



Wilton Community Celebration

Wilton Free Public Library New Fence Installation and Creation of Outdoor Programming Space



October 2, 2016



Project: Wilton Free Public Library outdoor fence along river to create safe, outdoor program space.



Lead: Cassie Savage, Children's Librarian, Wilton Free Public Library with additional help from the library Board of Trustees.

Project Overview and Celebration Summary

Anne Ball, Maine Development Foundation, Tyler Kidder, GrowSmart Maine and Carol Morris, GrowSmart Maine traveled to Wilton for the Community Celebration held on October 2, 2016 at the Wilton Free Public Library in conjunction with the library's annual Harvest Festival. It was a family event with a cider press, ukulele band, angora rabbits, a weaving demonstration and face painting. Making Headway had a table with homemade cookies and coffee located in the new outdoor programming space created by the fence.

The addition of a fence along the river, next to the library has made the space safe and alleviates concerns of anyone falling in the river. Children can now be outside of the library along the river's edge which is a beautiful spot. The library feels like they have gained additional seasonal programming space. This is the only green space downtown according to the library staff and it is now safe to be enjoyed by all.

This outdoor space has given this small-town library much **needed seasonal, weather-dependent program space. It is important to note that the library has already expanded inside space as much as is physically possible. The library began having outside story time as soon as the fence was completed.** Long-term plans include a path from the front entrance, a patio and outside furniture to be added so that adults too can come to the library, enjoy the sound of the river and use the WIFI. This is the only green space in downtown. Wilton and the community are enjoying using the new space and excited about new programming for next year.



Matching Grant Funds

Project Total = \$4700

MHYC \$1000

Match \$3700

\$1000 Bangor Savings, Community Matters More Campaign \$1000

\$2300 Fundraisers: Bake Sale, Dessert Night, Silent Auction

\$400 Volunteer Labor in fundraising and event planning Library Board and Staff- 20 hrs @\$20/hr

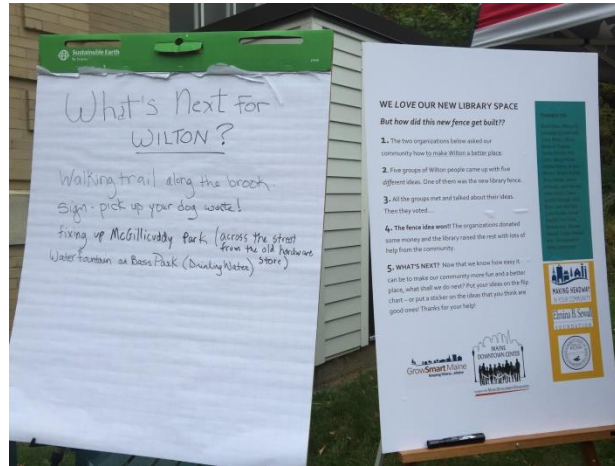
Next Steps

While at the Community Celebration the MHYC table had a large flip chart on an easel where people could think about what could be next for Wilton. The flip chart was filled with ideas, and people used dots to show support of ideas that were already posted. Below is the list transferred from the flip chart. There were lots of great ideas for the community to think about doing next.

What's Next For Wilton? *= more than 3 people liked the idea

- Walking trail along the brook*
- Sign- pick up your dog waste, an ordinance if one doesn't already exist*
- Fix up McGillicuddy Park (across the street from the old hardware store)
- Addition of a water fountain at Bass Park*
- Kayak rentals at boat landing (see Frank Donald of Wilton Rec)

- Add something else for little kids at the playground (remove broken merry go round)*
- Update playground at Kineowatha*
- Update playground or space at East Wilton Park



Community Capacity

The Making Headway Process has been wonderful for community. The Chair of the Wilton Library Board expressed that Making Headway made people feel so good about the community and gave them confidence that they could accomplish something else. As the Library fence project was underway the municipality moved ahead with another one of the original suggested projects from the Community Conversation held at Calzolaio Pasta in April 2016. The municipality went ahead and put electricity in at the park at the foot of the lake so that next summer there can be outdoor concerts. The ukelele band heard about the new outdoor concert venue and is eager to perform there next summer. While at the celebration there was great pride from all of the community in their library, their downtown and their community. There is no question Wilton is a special place where the community can work together and make small improvements that benefit the community at-large.

Lessons Learned from the Community

Making Headway In Your Community is a program that celebrates a lighter, quicker, cheaper approach to the community engagement process and the community project that is ultimately selected. MHYC provides the community with a quick pay back for their efforts. Through this process the Wilton community gained confidence and leadership that will serve them in the future as they tackle additional projects. The community embraced the Library's efforts and leadership to get the fence project done and that group will surely be tapped again as a group that can make things happen.

Skills, Abilities and Instincts

At the time of the writing of this report the community is finalizing how they will spend their \$500 for additional training or education for interested community members.

Conclusion

The Making Headway Team spoke to probably 40 different people attending the Harvest Days. There was overwhelming enthusiasm for the fence project and what it has done for the library and the community. The \$2000 was small, but mighty since the addition of this new safe space really appeared to be like a major addition to the library. The recently retired Library Director, David Olson, said, “It was a like a capital campaign in that it created much needed programming space for the library.”



“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.