

## **Salem Athenaeum Planning Project**

As part of its strategic plan, the Trustees began to plan for the future of the Athenaeum: its building, programs, collections and member and staff.

Project goals were established by the Trustees in 2015; priorities were set in 2016 when the project team was assembled and project work began.

### **Goals**

**Approved July 2015**

The Athenaeum is planning for the future of its building, collections, programs, membership and staff services over a 20-year time horizon during which it seeks to broaden its audience. The goal of the plan is to meet the future needs of the Athenaeum while preserving the spirit and physical character of the Athenaeum's building and grounds.

The plan will define functions the building will need to provide including: program, social and meeting space; the level of secure storage and secure exhibition space; access to collections; and staff requirements. The plan for public and member programs, courses, meetings and social functions will recognize that some of these can be provided at other locations.

The plan will identify needed maintenance, systems upgrades and enhancements to existing spaces based upon projected uses, as well as cost estimates, priorities and scheduling to achieve the plan.

### **Salem Athenaeum Future Planning Priorities**

**Approved October 2016**

With the results of the 2015 membership survey and an eye to practicality, the Board of Trustees agree that the following should be priorities for planning the future of the Salem Athenaeum. Most importantly, the membership and Trustees agree that the historic look and feel of the building and main reading rooms should be maintained.

1. For universal access and the movement of large collections, the construction of an elevator should be strongly considered. All other decisions regarding the use of space and expansion will hinge on whether and where an elevator would be placed.
2. Members indicated that there is not enough usable space for quiet reading, programs and work in the library as membership has increased and more programs and groups are offered. Finding flexible ways to improve all areas for increased space and use is a priority.
3. The members and Trustees agree that continued stewardship of the Athenaeum's collections and artifacts – historic, current, and future – is also a priority. Increasing storage for collections, improving the HVAC and creating adjacent workspace are necessary to responsibly care for these items.
4. As more members, groups and visitors frequent the library, a need for dedicated space for staff has become apparent. Private work spaces, bathroom facilities and a kitchen for events should be included.

### **Process**

The team includes: Trustees David Hart, Meg Twohey, Wendy Biggs, Marla Gearhart, Steve Immerman, and Gary Santo; Past Trustee Stephanie Buck; Executive Director Jean Marie Prociuous; Consulting architect *pro bono* Dan Ricciarelli of Seger Architects; Athenaeum members Barbara Cleary, John Hermanski, Jessica Herbert and Louis Sirianni.

To date, the team has focused on examining alternatives, undertaken some due diligence, and has now determined that the appropriate next step is to undertake a feasibility study which will include the services

of a mechanical engineer, conservation expert, an architect, a library space planner, a book/paper conservator, an estimator, a campaign consultant and a project manager.

The goal of the feasibility study is to determine requirements, examine alternatives, including phasing alternatives, and prepare cost and time estimates to provide the information needed to make a decision as to whether and how to proceed with a capital project.

The feasibility study will start when funding is received and is expected to take 1-2 years. Partial funding has been provided by the Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund, a program of the state of Massachusetts administered through a collaborative arrangement between MassDevelopment and the Mass Cultural Council.