**Municipal Data Across Sectors for Health (M-DASH)**



**City of Eastport**

**Task Force Meeting**

**June 1, 2021 – 10a.m.-12p.m.**

By Zoom

Attending: Kate Devonshire (New Eastport City Manager), Cammi Deschene (Eastport Memorial Nursing Home), Steven Cannon (Eastport Masons), Betsy Fitzgerald (Washington County Manager, John Ferland (ORPC), Lynn Rutledge (Rector, Christ Church; President of Food Pantry and Emergency Heating Program), Jeanne Peacock (City Council), Dyan Walsh (EAAA), Dale Basher (DCP), Barry Curtis (Sheriff), Debbie Pottle (Eastport Health Center), Rob Belanger (MCOA Intern), Jess Maurer (MCOA) Anne Schroth (MCOA), Effie Rorke (MCOA); Presenters: Wendy Kasten & Meghan Erving (Living Well in Waldo County Masons’ Elder Outreach), Vic Taylor (Rebuilding Together Lincoln County)

**Meeting Notes**

1. **Welcome, Introductions, & Review**
   1. Introduction of Eastport’s new City Manager – Kate Devonshire.
   2. This is our 4th meeting of the M-DASH Eastport Task Force.
      1. The goal of this project is to help municipalities make data-driven decisions on how to better meet the need of their older residents.
      2. MCOA is here to support the work, offer technical assistance, share good models, bring new people to the table, help solve challenges.
      3. Based on the Eastport Data Dashboard, you arrived at a consensus that **housing insecurity** will be the first focus of action planning for your project.
      4. Last time we met, we heard from ORPC, the Island Institute, and Efficiency Maine about resources and models for weatherization and energy efficiency.
      5. Today, we are hearing about home repair models. Any project involving improving housing costs and energy efficiency older Eastport residents will inevitably be faced with what to do about home repair needs that will be identified in the process.
2. **Presentations – Home Repair Models**
   1. Dale Basher, Downeast Community Partners
      1. <https://www.downeastcommunitypartners.org/>
      2. Home Repair and Weatherization at DCP: <https://www.downeastcommunitypartners.org/services/house-and-home/info.php/Home-Repair-and-Weatherization-6/>
      3. Home Repair program is multifaceted
         1. Funds from CDBG, MaineHousing, private donors
         2. Over 300 people on waitlist. Money goes long before we can help all in need.
         3. Numbered system: Emergencies -- Warm, Safe, Dry issues, bump to top of the list. For example: Failed septic; severe roof issue; basement collapse
         4. Aging in Place Program – Washington and Hancock Counties
            1. High impact/low-cost = $2500 average costs. Go quickly b/c criteria is very liberal.
            2. Excellent program – allows high impact, low costs interventions to keep aging people in their homes safely.
         5. Home repair program: 12-20 homes each year total for both counties. Great program but wish we had more funding.
      4. Recap some of the other programs that touch on home repair
         1. Heat pump program (anyone on heat assistance is eligible)
         2. Central heating improvement program (same eligibility as heating assistance).
         3. Weatherization program: That’s where we make biggest difference. Anyone on heat assistance qualifies for weatherization program. We improve a lot of homes but some can’t weatherize b/c need home repair.
         4. Work with Maine Seacoast Mission (Scott Shaw) – small program (15-18 homes on average) with them; they bring volunteers to repair homes so we can weatherize some homes that we would otherwise have to walk away from. Grant from C.F. Adams. Great program. We really think it is replicable. (Service area: Franklin to Addison; used to serve Eastport. Dale is urging them to serve Eastport again).
         5. We are trying to replicate the Maine Seacoast Mission project with Climate to Thrive (<https://www.aclimatetothrive.org/>) on Mount Desert Island. (Already have worked with Gordon Beck, Electric Vehicle Project Manager at ACTT).
      5. Most successful project to create with DCP would probably be:
         1. Speak to Maine Seacoast Mission to see if we could organize those volunteers. The biggest impact would be to look at the homes we deferred from weatherization that need minor repair or roof repair or other repairs that would allow us to come in and weatherize.
         2. Once we start working on homes, we can leverage as many programs and funds in each home that we can.
   2. Wendy Kasten, Aging Well in Waldo County, Masons’ Elder Outreach
      1. <http://agingwellinwaldocounty.org/>
      2. Background
         1. County-wide approach. 10 Masonic lodges in Waldo County.
         2. They carry their own insurance; we carry liability insurance for us.
         3. Publicity through papers, local TV, posters in library, etc.
         4. Started in March; serving about 2-3 people per week with about 11 Masons who signed up to do property visits.
      3. Requests:
         1. Have taken on one case that is more complicated than usual (50-year-old trailer that needs new windows and back door won’t open).
         2. Most are small:
            1. Re-hung door
            2. Treads on rotted staircase
            3. Replaced couple of railings (interior and exterior stairs)
            4. Put air-conditioners in and out
            5. Storm windows in and out
            6. Mailbox that fell down
            7. Indoor and outdoor lights
            8. Replaced a bunch of smoke detectors
      4. Have had to refine our procedure and decide what we can and cannot do:
         1. Won’t send them up on roofs
         2. Don’t clean up yards, rake, mow lawns (would address fallen tree that blocks driveway, e.g.)
         3. Had inappropriate request to remove all trees with brown tail moths
         4. Had inappropriate request to scrape and re-paint porch.
         5. Can’t do cosmetic issues
         6. Can’t do things that are urgent
         7. Have to focus on what improves aging in place: safety, maneuverability around the home; being safe in the home or immediate outside environment of home.
      5. Work closely very closely with Waldo CAP
         1. Wheelchair ramp for couple in 90’s
         2. They have also referred things to us when small
      6. Biggest lesson: Have to have a very clear, rich conversation with the person who is asking for help.
         1. We have to understand parameters of what they need.
         2. We have to have them understand we (and Masons) are volunteers.
         3. They need to understand the Masons are not retired – they have day jobs so the work will probably happen after hours and on weekends.
         4. Sometimes in that conversation, we have found other ways to solve their problem.
         5. Learned we need to protect volunteers: rude, abusive people.
      7. Process:
         1. One of us does Intake form
         2. Scan to Mason contact
         3. He finds out who can do it, schedules it, and tells me when it is done.
      8. Funded by donations and grants from MCF.
         1. Masons gave us $2400 and said might be able to get more $$ from their foundation if needed
         2. We will probably apply for another MCF grant.
         3. We have money we need for about the next year.
      9. Jess: Bowdoinham model is slightly different. Masons are self-contained (Handy Brigade). Referral goes through town manager. Have sign-up program that goes right to Masons and Masons take it from there.
   3. Vic Taylor, Rebuilding Together Lincoln County
3. <https://www.rebuildingtogether-lc.org/>
4. Rebuilding Together is a national organization created in Midland, TX, in 1973. Went national in 1988; currently have 30 affiliates. We are the smallest; most are in cities.
   * + 1. There were 2 other models in Maine -- Portland and Lewiston/Auburn -- both very different models (get money from corporations, who field volunteers).
       2. For us, donations come from grants or individuals.
5. We started around 1998; used to be called Christmas in April – we did it once/month for many years. This was very challenging because the skilled workers you need to run the jobs are so busy. COVID gave us opportunity to change the model. Now we get the team together to do the work no matter what time of the year.
6. We do 20 houses/year; have a request form and volunteer form (will send to Anne)
7. Board is 16 people: about ½ locals (and know applicants) and ½ from away
8. Not been very successful reaching beyond Boothbay peninsula. We know how to do it – ask other towns to create their own infrastructure and we’d give starter funds -- but hasn’t happened.
9. We are the only charitable organization doing the work of keeping people safe, warm and secure.
10. Biggest challenge: running operations side.
    * + 1. Have to have skilled construction person on the board to deal with these jobs.
        2. In past few years, have created “gold team” – list of 50 skilled people who say they will help if can.
11. Fundraising is not the problem with us.
    * + 1. If not 125% poverty level or less – usually don’t help.
        2. The costs of us insuring ourselves is significant portion of what we give the national organization.
12. Sample jobs:
    * + 1. Roofs are common (we don’t do them but pay to be done (about 4 per year)
        2. Most common has to do with trailers (bulkhead leaks; bathroom leaks)
        3. Big, old house where single older woman needed all windows replaced – we said we’d do half each year for 2 years
        4. Ramps
        5. Porches (entry into the house)
        6. Some cosmetic work (we have painted some houses…).
13. Warm, safe and secure is key but dignity is a lot of it.
14. For Eastport, might not make sense to be part of Rebuilding Together if just focused on Eastport.
    * + 1. It does cost money to run it. We spend about $20,000/year. We pay national organization about $4000 year to cover board insurance; volunteer insurance
        2. If doing bigger area – covers more fundraising opportunities.
        3. National organization finds us opportunities to write grants for. This year, we’ll probably bring in $30,000 ($10,000 from Lowe’s alone).
    1. Jess Maurer, Harpswell Aging at Home
       1. <https://www.hah.community/>
       2. Background
          1. Partially grew out of CHIP program in Lincoln County. “The Regulars” – older guys who wanted to help with home repair projects. Worked with CHIP and Habitat for Humanity 7 Rivers.
          2. We went to Habitat 7 Rivers to ask if we could be a volunteer group with you in Harpswell. They said we could do a pilot.
             1. Wildly successful: 2nd home they did: Saved a woman’s life and town thousands of dollars. Leaky, moldy cellar, woman had COPD; doc said if go home you will die. They installed gutters, vent fan, fixed foundation. Fixed 40 things for $2400. Habitat was so moved by this, they agreed to work with us.
          3. Town applied for CDBG funds with goal of 25 houses per year in Harpswell and have exceeded that for 5 years every year until COVID.
          4. Grew from 6 to 26 guys (2 teams; two team leaders); all volunteer; about half have been professional builders and the other half are do-it-yourself guys. They do it 1-day per week.
       3. We have MOU with Habitat; the volunteers are both Habitat volunteers and Harpswell Aging at Home volunteers
          1. Currently have 2 tool trailers.
          2. Habitat trains them, manages projects, guarantees the work.
       4. Projects
          1. They don’t take on big projects – not the goal b/c there are other organizations that do take on large projects.
          2. Fix floors, build ramps.
          3. They don’t do plumbing or electrical that requires permit.
          4. No roofs; no ladders too high.
          5. They weatherize every house they go into.
          6. They average costs is about $1400
       5. Process:
          1. Initial 3 questions come through the town for home repair: GA manager asks: do you own home; is it for sale; income (80% median area income)
          2. Then housing coordinator calls to ask what they need
          3. Then in-home process.
       6. One thing that is totally different: we do assessment of home with assessment of other needs: we only ask questions for things for which we have referrals (food, isolation, income, falls, fires, hospitalization, ER use). And do follow up 3 months later and found 100% no falls after home repair and assessment.
15. **Discussion**
    1. Island Fellow has been hired. Will be wonderful. Volunteered in Peace Corps and with other nonprofits. Island Institute has a lot of great experience we can learn from. Will be part of city government, working on these special projects. Will be an infusion of energy and expertise. Fellow will work on 3 projects: broadband; M-DASH; ORPC with microgrid.
    2. We do have Masons and some veterans’ groups. They would have to listen to this recording and hear from other groups that have done it before would commit.
    3. Eastport had 12 people in our age-friendly group in 2018. Maybe we can bring that AF group back together. Could be an engine to keep this project going in future.
    4. Only need a small number of people to get a thing like this started (someone who is influential in town; someone who can talk to the town; someone who understands fundraising). Then can build from there.
    5. Should follow-up with DCP re: Seacoast Mission; Could try to work with both Masons and Seacoast Mission.
16. **Next Meeting**
    1. August 3, 2021, 2-4p.m.