, the WRA has undertaken a number of projects in the areas of downtown revitalization, economic development, affordable housing, open space, environmental planning, and transportation.

The WRA is governed by a board of five members, four of whom are appointed by the Mayor with approval by the City Council, and one of whom is appointed by the Governor. The members of the WRA, as of December 31, 2023 were as follows:

Donald Queenin, Chairman
Arthur Duffy, Treasurer
Wayne McDaniel, Alternate Treasurer
Mark Kiklis, Member
Christopher Glaser, Member

Staff support was provided to the WRA by Tina P. Cassidy, Planning Board Director/WRA Administrator, Economic Development Director Casey Hagerty, and Karen Smith, Assistant Planner.

Marlowe Park

Located in the heart of Woburn Square, this property and an adjacent vacant lot were acquired from Citizens Bank of Massachusetts in 2000 for the primary purpose of creating a public plaza to provide needed downtown open space, a direct pedestrian link to the municipal parking lot to the rear of the property, and an elevator providing ADA access to and from the lot.

The WRA typically leases portions of this public plaza to an adjacent restaurant for seasonal outdoor seating and more recently, for outdoor concerts and movie showings one night a week in the summer months.




SUMMER CONCERT SERIES 2023

EVERY WEDNESDAY THIS SUMMER

FEATURING:

5/3 RENEE LEAVITT COUNTRY/REGIONAL RECREATION ARTISTS	7/5 RED SQUARE CLASSIC ROCK/NEW BAND/ALTERNATIVE
5/10 ROSE MOUNTAIN MUSIC CLASSIC ROCK (STRAIGHT OUT OF THE WOOD)	7/12 ELVIS FT. WILSON'S DOWN TOWN
5/17 BRENDA WHITE-SWEENEY CLASSIC ROCK	7/19 GOOD TO GO ROCK
5/24 3 FLOORS UP CLASSIC ROCK (HOMETOWN FAMILY)	7/26 BRENDA WHITE-SWEENEY CLASSIC ROCK
5/31 IN BETWEENERS CLASSIC ROCK	8/2 THE INBETWEENERS CLASSIC ROCK
6/7 BUCKET OF BLUES FOLK/BLUES	8/9 RED SQUARE CLASSIC ROCK
6/14 ACOUSTIC WRECKAGE CLASSIC ROCK	8/16 FREDDY G'S HAPPY HOUR BAND (LIVE/BLUES/ROCK)
6/21 GRAND THEFT AUDIO CLASSIC ROCK	8/23 PARTY ON! (TANCRABLE FUN MUSIC)
6/28 PARTY ON! (TANCRABLE FUN MUSIC)	8/30 ROSE MOUNTAIN MUSIC CLASSIC ROCK (FROM THE WOOD)

MUSIC STARTS AT 6!

THE BRICKYARD 371 MAIN STREET, WOBURN MA 01801 BRICKYARDBAR.COM (781) 935-6699

Downtown Storefront Sign Grant and Façade Loan Program

The Downtown Storefront Sign Grant Program is an initiative helping local merchants and business/ property owners in the downtown area to install attractive, quality commercial signage in accordance with the City of Woburn's Sign Ordinance. The Storefront Façade Loan Program assists the same merchants and owners to improve the exteriors of buildings in high-visibility locations. Both programs are administered by the WRA. Since its inception in 2013, the sign grant program has helped fund 40 signs at downtown establishments which represents a total investment of over \$96,000 in public and private money. In 2023, the WRA began discussions of changing some of their design requirements for signs and will continue this discussion in 2024.

The WRA also offers no-interest loans for façade improvements in the downtown and has received its first façade loan application in 2022. This \$15,000 loan was approved for property at 170 Main Street and with repayment scheduled over the next ten (10) years. However, the grantee paid off the loan in entirety in 2023.



FUNDING AVAILABLE

for signs and facades

Enhance your business visibility with the Woburn Redevelopment Authority's Signage Grant and Façade Improvement Loan Programs! The Sign Grant and Façade Loan Program offers financial assistance to help you create eye-catching and effective signage for your establishment.

\$2,000 Matching Grants for Signage and no interest loans up to \$15,000 for façade improvements are available.

Are you interested in learning more about the funding programs?

Contact Casey Hagerty:
chagerty@cityofwoburn.com
781-897-5816

woburnma.gov/news/2023/10/signs/





Implementation Downtown Local Rapid Recovery Plan (LRRP)

Bringing Murals to Woburn

PLANNING BOARD
SEPTEMBER 25, 2023

Planning Staff prepares a presentation for the Planning Board regarding murals.



DPW Crew make progress on the Pocket Park during the Summer of 2023.



Economic Development Manager meets with Chamber of Commerce and Business Community.

In early 2021, the City was awarded the services of consulting professionals through the State's Downtown Initiative Program. The firm of Goman and York was assigned to assist the City in objectively assessing the downtown and developing a series of recommendations to improve the public realm, the private realm, business revenue and sales, administrative capacity and cultural/arts.

The WRA used the LRRP report to set priorities and set the workplan for 2023. The 2023 goals for the WRA were to:

1. Finish improvements to the Main Street pocket park

The work on the Pocket Park was completed in Summer 2023.

2. Develop and implement a public art/mural program

Planning Staff has been working on an amendment to the Woburn Zoning Ordinance that would allow for murals City Wide. The Woburn Redevelopment Authority voted to support the Zoning Amendment at their September 26, 2023 meeting. The Planning Board voted to formally sponsor the amendment at their December 12, 2023 meeting. The zoning amendment has been filed with the City Council and will be discussed in 2024.

3. Create a business registry for Woburn Center

Throughout the year, the Economic Development Manager has been meeting with business and property owners in Woburn Center in an effort to collect good contact information for each establishment. The organized data will be completed in early 2024.



Pocket Park Grand Opening

On August 24th, 2024, the WRA and larger Woburn Community celebrated a momentous occasion as the ribbon was officially cut to unveil the refurbished Pocket Park. This exciting event was filled with live music, games, delicious treats, and more, marking the beginning of a new chapter for this beloved community space.

The transformation of the pocket park was made possible through the dedicated efforts of various stakeholders, with special recognition to Representative Rich Haggerty for securing a State Earmark to fund the project. Leveraging this funding, the Woburn Department of Public Works demonstrated their expertise by completing the work in-house, effectively reducing costs by half compared to hiring an external consultant.

During the ceremony, Mayor Galvin expressed gratitude to all those involved in the park's renovation. In recognition of their contributions, Certificates of Appreciation were presented to individuals and organizations who played pivotal roles in the project's success.

The celebration drew a large crowd, including community members, elected officials, and dedicated city employees, all eager to witness the unveiling of the revitalized Pocket Park.





Porchfest

In 2023, Woburn saw the debut of its first annual Porchfest event, a community celebration highlighting outdoor live music across town. Embracing the concept with enthusiasm, the Woburn Redevelopment Authority wholeheartedly supported the occasion by granting permission for musicians to perform at both the revitalized Pocket Park and Marlowe Park. Held on October 8th, this all-day festivity not only showcased local talent but also fostered a deeper sense of unity and pride within the community.



Pictures of Porchfest around the City. Photos Courtesy of Woburn Porchfest

Economic Development Updates

In 2023, many new businesses moved into the City. Below are some of the new businesses that now call Woburn home.

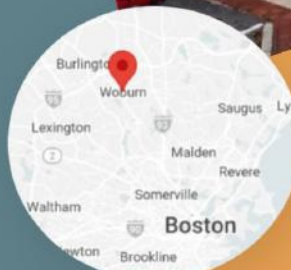


The City embarked on an active campaign to promote Woburn as an excellent business destination. Below is the advertisement the City placed in the Mass Innovation Network's Founder Startup Guide.

Unlock Your Business Potential in Woburn, MA

Strategic Location, Limitless Opportunities

-  Prime location, just minutes from Boston with easy access to major highways and MBTA commuter rail and bus access
-  A business-friendly environment marked by a team of professional staff dedicated to providing guidance and assistance
-  Dynamic and diverse business community that creates a culture of opportunity and collaboration



Contact Us:

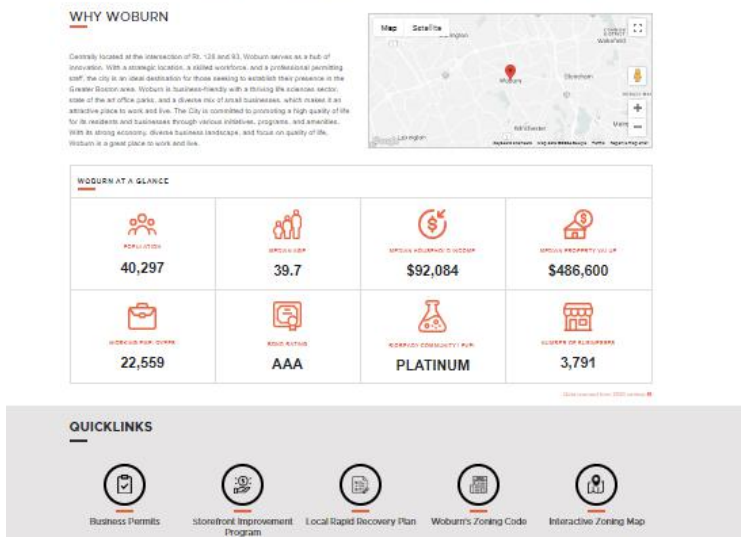
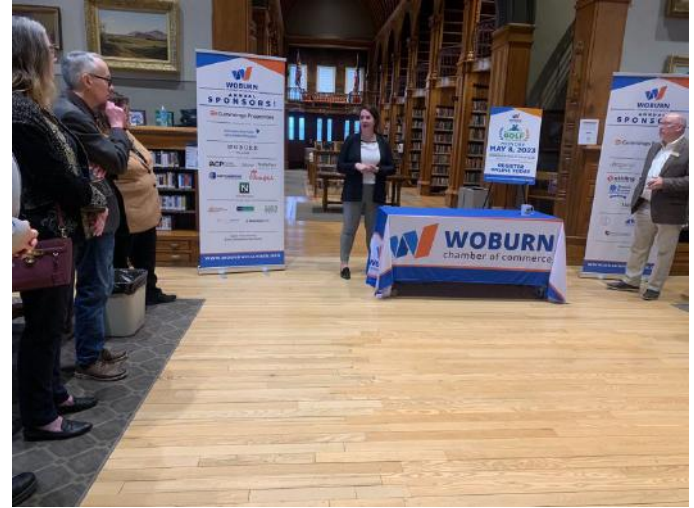
www.woburnma.gov

chagerty@cityofwoburnma.gov



Economic Development Updates

In 2023, the City appointed its first Economic Development Manager. Casey Hagerty assumed the role in January of that year. She collaborates closely with both the Woburn Redevelopment Authority and City Officials to advance Woburn's economic development objectives forward.



This past year, the City launched its inaugural webpage exclusively dedicated to Economic Development. This platform showcases compelling data promoting the City as an ideal business destination while offering practical guidance for aspiring entrepreneurs looking to establish a business.



What's Happening in Woburn



State Economic Development Plan Unveiled

The Governor's Office and the Executive Office of Economic Development have unveiled their draft economic development plan. The plan identifies priorities that will guide the Healey-Driscoll Administration over the next four years. The plan is the result of extensive outreach and coordination of which Woburn City Officials participated in.

[Read the Plan](#)

Are you a start-up founder?

The Massachusetts Innovation Network has released its Founders Start Up Guide. This guide provides business owners with a comprehensive round-up of key resources, incubators, and accelerators to jumpstart their business. The City of Woburn was highlighted as a hotbed for innovation in the State.

[Check out the Resource Guide](#)



The Economic Development Office initiated a monthly newsletter as well. This newsletter, circulated on a monthly basis, will feature updates on city events and activities, new business ventures, and exciting economic development initiatives. Its primary goal is to ensure the community remains informed and actively involved in the city's economic advancement.

Economic Development Updates

The City opted in to Mass Development's PACE program. The PACE program enables property owners to access affordable, long-term financing for projects that improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon footprints, and enhance overall property values. By leveraging the program, Woburn businesses and commercial property owners can contribute to the City's sustainability objectives while enjoying the economic benefits associated with clean energy initiatives.



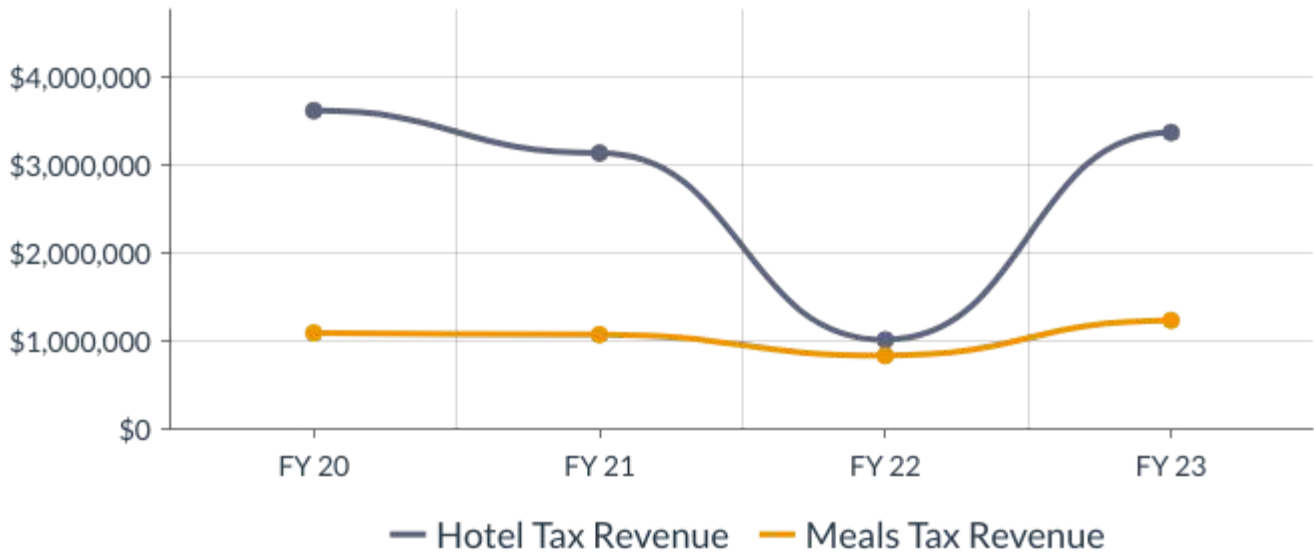
Due to the establishment of the Economic Development Manager position, Woburn has enhanced its capacity to play a proactive role in regional economic development and planning organizations. These strategic alliances have not only fortified the City's presence but have also allowed it to engage more robustly in collaborative initiatives aimed at fostering economic growth and sustainable development within the region.

With the surge in development activity in the New Boston Street Area, encompassing apartments, life science facilities, and the construction of a new bridge, the City has reestablished communication with property owners in the vicinity. In June, a breakfast gathering was convened to disseminate updates. The City intends to adopt a strategic stance in revitalizing the area by scrutinizing market demands, evaluating infrastructure needs, and addressing zoning constraints to foster redevelopment efforts in the New Boston Street area.



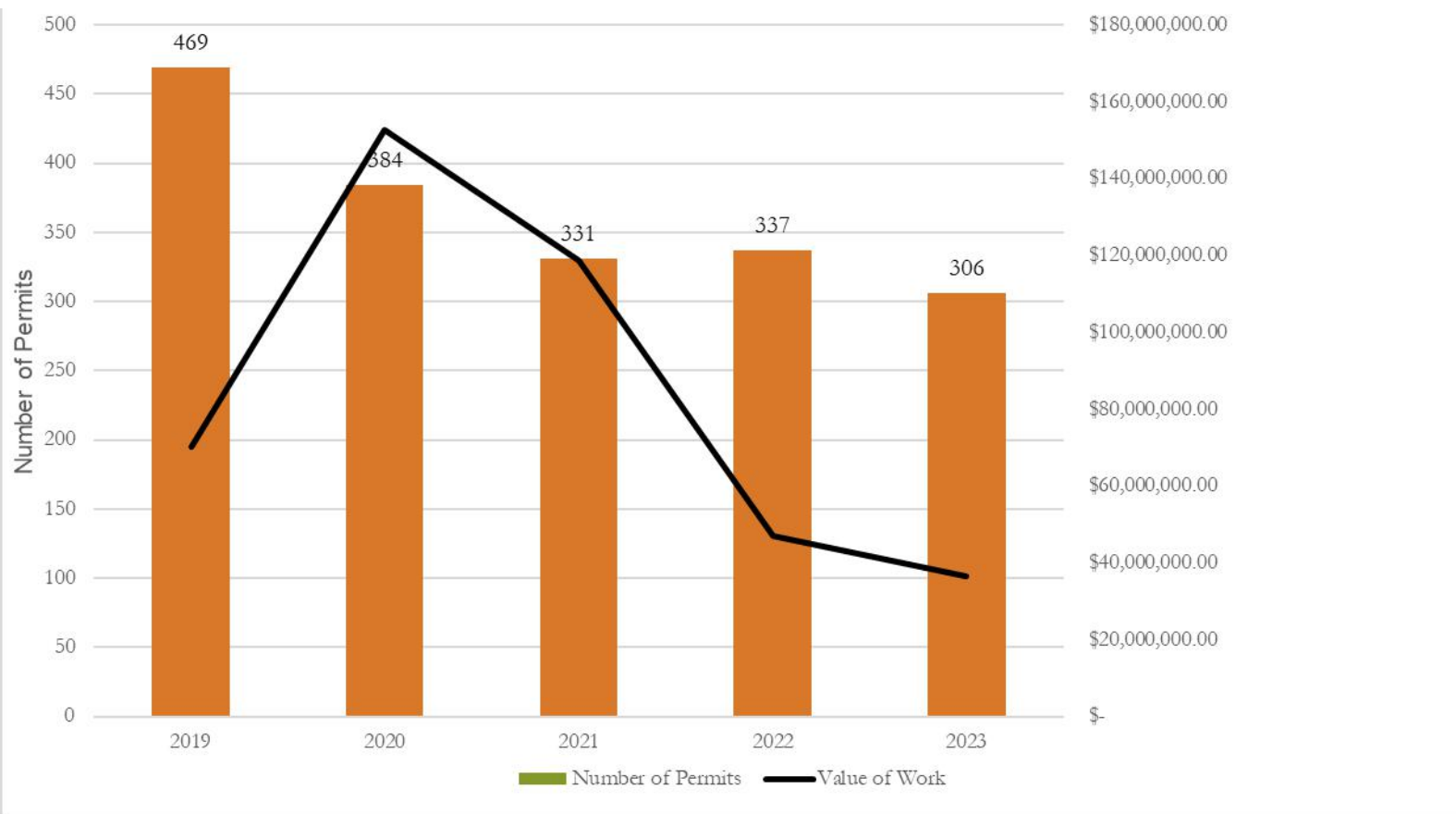
Stakeholders gather to discuss the New Boston Street Area at Leonardo's Cafe in June 2023

Hotel and Meals Tax Data



Hotel and Meals Tax numbers have rebounded in 2023. Meals Tax revenue has surpassed pre-covid amounts and hotel tax is close.

Commercial Building Permit Data



The number of Commercial Buildings Permits in 2023 is comparable to the last few years. The value of projects peaked in 2020 and 2021 due to large commercial and mixed use projects at the Woburn Village and 120 Commerce Way.

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