

## **Ingleside - a place for the people of Winchendon**

In September 2014 over 2000 people from Winchendon came to Ingleside for a Fall Festival. The event took place on the heels of the news of the Town's financial situation. Some people wondered if the Festival would still happen. It did. In response to a couple dozen well-placed signs and balloons in the days just preceding the Festival, people showed up – in droves. They came for different reasons. The weather was amazing. The event was free. They were curious about a place, in the middle of town, they had never seen. They were nostalgic for a place they knew from the 1940's and 50's. Most came by cars and many came by foot, walking up from downtown or walking over from the surrounding neighborhoods.

In addition to the food, games, music, crafts, rides and contests, there were tours and an Ingleside Information Table where people gathered to learn more about this property – this place – to talk about what it was and to imagine what it could be. Some came to reminisce and share their stories of swimming, playing ball or the community gardens during WWII. Most came to hear about plans for this place and discovered that they were being asked to consider how this place could be important and valued by them, their family and their friends.

It was eye opening, as surveys can be, to see what people wanted, to hear their excitement and ideas as they considered the potential of what could be made and done with this place. People identified many opportunities that are not readily available or accessible in Town.

People looked at the land and responded

- Trails for walking, cross-country skiing, snow shoeing
- A picnic area, community gardens, a splash park and playground area
- An outdoor stage, outdoor movies, sculpture gardens, a skate park
- A labyrinth, wildlife viewing, environmental kiosks, nature areas
- Soccer, volleyball, baseball, tennis
- Community and holiday events, a Halloween walk, Easter egg hunt, fairs, festivals and gatherings

They looked at the water and ask

- A boat ramp and rentals, fishing, a swimming beach, ice skating, a boardwalk

They looked at the buildings – the house, the impressive barn, the open garage and imagined what they could learn and do with others

- An art center, music rooms, an indoor stage
- Woodworking, pottery, glassblowing, metal working
- Game rooms, classrooms, meeting rooms, computer space
- Painting, photography, drawing, sewing, knitting, cooking, car repair

Ingleside is a place and a project with a long time horizon. Its potential is in the hands of the people who live and work in Winchendon. It starts with this sense of what the place could become.