

Thank you for being here. Community engagement is welcomed. One note, after Heather speaks there will be time for comments which Robin Mass will moderate.

**Project Mission:** To extend the legacy of the Witherle Family's commitment to preserving and enjoying the natural environment with a landscape featuring native plants while also addressing issues resulting from climate change. To this end the garden will include materials grown, produced, and quarried in Maine which exemplify our state's geological and botanical history.

What better way to honor the legacy of George Witherle as an early conservationist than to establish an educational native garden?

**Project Goal:** The goal is to align with the priorities of the Town's Comprehensive Plan, "to explore the anticipated environmental, societal, and infrastructural needs of the town." (CCP draft 2022 page 1)

According to the survey, residents are interested in seeing proactive plans to mitigate the impact of climate change; unfortunately all too real to Castine residents this past winter. This garden is conceived on encouraging the web of life with native plants, natural habitat, and biodiversity. (CCP 2023 Chapter M, Climate, Public Opinion Survey, page 2)

This is in keeping with the vision of the Maine Library Association to be a model of environmental sustainability in their communities.

Another consideration is the vital role of libraries as public institutions have in recent years grown to encompass being community centers. Witherle Memorial Library is no exception, community engagement is shown in the growing numbers of participants in programs, demand for materials, and the generous support for the Library and Friends.

**Design Intent:** To improve the functionality of the grounds by the side entrance which have been facing heavy use especially from May until October. Create an area for patrons and the public to enjoy the native plantings and the view of both the Common and down Green Street toward the water.

### **Three Phases:**

1. The first phase was, commission a concept design. The Select Board and other town officials have been kept in the loop of our progress. The Board of Trustees of the Library appointed an ad hoc landscape committee and is now holding this public forum for presenting the plan and designer to all of you. There will be time for comments at the end after Heather McCargo has spoken. The project concept was presented at the annual Town Meeting in May and was approved by the voting citizens of Castine; \$130,000. from Library Investment Fund. **NOT FROM TAXATION.**
2. Town Warrant May 11, 2024 Page 18, number 38
3. The second stage which is underway will be detailed architectural and horticultural plans addressing elevation and being fully ADA compliant. The town will review these in the near future along with researching the feasibility of removing electrical poles.
3. The third stage is the actual implementation and Heather will speak to that.

With your valuable input we will be able to refine a plan for the site and plantings that will stay true to its mission and also consider the perspectives of all concerned citizens.

Heather's bio, et al.