



Making Headway In Lubec Community Celebration



“Making Headway in Your Community” is a community engagement program featuring three public meetings, facilitated by GrowSmart Maine and the Maine Downtown Center. Working 8-10 months, communities identify what they value most in their towns and select small projects that bring new energy and focus to the community while drawing attention to collaborative work, improving connections and building capacity within the community. www.makingheadway.me is the searchable 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. This is a report on the third and final public event in Lubec, their Community Celebration.

Program 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.

Making Headway in Lubec Community Celebration

Aug 1, 2016



PROJECTS:

Project Leaders: Ruta Jordans, Plastic Free Lubec; Denise Rule, Beautify Water Street; Fred Pierce, Arts in the Park. These projects were funded within the Making Headway in Lubec budget with matching community funds.

Project Descriptions:

Beautify Water Street: Improve the horseshoe pit in Stockford Park, install additional flower boxes along the street and, in acknowledgement of the heritage of the town, 16 fish-shaped wayfinding signs painted by adult residents and kids were installed.

Arts in the Park: Stabilize the bandstand at Stockford Park and add a mural highlighting local interest.

Plastic Free Lubec: Over 30 local shops and restaurants have accepted the challenge to encourage use of biodegradable containers for takeout food and eliminate plastic bottles. Shops including the IGA are encouraging customers to use reusable bags. A "Plastic-free Lubec" window sticker was provided to all participating businesses. Reusable bags were sold as a fundraiser.



The Event: The Celebration began with a walk along Water Street to view the 16 fish wayfinding signs and new planters on Water Street. 25 students and teachers from the Lubec Summer Program along with 12 residents and community leaders as well as Maine travel writer, Hillary Nangle, joined the walk. Nancy Smith of GrowSmart Maine and Lorain Francis, representing the Maine Downtown Center, also attended. The group admired the artwork done by kids and adults and created fun, colorful public art in downtown Lubec. The signs are attached to poles secured in flower pots along the road and in parks.

The group arrived at Stockford Park with music set up by Fred Pierce and Duane Ingalls. The ice cream arrived and kids enjoyed a cone, with sprinkles if they showed the cut out fish they were to color later. Families played horseshoes and residents gathered to listen to the updates on the projects presented by Ruta Jordans, Fred Pierce and Denise Rule. Thanks was given to all the community members and organizations that supported the projects. Nancy Smith closed out the event by encouraging continued work and further outreach to other Maine communities.



Matching Grant Funds: TO BE COMPLETED by the community by Oct 1st.

Next Steps:

Local Leaders: Katherine Cassidy and Ruta Jordans have been critical to the success of this program and both will be moving away from Lubec. Others in the community will fill this void, as there are capable and dedicated men and women in elected, appointed, and volunteer positions.

With the “Skills, Abilities and Instincts” funds still available, we encourage the team members to use this \$500 to attend appropriate conferences this fall.

Making Headway Projects: The Making Headway team will tend the planters and signs as needed, APPLE will continue reinforcing Plastic Free Lubec. The first coat of primer has gone on the panels of the bandstand stage and Sherry Ashby will soon be painting the mural.

Other Projects from the Community Conversation: Though three projects were moved forward, there were other submissions for the competition and they too are moving forward.

The community has plans for a trail to connect the school to Stockford Park, with added bike racks, and trail heads. (Active Communities Environment Program at the Maine CDC can assist in this effort). Lubec will build on their experience with the marathon in their role as a host community for BikeMaine 2016. Nancy was able to share with them news of the plan between Washington County Council of Governments and Bicycle Coalition of Maine to make this year's route an ongoing marketed experience.

Other Projects continue as well: People recognize that the connection with Campobello is important! There are plans to build up Lubec side for Fog Fest with music in 2017. Lorain recommended they reach out to Abbe Levin through the Maine Office of Tourism to connect with the Two Nation Vacation.



Lessons Learned:

Community: People are still mourning the closure of the High School in 2010. There is interest in tracking the High School population in Lubec as they attend different regional schools. Discussion included the potential to reach out to past graduates who may have an interest in supporting the community or in returning, as Our Katahdin has done in the Millinocket region.

MHYC Process: The decision to come back for a second Community Conversation in Lubec proved worthwhile as demonstrated by the many good outcomes. The program recovered from an attempt to accommodate a last minute scheduling concern within the community. Local leadership emerged at the second Community Conversation event and though these people recognized that the few longtime Lubec residents were not engaging in these events, participants are optimistic they will join in efforts moving forward.

Building Relationships:

Many groups were involved in the process including: APPLE (Association to Promote and Protect the Lubec Environment), Lubec Landmarks, Lubec Arts Alive, as well as the town manager, select board and committee members.

Lubec is experiencing many interrelated successes in improving the local economy, environment and community. Below are listed a few:

The Dodge Building, which has been a challenge for downtown revitalization, has been sold to new owner who intends to make improvements.

The Lubec Market is underway this summer, bringing local farmers, craftspeople and artists to Water Street on Saturday mornings.

Love at First Light Gift Shop & Ice Cream and Lubec Brewing Company received CDBG Micro-enterprise grants to build their businesses.

Improvements are being made to the small park at the beginning of Water Street, making it safer and more attractive and the basketball course is being resurfaced to improve the experience for youth who are using the court even in its current condition.

HD & Sons Seafood has begun processing seafood locally, with potential to add takeout service soon, creating new jobs in town.

There is interest in having Lubec rejoin the Maine Downtown Center Network Program. In the meantime, the Downtown Revitalization Committee will once again become a subgroup of the Economic Development Committee.

The town received a brownfields grant to convert the former Columbia factory to a scenic turnout.

The town is preparing for the BikeMaine 2016 tour, which will bring 400 bicyclists to town for a day and night in September. This is a terrific opportunity to promote the community to new people with disposable income and available time for travel and recreation.

It was noted that the town simply seems more positive, with a renewed sense of optimism in light of all these incremental improvements.



Skills Instincts & Abilities Funds: The Lubec MHYC team sent 3 people to the Maine Downtown Center Annual Conference held in Bar Harbor in May 2016. Lubec is interested in becoming a member of the Maine Downtown Network program at the Maine Downtown Center. Lubec used their \$500 to pay registration and travel expenses to attend the conference which provided a full day programs on downtown revitalization and allowed

them to network and speak to other communities that are current members of the Downtown Network Program.

Followup Thoughts after BikeMaine: to be completed by the Community. How did these project enhance the BikeMaine event for both locals and the event participants?

Attachments: Event flyer, Press Release and Contacts with emails from previous events.