

NANTUCKET ATHENEUM
STRATEGIC PLAN – Fiscal Years 2010-2012

Approved by the Nantucket Atheneum Board of Trustees on May 26, 2009

INTRODUCTION

The Nantucket Atheneum is unique in many ways. It has a long and rich history. It is not only a public library, but also a cultural center that, almost since its inception in 1834, has hosted speakers and other programs of interest to the community. It serves as a repository of historic Nantucket artifacts intimately connected with the history of the island. Its building is an historic landmark and included in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Atheneum is one of a relatively small number of public libraries in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that is privately owned and operated, rather than operated by the municipality. This has both advantages and disadvantages. It does permit the Atheneum substantial flexibility in its operations and programming, but presents challenges to financial security, creating significant pressure for effective fund raising. The Atheneum's fiscal year is concurrent with that of the Town of Nantucket, running from July 1 to June 30. In Fiscal Year 2009 the Nantucket Atheneum received 37% of its budget resources from Town funding. As a response to the challenging economic environment, the Town of Nantucket has implemented across the board funding cuts for FY2010. As a result, the Town's contribution to the Atheneum's operating budget in FY2010 will drop to 32%.

COMMUNITY DYNAMICS

Nantucket is a community whose fabric is being stretched in many directions. The fact that Nantucket is an island both isolated and in close contact with the world, only complicates the role of a public library serving a multi-faceted community.

The year-round population is diverse with respect to both composition and interests. There is a large and growing immigrant population from the Caribbean, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and, increasingly, Southeast Asia. Many members of this population group have rudimentary English language skills. The community segment comprised of retired persons is growing, presenting greater demands for services but also providing a pool of volunteers and participants. Young working people and families with children face economic stresses that often require the working of two jobs and permit little time to pursue cultural and recreational interests or community interaction. As a resort, seasonal visitors increase Nantucket's resident population by more than five fold at summer's peak. This influx increases exponentially the demand for library services and cultural programs.

Bridging all, the Nantucket Atheneum's Mission Statement reflects the community complexity and the demand for a breadth of programs and services

MISSION

The Nantucket Atheneum, a private, non-profit organization, provides public library service to the island's year-round and seasonal residents, housed in a historic 1847 building and in the Weezie Library for Children. The Atheneum collects, organizes and disseminates books, literature, and other materials in a variety of formats to help users of all ages meet their recreational, personal, professional and intellectual needs. In keeping with its heritage, the Atheneum also serves as a cultural center for the Nantucket community by sponsoring educational programming and maintaining special collections related to the history and culture of the island.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Strategic Plan of the Nantucket Atheneum for Fiscal Years 2010-12 encompasses three goals and related objectives that were identified by the Atheneum Board of Trustees, Atheneum staff, Community Forum participants and patrons. The first goal focuses on maintaining the quality of the Nantucket Atheneum's services and programs within the limits of its financial resources. The second goal is to strengthen the Nantucket Atheneum's financial resources in order to help maintain its historic building and grounds. The third goal is to increase the Nantucket community's knowledge of the Nantucket Atheneum's role in the community and its financial resources. The plan was developed with the awareness that the three goals are equally important to the Atheneum's future and that the objectives in support of these three goals should be attainable within the three-year period.

PROCESS

The methodology utilized in the Atheneum's strategic planning process is one recommended by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, which focuses on the services ("library service responses") a library provides to its users. The potential service responses are broken down into fourteen components (see Appendix A). The prioritization and adoption of service responses are driven entirely by community needs. The Strategic Plan Committee, which was appointed by the Board of Trustees, considered additional concerns relating to the financial position of the Nantucket Atheneum and the ability to maintain its historic building and also relating to community awareness and perception of Nantucket Atheneum programs and services.

As part of the strategic planning process, the Nantucket Atheneum Mission Statement was reviewed. It was deemed appropriate and was not changed.

In December 2008, a consultant, Ann Caldwell, facilitated a Community Forum with representatives from throughout the Nantucket community. (See Appendix B for Community Forum participants.) The forum included an exercise in which the facilitator led the group in identifying the Atheneum's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). Ms. Caldwell also categorized the responses to a list of strategic planning questions. The Nantucket Atheneum Board and the Nantucket Atheneum staff participated in separate SWOTs and brainstorming sessions. During January 2009, an electronic membership survey garnered further community responses. (See Appendix C for Strategic Planning Questions and Electronic Survey Questions)

The development of the plan was a joint effort of the Executive Director, the senior staff of the library and the Strategic Plan Committee. The responses derived from the various constituencies provided the basis for the development of the three goals, and then the objectives and related activities. After three and one-half months of diligent work, the plan was adopted by the Strategic Plan Committee in April 2009. [*The Atheneum Board of Trustees will vote on the approval of the Nantucket Atheneum Strategic Plan 2010-12 at the May 26, 2009 meeting of the Board.*] (See Appendix B for Strategic Plan participants)

CONCLUSION

The Nantucket Atheneum is acutely aware of its role as Nantucket's public library. In its collections, its services and its technology, the Atheneum has sought to meet the needs of a growing and diverse user population. This strategic planning process enabled the library to reach out to the community, as well as to use a self-assessment process to determine the directions that this plan should take. While the plan period is only three years, clearly the service response needs and the infrastructure requirements extend beyond this period. Thus, the plan is a mixture of objectives that can be accomplished in that period and can also serve as a foundation for moving into future strategic plans.

STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: To maintain the quality of the Nantucket Atheneum's services and programs within the limits of its financial resources

Objectives:

1. Maintain and where possible strengthen adult and youth programs for existing and newly-targeted audiences
2. Maintain and where possible strengthen Literacy Volunteers of the Atheneum program
3. Strive to maximize public use of the Nantucket Atheneum's circulating materials, reference services and historic resources

Goal 2: To strengthen the Nantucket Atheneum's financial resources in order to maintain its historic building and grounds

Objectives:

1. Develop and initiate a plan to increase the Nantucket Atheneum's endowment, thereby reducing reliance on special events for funding
2. Continue efforts to increase financial support provided by the Town of Nantucket to its public library
3. Continue cost containment efforts
4. Achieve more sustainable, cost-effective, and energy-efficient building operations

Goal 3: To increase the Nantucket community's knowledge of the Nantucket Atheneum's role in the community and its financial resources

Objectives:

1. Review and assess in 2010 current awareness of the services provided by and the funding available for the Nantucket Atheneum
2. Develop and implement by 2011 an integrated plan to strengthen community awareness of Nantucket Atheneum services and funding
3. Redesign by 2012 the Nantucket Atheneum web site to better communicate with and serve the Nantucket community

APPENDIX A

LIBRARY SERVICE RESPONSES

BASIC LITERACY: A library that offers BASIC LITERACY service addresses the need to read and perform other essential daily tasks.

BUSINESS & CAREER INFORMATION: A library that offers BUSINESS AND CAREER INFORMATION service addresses a need for information related to business, careers, work, entrepreneurship, personal finances and obtaining employment.

COMMONS: A library that provides a COMMONS environment helps address the need of people to meet and interact with others in their community and to participate in public discourse about community issues.

COMMUNITY REFERRAL: A library that offers COMMUNITY REFERRAL addresses the need for information related to service provided by community agencies and organizations.

CONSUMER INFORMATION: A library that provides CONSUMER INFORMATION service helps to satisfy the desire of community residents to gain an understanding of their own cultural heritage and the cultural heritage of others.

CURRENT TOPICS & TITLES: A library that provides CURRENT TOPICS AND TITLES helps to fulfill community residents' appetite for information about popular cultural and social trends and their desire for satisfying recreational experiences.

FORMAL LEARNING SUPPORT: A library that offers FORMAL LEARNING SUPPORT helps students that are enrolled in a formal program of education or who are pursuing their education through a program of home-schooling to attain their educational goals.

GENERAL INFORMATION: A library that offers GENERAL INFORMATION helps meet the need for information and answers to questions on a broad array of topics related to work, school and personal life.

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION: A library that offers GOVERNMENT INFORMATION service helps satisfy the need for information about elected officials and government agencies that enable people to participate in the democratic process.

INFORMATION LITERACY: A library that provides INFORMATION LITERACY SERVICE helps address the needs for skills relating to finding, evaluating and using information effectively.

LIFELONG LEARNING: A library that provides LIFELONG LEARNING helps address the desire for self-directed personal growth and development opportunities.

LOCAL HISTORY & GENEALOGY: A library that offers LOCAL HISTORY & GENEALOGY service addresses the desire of the community know and better understand personal or community heritage:

APPENDIX B

Consultant: Ann Caldwell

Resource: Nelson, Sandra. *The New Planning for Results: A Streamlined Approach*. Chicago, American Library Association, 2001

Strategic Plan Committee:

Judith Opatrny, Co-chair

Suzanne Gardner, Co-chair

Molly Anderson, Executive Director

Tish Emerson

Al Forster

Chris Harding

Alan La France

Atheneum Staff Participants:

Molly Anderson, Executive Director

Kasia Baker

Karen Borchert

Dave Byer

Amy Cabre, Business Manager

Bess Clarke, Department Head

Ellie Coffin, Department Head

Gillian Fleming

Laura Freedman

Maggie Head, Department Head

Amy Jenness, Department Head

Mary D. Macy

Kiley Mann

Amy Mannino

Andrea Marcavitch

Pamela McGrady

Eileen McGrath

Kate McCombe

Lincoln Thurber, Department
Head

Nancy Tyrer

Paula Williams

Ellen Young

Michelle Meckler – Nantucket
Community School

Sarah Oktay – UMass Field Station

Community Forum Participants:

Rick Atherton – Board of Selectmen

Tracy Bakalar – Chamber of Commerce

Leslie Bressette – Nantucket Golf Club
Foundation

Kate Brosnan – Plum TV

Margaret Carroll-Bergman – *The
Nantucket Independent*

Dan Drake – *The Nantucket Independent*

Ann Dyer – Nantucket New School

Sylvia Getman – Nantucket Cottage
Hospital

Chris Getoor – Strong Wings

Gabrielle Gould – Small Friends

Jean Grimmer – Egan Institute; Rotary
Club

Jan Jaeger – Geronimo's

James Kelly – Town Finance Committee

Michael Kopko – Board of Selectmen

Jim Lentowski – Nantucket
Conservation Foundation

Dual MacIntyre – Nantucket Civic
League

Alex Madden – Nantucket Cottage
Hospital

Gene Mahon – Nantucket Arts Council;
Mahon About Town

Renee Oliver – African American
Meeting House

Les Ottinger – Literacy Volunteers of
the Atheneum

Linda Roberts – Saltmarsh
Center/Council on Aging

Joan Rouillard – Nantucket High School

Janet Schulte – Maria Mitchell
Association

Phillip Stambaugh – Nantucket Bank

Marianne Stanton – *Inquirer & Mirror*

Michelle Starr – Bank of America

Connie Voges – Town of Nantucket
Finance

Andrew Vorce – Nantucket Planning &
Economic Development Commission

**Community Forum Participants via
Email:**

Lisbet Fuller – Nantucket Lighthouse
School

Eve Messing – Nantucket Community
Music Center

Bill Tramposch – Nantucket Historic
Association

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY FORUM 12-11-08

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Over the past three years, the Atheneum has expanded its programs, services, collections, and technology in response to community needs. Which Atheneum programs and services do you think have been the most effective in meeting these needs and which have been the least effective? How could the Atheneum improve its effectiveness in the next three years?
2. Current economic conditions are imposing financial constraints on the Atheneum. As a result, the Atheneum will need to prioritize its programs and services. What current Atheneum programs, services and outreach do you consider the most important to continue? What might be postponed or discontinued in the next three years?
3. The Atheneum is an important historic building in downtown Nantucket. It serves as a cultural center for Nantucket residents, and its gardens provide the only open public space in the heart of town. The cost of the building is outrunning the Atheneum's financial ability to maintain it. What could the Atheneum do to ensure that financial resources are available to preserve this important part of Nantucket's heritage?
4. In 2009, the Atheneum will celebrate its 175th anniversary. What changes do you see coming to Nantucket and how should the Atheneum respond? What opportunities will ensure that the Atheneum continues to respond to the future needs of the community?

NANTUCKET ATHENEUM

STRATEGIC PLAN ELECTRONIC SURVEY

Dear Library Patron,

The Nantucket Atheneum is currently working on its new Strategic Plan which will cover 2010-12. We would welcome your input from the following survey which should take approximately 5 minutes. Thank you,

Atheneum Strategic Planning Committee and Molly Anderson, Executive Director

- 1) Please indicate how often you use the following library services. [1= Never; 2=Sometimes; 3=Frequently]
 - a. _____ Checking out books, CDs, DVDs, magazines
 - b. _____ Using Internet
 - c. _____ Researching reference questions
 - d. _____ Reading newspapers and magazines
 - e. _____ Attending or holding community-sponsored meetings or forums
 - f. _____ Attending library-sponsored programs
 - g. _____ Attending or volunteering in library literacy program

h. _____ Using the garden

2) Please indicate how often you attend the following library programs. [1= Never; 2=Sometimes; 3=Frequently]

- a. _____ Children's Programs
- b. _____ Teen Programs
- c. _____ Adult Lectures
- d. _____ Adult Concerts
- e. _____ Adult Films
- f. _____ Writing Workshops
- g. _____ Book Discussion Groups
- h. _____ Computer Classes
- i. _____ Craft Classes

3) Current town funding covers less than 38% of the Atheneum's annual operating budget, and it is increasingly difficult to maintain the historic building. What is the solution?

4) Please share with us any suggestions you have for improved services or programs.
