



MAKING HEADWAY IN YOUR COMMUNITY



Final Report

Rumford, Maine

May 23, 2016

A Project of



Prepared by Jane Lafleur

Friends of Midcoast Maine and The Community Institute

Introduction

Making Headway in Your Community (MHYC), a program of GrowSmart Maine and the Maine Downtown Center, began in Rumford, Maine with a Community Gathering on April 5 at Rumford Town Offices and Movie Night on May 9, 2016 at the American Legion Hall. The project partners showed the film “Reviving the Freedom Mill”, followed by discussion of what matters in Rumford. Twenty residents attended Movie Night. This report summarizes the follow-up Community Conversation held on May 23, 2016.

From the Report on Movie Night:

The Movie night was held at the American Legion Hall in downtown Rumford and attended by 20 residents. While the group was enjoying dinner, Anne Ball and Nancy Smith began with introductions. A summary of MHYC was presented and then the movie was shown. Following the movie 5-10 minutes was devoted to participants throwing out one-word reactions to the movie followed by questions and answers. Nancy and Anne then guided the conversation into deeper thoughts about what matters most in Rumford and what people are passionate about. Finally the program wrapped up with a discussion of next steps for Rumford including identifying educational opportunities to send representatives to and prepping up projects for the May 23rd Community Conversation.

Below are the notes from Movie Night that were transcribed during the program.

One-word Reactions to the movie:

- Revival
- Inspiring
- Visionary
- Sense of harmony
- Dreams
- Friendship
- Money

What are you passionate about in Rumford?

- Downtown is beautiful
- River is beautiful
- Historic Buildings
- Community Events
- Youth and Seniors all need to be engaged
- Empty properties on Congress Street- Clough & Pillsbury Building
- “Brick Park”
- walking trail showcases the areas
- Androscoggin River
- Pumpkin Festival and Moontide Festival (there were fireworks last year)
- Community coherence/wholeness
- Falls Hill Foundation

What potential projects could be done in Rumford?

- Rumford Falls Auditorium (located on upper floor of the town hall) is a wonderful -community space, but needs comfortable chairs
- Seniors need a place to socialize
- Kitchen access at the auditorium (someone said they it is needed and then someone said there is a kitchen downstairs- so unclear if it is actually needed)
- Support for the new store opening- Good Karma Store and Café
- Children's park with accessibility – across the Swift River to join the trails
- Outdoor movies
- Spruce up the visitors center
- Mural on the Sun Journal Building- 100th anniversary of the town, Building owner has given permission, also the location of the farmer's market.
- Bandstand in the Veteran's park-both the mural and the bandstand would bring people downtown and would make a place to gather for socializing, farmers market and to support the Good Karma Store and Café that is opening.



Making Headway in your Community

Step 1: Initial Community Gathering. Eight MHYC partners and community members met on April 5, 2016 at Rumford Town Offices and developed a **Community Network Analysis** to determine the networks and organizations in town and the methods to connect with them to advertise the Community Conversation event fully.

Step 2: Movie Night. This event attracted twenty people on May 9, 2016.

Step 3: A Community Conversation was held Monday, May 23 at *The American Legion Hall in downtown Rumford*. The purpose of this evening event was to brainstorm a project that would have a significant impact on the community, with \$1000 funding from The Making Headway in Your Community project, matched by \$1000 in cash and/or in-kind donation to support the project. This portion of the evening was facilitated by Jane Lafleur of Friends of Midcoast Maine and The Community Institute.

Step 4: A community celebration will be held with the community in late summer.

The Community Conversation Summary

Participants were asked to bring ideas to “pitch” to the group for discussion and a voting process using electronic key pad polling. Ten ideas were presented in short 3-minute pitches. These were:

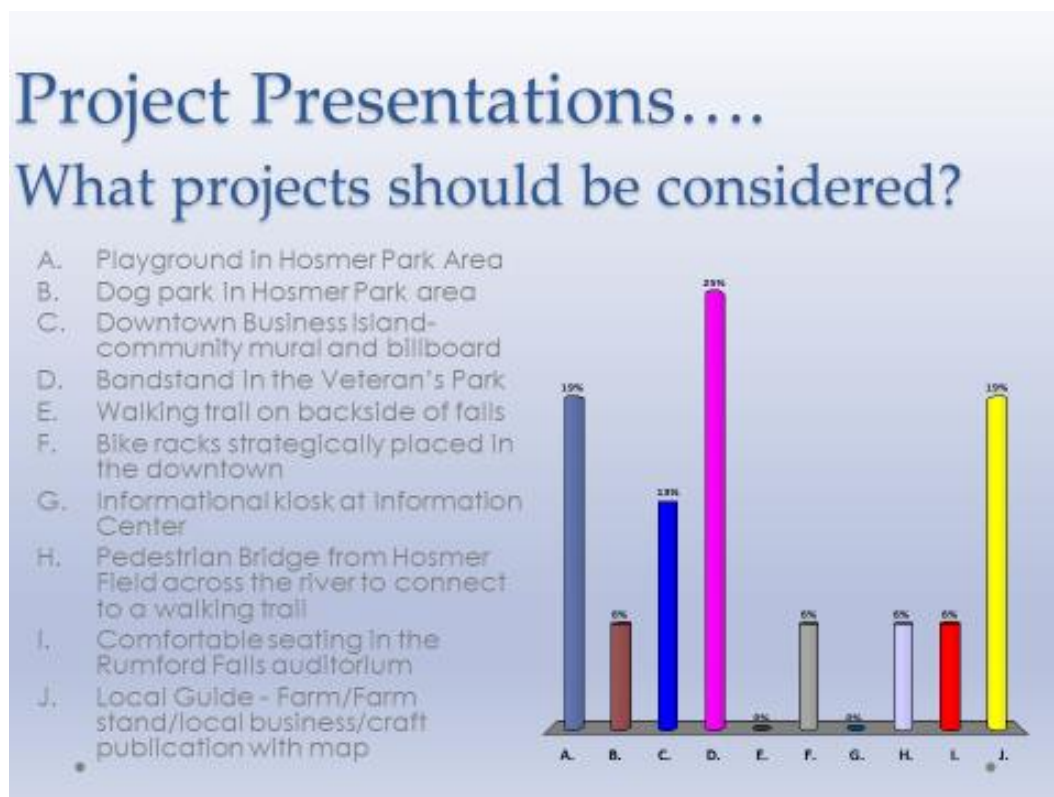
- A. Playground in Hosmer Park Area
- B. Dog park in Hosmer Park area
- C. Downtown Business Island-community mural and billboard
- D. Bandstand in the Veteran’s Park
- E. Walking trail on backside of falls
- F. Bike racks strategically placed in the downtown
- G. Informational kiosk at Information Center
- H. Pedestrian Bridge from Hosmer Field across the river to connect to a walking trail
- I. Comfortable seating in the Rumford Falls auditorium
- J. Local Guide - Farm/Farm stand/local business/craft publication with map

Semi-Final Project Proposals

After three minute brief descriptions, community members used electronic key pad polling devices to select the top three projects to move forward for more detailed discussion and project pitches.

As a result of this vote, three projects rose to the top using electronic key pad polling. These were:

- A Playground in Hosmer Park
- A Bandstand in Veterans Park
- Local Guide for local businesses, farms, food and products



Project Details-Small Group Discussions

Community members selected one of the three projects to work with and to develop their final detailed pitches. Each group was asked to complete the following questions on flip chart pages:

1. How will the project increase local support and what is the community impact?
2. Who will lead the project (individual and organization)
3. What other groups are involved?
4. What is the budget/cost and match?
5. Which MHYC Principles does it involve: Smart Design, Community Connections, Local Economy, Healthy Communities or Climate?
6. What is the timeline?



Project Pitch #1: Playground in Hosmer Park

1. **How will the project increase local support and what is the community impact?** Playground provides activities for younger children and family involvement. It provides business opportunities to “adopt” a piece of playground equipment. All abilities will be taken into consideration.
2. **Who will lead this project? Individuals and Organizations.** Rumford Parks and Town (Mike Nulls) and local business sponsors.
3. **What other groups are involved?** RSU, Rotary, Envision Rumford, River Valley Chamber, Rumford Ahead (recreation subgroup)
4. **What is the budget (cost and match?)** \$1000 MHYC, \$1000 Town of Rumford, \$500 in-kind material, \$1000 in-kind labor, \$500 civic organizations, \$5000 to \$35,000 in crowdfunding. Total project cost is \$9000 to \$39000, depending on cost of playground equipment.
5. **Which MHYC Principles does it involve: Smart Design, Community Connections, Local Economy, Healthy Communities or Climate?** Community Connections: All ages, incomes and abilities, schools and local organizations; Local Economy: Arts and culture; Healthy Communities: walking and biking, parks and public gatherings, safety.
6. **What is the timeline?** October 2016 to obtain and install one piece of playground equipment.



- 1. How will the project increase local support and what is the community impact?** Helps to build community, brings people into the downtown, helps the arts, provides a place to hold events, and utilizes a space that isn't being used.
- 2. Who will lead the project (individual and organization)** Randy is the contact person/ Town of Rumford.
- 3. What other groups are involved?** Groups will include Envision Rumford, Rotary, Chamber, Rumford Ahead. Local carpenters including Bernie and businesses to donate materials. Are there power sources available for electricity? Local musicians, Region 9 has a construction program, Eagle Scouts, and Veterans. It has a nice monument for Veterans and with the bandstand we can organize an event for Veterans appreciation. We can also make sure that the Veterans area is staked off for other events.
- 4. What is the budget/cost and match?** Unknown. We will solicit donations of materials and labor to match the MHYC grant.
- 5. Which MHYC Principles does it involve: Smart Design, Community Connections, Local Economy, Healthy Communities or Climate?** Smart design: with productive lands and open space; Community Connections: it brings the community together; Local Economy: Arts and culture, hospital and tourism; Healthy Communities with parks and public gathering spaces.
- 6. What is the timeline?** 60 to 90 days. Might take longer to organize and get permission of the Veterans.



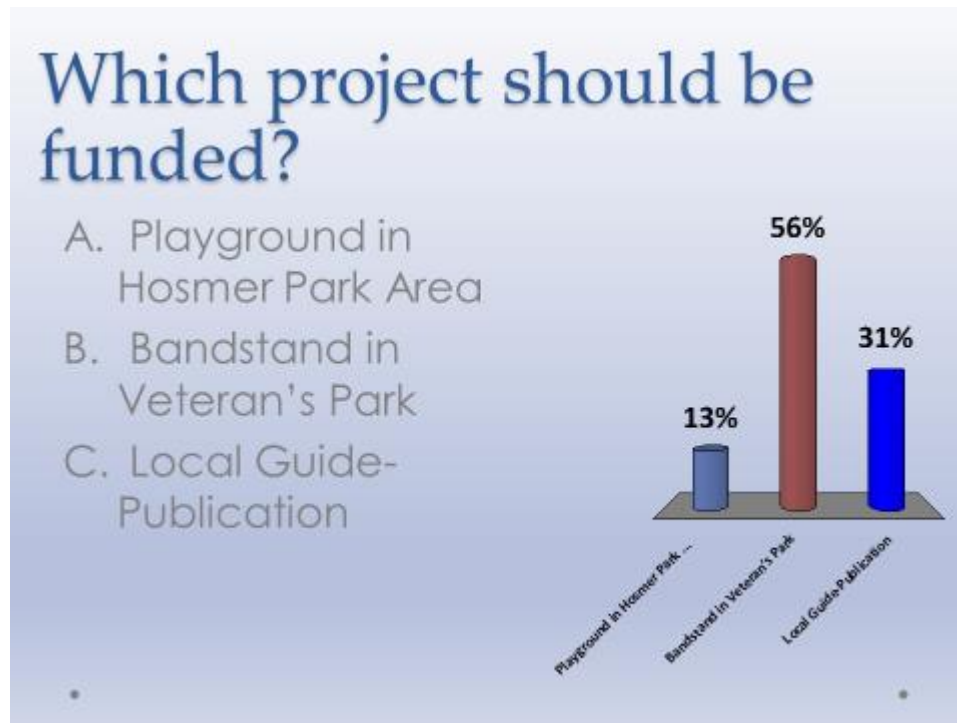
Project Pitch #3: Local Guide to Businesses, Farms, Food & Local Products

1. **How will the project increase local support and what is the community impact?** This community guidebook will be produced annually in print version and could also grow to an on-line version. It will impact local farmers and business owners. It will keep money local. It will make connections within the community. It will help to advertise events
2. **Who will lead the project (individual and organization)** Individuals and groups of individuals. Will need runners for ads and content and people for the logistical production piece.
3. **What other groups are involved?** Farmers, crafters, artists, business owners, Envision Rumford and Chamber of Commerce.
4. **What is the budget/cost and match?** \$1000 from MHYC for publishing/printing. Matched by Ink Maine for design and copies, and by selling ads and gaining donations.
5. **Which MHYC Principles does it involve: Smart Design, Community Connections, Local Economy, Healthy Communities or Climate?** Community Connections by learning what is available in Rumford area and promoting these local places, Local Economy because people will know they can shop locally, Healthy Communities because people can choose to buy healthier foods and products if they know they are available.
6. **What is the timeline?** 2 -3 months for first edition and updated annually. This will be a River Valley production. Channel 7 will be a resource.



Final Vote to Receive Grant

Attendees used electronic keypad polling devices to select the final project to receive the \$1000 MHYC funds. As a result of this vote, the **BANDSTAND in VETERANS PARK** project will receive the grant funds.



Educational Funding

Andrew Zarro, Grow Smart Maine, reminded community members of the \$500 available for community members to attend a workshop, training, educational seminar or site visit. The community should speak to him about possible people and places to attend.

Community Guidelines for Finding Those Educational Opportunities:

Skills Instincts and Abilities

- ❖ Research on your own and talk with MHYC to find the most valuable experiences
- ❖ Be sure to confirm MHYC approval before committing any money!
- ❖ Registration, travel costs are allowed
- ❖ S T R E T C H these funds by carpooling and finding matching dollars!
- ❖ Team up for greatest impact
- ❖ Be Creative!

Project Partners and Thank You!

Andrew Zarro expressed thanks to all the participant, project partners shown below and to facilitator Jane Lafleur.



For more information, please contact:

Nancy E. Smith
Executive Director
GrowSmart Maine
415 Congress Street, Suite 204
Portland, ME 04101
207-699-4330, ext 1
<http://www.growsmartmaine.org>

Lorain K. Francis, Senior Program Director
Anne Ball, Interim Program Director
Maine Downtown Center
Maine Development Foundation
295 Water St., Ste. 5
Augusta, ME 04330
Direct: 207-626-3117
<http://www.mdf.org>

This report has been prepared by Jane Lafleur, Executive Director,
Friends of Midcoast Maine and the Community Institute.
Friends of Midcoast Maine, 5 Free Street, Camden, Maine 04843 (207) 207-236-1077
www.friendsmidcoast.org www.communityinstitute.org