

**Report from the Long Range Planning Committee
to the
Board of the Maine Charitable Mechanic Association
11/16/2014**

The Process:

In March of 2014, the Board of the Maine Charitable Mechanic Association agreed to create and solicited members for the Long Range Planning Committee. The Committee included the whole 8 person board plus 8 community members. The purpose of the Committee was to

- learn about the MCMA, its history and current activities,
- to take in all the information gathered by the interns and shared by members,
- to bring to bear their own experience in the community, with nonprofit organizations, with preservation and history and
- to suggest a mission, vision and goals for MCMA that would make the organization useful, active, sustainable and valuable to the community in the 21st century.

The Committee met 8 times from April to November. The early meetings were focused on what the group wanted to know to help them make decisions around the organization's future. The fall meetings were focused on digesting the information collected and then coming to conclusions on recommendations.

In the process of compiling the goals agreed to by the Committee, I have taken the liberty to meld some of the work from the two goals sessions and to smooth out the writing that come from the flip chart sheets to make it more concise and readable. I tried to make sure that nothing was lost in the translation. The goals for the business plan and membership has been added to the financial stability goal and the accessibility goal has been added to the programming goal. The final goal of MCMA as "a vibrant community of users, members, organization with common interests and the general public" did not have any detailed goals set for it. But many of the other goals have steps identified that will help lead to that desired goal.

The shorter term goals are consolidated with the 2019 goals in a horizontal table, which will come as a separate document.

The Recommendations:

Mission:

MCMA has never had a mission statement although its articles of incorporation in 1815 and the later revision outlined several purposes and activities. The Committee discussed the historical intentions of the organizations and the purposes that it should and could serve in the current century. After several sessions of deliberation and discussion the Committee recommends the following mission statement to the Board:

The Maine Charitable Mechanic Association strives to inspire and enrich the community by promoting ingenuity, creativity, innovation and the diffusion of useful knowledge.

As part of that discussion, the group outlined the various people that MCMA would serve including: modern mechanics (such as members of the current “makers” movement, innovators / inventors and artisan), the community of the creative, ingenious, skilled, innovative and entrepreneurs. The Committee felt that the topics would also generate interest in members of the general public as well as the target audiences.

MCMA would “inspire and enrich” the target audiences identified above through:

- presenting programs and workshops on various subjects,
- awarding and recognizing individuals’ success and projects that show excellence in these areas,
- educating, promoting, advocating,
- providing resources
- serving as a hub for people or groups active in its community of modern “mechanics”.

Vision: What does MCMA look like in 2019 when it is the way you want it to be?

In identifying the Committee’s vision of MCMA in 2019 the way they wanted it to be the group looked at all aspects and activities of the organization. In their vision of MCMA in 2019 it is a hub of activity and creativity. Its focus is on a broad definition of modern mechanics and its activities attract as well a wide range of the “curious”, creative amateurs and people seeking cultural enrichment. MCMA is serving its membership with: mentors, education and knowledge resources, networking, advocacy, physical resources, lectures, and workshops. The library is a knowledge resource supporting the mission of the new organization. It continues to be a congenial gathering place to share ideas and stay connected. MCMA’s larger Board is a cross section of the people it serves. Board members have board skills, are committed to the organization and focused on the mission. MCMA has generated the resources to hire a staff person to make things happen and collaborate with other organizations. MCMA is collaborating with like minded organizations, doing things outside the building, inviting smaller organizations into the building and working with nonprofit and for profit groups. MCMA is building its presence in the community with awards and other events that called attention to the organization and its members. In its transition, MCMA has honored the traditional membership and those who kept the organization alive, combining things done in the past with the new ideas and directions.

Goals: What has MCMA accomplished by 2019?

MECA has financial sustainability. MCMA’s revitalization has been guided by a sound

business plan with realistic sources of funding and human resources. Use and management of the endowment is guided by a clear policy. The budget for all the organization's activities is balanced annually. Funds to sustain programs are identified up front. MCMA has built a significant donor/member base. Sources of funding include building and venue rentals, diverse forms of fund raising including membership, annual appeal, solicitation of individuals and grants, revenue from programs and growth in the endowment. MECA has 500 paying members and an effective membership program.

MCMA is known as a source of useful knowledge. There is a positive public awareness of MCMA. It is understood and appreciated. Its programming is well known in and supported by the community of 21st century mechanics and the general public. MCMA works to provide broad accessibility to its classes and activities

MCMA has provided public recognition for accomplishments in the broad field of modern mechanics with awards, incentives and projects like the X Prize and is well known in the community. These activities are meeting the mission of the organization, providing publicity and helping to define the mission publicly.

MCMA has a useful library as well as unique and needed resources. The Library Committee has executed a plan to develop the library to meet the mission and the needs of the members.

MCMA's has an active, capable Board that reflects the mission and at least one part time staff person. The Board has 18-22 members and is a mix of people. They are the best and brightest with strong board skills. They were attracted by the organization's mission and are contributing to the organization financially. The Board has a well organized Board nominating process and other active committees. The staff person is making things happen.

MCMA has a clear agreement on the purpose, function and needs of Mechanics' Hall. The major structural threats to the building have been identified and taken care of. Funds have been found and work is underway for the upgrade of the third floor and attic to bring them up to code and make them more useful.

MCMA is a vibrant community of users, members, organizations with common interests and the general public.

Goals for December 2015, December 2016 and the suggested first steps are in the horizontal consolidated table of goals.

Appendix:

- A. Notes from the meetings of the Long Range Planning Committee
- B. Summary of Summer Research