

EDUCATION EXPANSION PROPOSAL

Friends of Wood Memorial Library & Museum, Inc.

The Wood Memorial Library, built in 1927/8 served as one of the Town's Public Libraries for forty years. William R. Wood paid for the erection of the building as a memorial to his parents and provided a Trust fund to use for maintenance of the building, while the Town provided the funds to operate the library, covering books, staff and programs. Today, the programmatic operations of the library are managed and funded by a nonprofit organization, the Friends of Wood Memorial Library & Museum, Inc., and has been for nearly 50 years. Among other endeavors, the Friends provides educational field trips and similar programs for school-aged children about South Windsor's early colonial history and the late Woodland-period lifeways of Native American tribes in the central Connecticut River Valley.

We have an opportunity to greatly expand our educational programs, positioning The Wood, historic Main Street and South Windsor as a vibrant historical, educational and cultural destination in the region.

PROJECT SCOPE

In 2018, the Friends of WML&M, Inc. applied and received approval for a 2 year Temporary and Conditional Permit to construct a Native American Village exhibit. The Friends of WML&M, Inc. would like to renew the Temporary and Conditional Permit to keep the Native American Village Exhibit open.

The exhibit is funded through a grant from the Department of Economic and Community Development and matching funds. The grant period ends on October 31, 2020, by which time construction will be complete.

This Exhibit is located on the land behind the library, deeded to the Friends in 2016. The program serves primarily elementary school students from the Greater Hartford Region, predominantly in the spring and fall. Students arrive by bus and are delivered on Main Street to the sidewalk in front of the library. Upon entering the building, they receive an introduction to the program. Students then move to the village to rotate through multiple learning stations. Duration of the trip is normally between three and four hours (c. 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.), occurring two or three days a week. Over time, occasional adult or family programs may be developed and implemented as well. Potential future programs include environmental sustainability, adaptive technologies, native crafts, and more. Due to coronavirus however, we don't expect to have many in-person field trips for the foreseeable future; we are preparing for digital field trip experiences, filmed in advance within the Nowashe Village.

The exhibit utilized existing natural clearings in the wooded area, providing various "classroom" sites that are not visible from Main Street or neighbors. These sites include a long house (large wigwam), a smaller wigwam, a partially built wigwam for teaching purposes, a "three sisters" garden (corn, beans and squash), and a general gathering area. All structures were built with traditional materials and via traditional methods. Based on advice from Environmental Officer, Jeff Folger, all structures will be securely anchored now that they are complete, for some of the sites are included in the 100 year floodplain. A series of nature trails with indigenous plantings connect the sites. Both palisade and deer (mesh) fencing (which will have indigenous plants installed to create a "living fence") provide both privacy and security along part of the northern boundary and the entire eastern entry / front. Several gates around the perimeter will provide opportunities for egress, and lock for security. Four wildlife cameras are soon to be installed throughout the property.