

# Monhegan Museum of Art & History

## Strategic Plan 2024 – 2026

June 2023

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### Strategic Planning Committee:

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### Summary of our Process (November 2022 – June 2023)

- Comprehensive internal literature review
- Strategic Planning Committee monthly meetings
- Online Board Survey
- One-on-one interviews with key external stakeholders
- Convened external listening session with Community Organizations January 2023
- Committee review of strengths/weaknesses/opportunities/threats/challenges
- Two-day board Strategic Planning Retreat in February 2023
- Identification of key goals and objectives
- Board work groups developed tactical work plans for each goal
- 3 Year Financial Proforma developed to support goals

## **Part One: Executive Summary**

The strategic plan for the Monhegan Museum of Art & History provides a roadmap for the institution's development and growth over the next three years. This plan aims to fortify the museum's role as a steward of Monhegan's rich historical and artistic heritage, strengthen community engagement, enhance visitor experiences, and ensure long-term sustainability.

Through these strategic initiatives, the Monhegan Museum of Art & History will solidify our position as a leading cultural destination and further our mission to educate, inspire, and preserve the arts, environment, and history of Monhegan Island.

### **Key Strategic Goals for the next three years:**

#### **Reinforce and Build Organizational Capacity**

We will strengthen the museum's organizational capacity by addressing the need to expand financial resources and staffing to support the long-term viability and sustainability of the institution.

#### **Nurture and Support a Sustainable Island Community**

We acknowledge our dual role as the repository of the island's history and a contributor to the community's future sustainability. As we move into our next organizational phase, the board and staff recognize and seek to strengthen the museum's critical role as community partner, leader, and supporter.

#### **Integrate Collections and Campus – Culture, History, Nature, and Art**

In unifying the campus and the collections, as well as our management systems, we have an opportunity to tell a stronger story, increase the museum's impact, and elevate people's understanding of the interconnectedness of the island's rich and complex history, its varied cultures and perspectives, and its significant and prolific artistic heritage.

This plan seeks to ensure that the Monhegan Museum of Art & History continues to thrive and inspire future generations to appreciate the rich artistic legacy and historical importance of Monhegan Island.

## **Part Two: Current Mission, Vision, and Values**

### Mission

The mission of the Monhegan Historical & Cultural Museum Association, Inc. is to preserve and display objects of historical and cultural significance to Monhegan Island, Maine, and in so doing, to provide a source of information and fascination about Monhegan for the benefit of the residents of the island and all other interested persons.

### Vision

Our vision is to be an enduring tribute to the power of place to foster community and artistic creativity.

### Values

- The Monhegan Museum is a creation of the island community, and, in return, we endeavor to actively build, support, and engage the community.
- As a significant organization in the local economy, we endeavor to support the economy through employment and to encourage visitor and investment opportunities.
- As a significant property owner and resource consumer on the island, we take our responsibility seriously to care for and help sustain the environment and we actively pursue opportunities to reduce our environmental footprint.
- The museum is here – both physically and virtually – for all the people drawn to this unique place. We aim to celebrate the diversity of the island’s history and art through scholarship, stewardship, exhibitions, and programs and by welcoming all perspectives.

## **Part Three: List of Goals and Objectives**

### **Three Goals for Strategic Plan**

1. Reinforce and Build Organizational Capacity
2. Nurture and Support a Sustainable Island Community
3. Integrate Collections and Campus – Culture, History, Nature, and Art

#### **GOAL ONE: Reinforce and Build Organizational Capacity**

- Objective One: Develop Optimal Organizational Staffing Structure
- Objective Two: Grow Support Base
- Objective Three: Build Sustainable Financial Model

#### **GOAL TWO: Nurture and Support a Sustainable Island Community**

- Objective One: Develop Dedication to Community Statement document
- Objective Two: Develop Assessment Process for Prioritizing Positive Community Impact of Museum activities
- Objective Three: Expand On-island Collaborations
- Objective Four: Expand Mutually Beneficial Off-island Organizational Collaborations

#### **GOAL THREE: Integrate Collections and Campus – Culture, History, Nature, and Art**

- Objective One: Articulate and Develop Revised Guiding Mission and Vision Statements
- Objective Two: Critically Evaluate and Integrate Kent - Fitzgerald and Light Station Buildings and Collections
- Objective Three: Develop Overall Operations and Management Plan for Museum Properties
- Objective Four: Optimize Interpretation and Presentation of the Collections

*These goals with associated objectives have been developed into detailed work plans by workgroups made up of Board and staff. In the months and years ahead, the supporting work plans will be continually reviewed, adjusted, and adapted to the knowns, unknowns, and “unknowables” resulting from the rapidly shifting external environment. The work plans can be found in the appendix of the plan.*

## **Part Four: Narrative Summary of Three Goals**

### **GOAL ONE: Reinforce and Build Organizational Capacity**

The key word in this goal is capacity. The museum has gone through significant growth and transformation since its inception. Over our more than fifty-year lifespan, we have added multiple buildings and collections, served a growing and changing audience, and up until very recently, been run by a primarily volunteer staff. With the recent shift to a paid director, the identified need for more human resource capacity, and promised gifts of art and property, the museum needs to thoughtfully assess its current operating and staff capacity, then identify and plan for what additional resources will be needed to manage and sustain the growth.

In this next stage for the organization, a considerable challenge will be to build the internal capacity to manage impact, growth and sustainability, as it transitions from a founder-led, volunteer-run institution to one with more paid staff positions. The museum has a tremendously strong and active board, and it has and will continue to rely on it being a working board to sustain growth in the near future.

Capacity in this goal is meant to address first and foremost the need for more staff, but also the need to build the financial resources to support the long-term viability and sustainability of the institution.

With the acknowledged shift in island demographics, we identified the need to build a more robust base of support in the coming years. Part of achieving this capacity goal will require broadening and deepening the base of support and developing a strategic approach to stewarding our members and donors.

Organizational sustainability also requires a robust financial model. As the organization continues to acquire additional structures and collections, maintain the Fitzgerald collection commitments made to Anne Hubert, and add staff to manage growth, it will be important to ensure that the multi-year operating budget and capital projects budget cover the full range of museum activities and align with long-term institutional goals.

Supporting this goal, we summarized three objectives and identified tactics to achieve these objectives:

- Objective One: Develop Optimal Organizational Staffing Structure
- Objective Two: Grow Support Base
- Objective Three: Build Sustainable Financial Model

Taken together with the next two goals in this Strategic Plan, the museum organization can be regarded as analogous to a living organism. The museum organism is made up of elements with varied functions that contribute to the success of the museum enterprise as a whole. We see this in the connectivity and interdependencies between the long-term goals, objectives, and action steps discussed at our board retreat in February and included in this Strategic Plan.

*As an example: Housing enables the sustainability of the island community. The community has donated a collection of artifacts, structures and works of art that tell a story of the island. And the telling of that story requires staff and financial resources to engage and inform others and to house the collection. Reinforcing and building organizational capacity is the starting point, because -- without it -- we can go nowhere.*

## **GOAL TWO: Nurture and Support a Sustainable Island Community**

This goal reflects our commitment to be of and for the island. The museum emerged from the community and has a history of leadership and engagement that is symbiotic with the greater Monhegan community.

We recognize our dual role as the repository of the island's history and an important source of future sustainability. As we move into our next organizational phase, the board and staff have acknowledged the critical role of the museum as community partner, leader and supporter.

We will start by developing a "Commitment to the Community Statement," articulating a set of values, goals and priorities to be held by the museum that will serve the needs of the island. This goal provides the opportunity to be thoughtful about how to support the island community moving forward and nurture a thriving future. Throughout this planning process, we engaged many other community organizations, and the museum was identified as being both a leader and a partner. This goal will support prioritization of community strengthening activities and the identification of a shared set of desired outcomes.

As an outcome of the planning process, we also identified the need to explore additional off island collaborations and to grow the resource and support base.

Supporting this goal, we summarized four objectives, and discussed a variety of potential tactics:

- Objective One: Develop Dedication to Community Statement
- Objective Two: Develop Assessment for Prioritizing Positive Community Impact of Museum Activities
- Objective Three: Expand On-island Collaborations
- Objective Four: Expand Mutually Beneficial Off-island Organizational Collaborations

### **GOAL THREE: Integrate Collections and Campus – Culture, History, Nature, and Art**

This goal addresses the need for alignment and continuity within the full extent of the museum’s holdings. Over the years, the museum has received bequests in the form of art, artifacts and buildings, and there is an emerging need to integrate and unify the campus and operating systems.

This goal is practical in nature and provides an opportunity for the museum to solidify many of the commonly held values and operating practices that have been characterized by the board as “instinctive” but need to be documented in a more systematic fashion in order to support the long-term vision and viability of the institution.

This goal calls upon the museum to reassess Mission and Vision statements as pillars for future planning and decision making. Also, within this goal, we will complete our core documents by developing a collections management policy and updating the disaster plan. This goal will support the care and planning for the current collections with eye to additional future bequests.

There is a visionary element to this goal as well. Unifying the campus will provide an opportunity to tell a stronger story – one that increases the museum’s impact and elevates our understanding of the interconnectedness of the island’s rich and complex history. Its varied cultures, perspectives, and significant artistic heritage ultimately derive from Monhegan’s beautiful, remote, rugged, and fragile island ecosystem.

Supporting this goal, we summarized three objectives and identified tactics to achieve these objectives:

- Objective One: Articulate and Develop Revised Guiding Mission and Vision Statements
- Objective Two: Critically Evaluate and Integrate Kent - Fitzgerald and Light Station Buildings and Collections
- Objective Three: Develop an overall Operations and Management Plan for Museum Properties
- Objective Four: Optimize Interpretation and Presentation of the Collections



## **Appendix I**

### Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Analysis Summary February 2023

#### **Internal:**

##### Strengths:

1. Museum's commitment to community origins in scope & focus of collection
2. Attractive location with distinctive culture & history
3. Rich collection that reflects community & art history
4. High quality programming (in person & virtual): serving community of shared interest
5. Dedicated staff and volunteers
6. Strong financial position & support
7. Well-maintained physical assets

##### Weaknesses:

1. Understaffed; erosion of volunteer base
2. Challenge of managing buildings; expanding space (storage):
3. No buildings plan/historic structures report
4. Unsynthesized expansion, need for a management plan (Fitzgerald, Wyeth + future)
5. Signage; make the connection between campuses evident
6. Lacking core documents: Collections Policy, updated disaster plan (that includes Horn's Hill)

##### Challenges/opportunities:

1. Thinking more about relevance of museum and connection to community of living artists on Island (engaging them)
2. Building financial capacity to support growth
3. Consider museum's role in interpreting contemporary Monhegan- MAI and natural history, MISCA, community challenges

#### **External:**

##### Strengths:

1. Location: incredible physical location & history
2. Positive public perception with locals and visitors
3. Contribution of museum to community building and resilience
4. Strong seasonal visitation

Weaknesses:

1. Increasing shortage of volunteers
2. Changing demographics; fewer full summer residents
3. Challenging labor market
4. Housing shortage
5. Location (remote + accessibility)

Challenges/opportunities:

1. Building synergistic community collaborations & alliances on and off island
2. How to broaden the audience without bringing more people to the island?
3. Leveraging digital channels for engagement
4. Better tech infrastructure could support some degree of remote work?
5. Increase access: Expand opening hours? Length of season? (i.e.: June)
6. Branding & marketing/communications
7. Engaging visitors who come to Monhegan for hiking/wildlands
8. Broadening base of supporters/members

## **Appendix II**

### **Community Listening Session Participants and Stakeholder Interviewees**

#### Community Members Participating on January 26<sup>th</sup> Call

1. Fred Faller – President of Monhegan Associates
2. Frank Stettner, Counselor at large for the Church
3. Laurie Day, Church Counselor and Museum store
4. Glenn Burdick, Monhegan Associates ex officio board member
5. Nan Nelson, Vice President of Monhegan Associates
6. Jes Stevens, Chair of Monhegan School Committee
7. Mary Weber, Vice President, MISCA
8. Sally Boynton, Trustee, Monhegan Associates
9. Daphne Pulsifer, School Committee and an island artist
10. Felicia Dunson, School Committee, Church Counselor
11. Jim Buccheri, 1st Assessor of the Plantation, Postmaster, and the local health officer

#### One on One Stakeholder Interviewees:

1. Susan Anderson, Summer resident
2. Oliver Barker, Director, Cape Ann Museum
3. Mia Boynton, Island Resident, Museum staff and Monhegan Island Sustainable Community Assn.
4. Ed Deci, Founder and Former President, Monhegan Museum of Art & History
5. Fred Grey, Volunteer and Summer resident
6. Judy Grey, Volunteer and Summer resident
7. Janet Henry, Morton Kelly Foundation, and summer visitor
8. Katie Howard, Maine Community Foundation
9. Katherine Watson, Donor, Former Director of Bowdoin College Museum of Art
10. Karen Smith, Executive Director, Penobscot Marine Museum