

MHYC Eastport Community Celebration

July 31st 2016

Project: Play area at Suddy Park for young children including swing set and picnic tables.

Lead: Lindy Weston and City Manager Elaine Abbott for the City of Eastport



Project Overview: Construct a swing set and add picnic tables near the ball field. The set features 4 swings (1 infant). It was constructed, but still needs concrete. A sand box frame was constructed and 2 picnic tables were added. The area was full of scrub bushes, trees and weeds. Major excavating was needed along with fill and gravel.

Project Highlights: Three Women (80 – 92 years old) pulled up in a car because they saw something happening. Elaine Abbott knew them and approached the car. After an ice cream cone and conversation, they have offered to donate funds to help keep the project going!

Jan Findley (City Councilor) spoke (speech attached) She is committed to keep this project moving ahead.



The Event:

There was a gathering at the new play area site. 30 people attended from an infant tasting her first ice cream to a 92-year old woman with two friends. Elaine Abbott welcomed everyone, Jan Findley spoke and Nancy engages briefly about Making Headway in Your Community before we celebrated with ice cream as kids enjoyed the new swings. People stayed and visited, swinging and talking about next steps and what visions they had for the space.



Matching Grant Funds: Peter Thornton, nicknamed the Godfather of Eastport for his extensive support of the community, donated \$7,650 in excavation time and crushed gravel to this project. Ice cream for 30 was donated by Linda of Breakwater Ice Cream and served by Linda and her husband as they wanted to be part of the project.



Next Steps:

Community: Lindy Weston enjoyed being the lead on this project, though she found it at times a challenge. Developing her leadership skills, perhaps through the Washington County Leadership Program, would be an excellent next step.



Project:

Immediate: Concrete to secure the swings, add wood chips at base, parking plan, 3 large boulders to keep people from driving up to play area, sand for the sand box.

Future: Skate Area (get kids involved!) Huge Tractor Tire, Culvert and smaller tires as an obstacle course, tire climbing wall. Organize meetings with kids to plan the area lead by Kierson Weston (Lindy's son) who had great vision and can bring in other interested kids and parents.



Other Projects from the Community Conversation:

Establishing a walking path from Suddy Park to Downtown Library / Quoddy Bay Lobster area.

Lessons Learned:

Community & Project: Need to build a team, one person can not do it all. With a small amount of money, a great project can be started, and others will help.

MHYC Process: Empower at the Community Conversations meetings the ability to move projects forward and build trust in others. Talk about ownership, leadership and

delegating. Look at timing for the community and project. Specify night of Community Conversation clearly who is the project lead & TEAM!! Talk about steps to complete the project and match. Build time into the agenda to talk about team building.



Building Relationships: Though Lindy was the lead person for this project, the list of those thanked by Jan Findley was extensive.

Skills, Abilities and Instincts: Eastport did not expend its \$500 funds for this component of Making Headway in Your Community

Attachments: Poster, PR and Sign in list with emails from previous events, Peter Thornton's grant match, Jan Findley notes and thank you list from her speech.

"Making Headway in Your Community" is a series of three public meetings, facilitated by GrowSmart Maine and the Maine Downtown Center, over a period of 8-10 months during which communities identify what they value most in their towns. Small projects are grant funded by the Elmina B. Sewall Foundation with local community match. The grants draw attention to collaborative work; improve connections within the community and inspire to improve communities across Maine. www.Makingheadway.me is the program website designed for sharing these success stories and connecting with local, regional, statewide and even national organizations offering information and services to help communities in these efforts.

Funding is provided by the Elmina B Sewall Foundation. Making Headway in Your Community is a collaborative program of GrowSmart Maine and The Maine Downtown Center.