

***Hampton Historical Society
Hampton, New Hampshire***

**Strategic Plan
July 2009**

When the Meeting House Green Memorial Association was founded in October, 1925, the intent of the first members was to honor the early settlers of the town of Hampton. Its main purpose was to care for Founders Park on Park Avenue, and no museum was planned at first. The next year the word “Historical” was added to the name to indicate the association’s function as the custodian of the town’s history. Over the years the association and its museum grew, and its goals changed. The emphasis on the early founders was expanded to cover the whole history of Hampton. The name was changed to the Hampton Historical Society in 1994.

The Strategic Planning Committee discussed the Society’s current mission statement (last revised in 2003) extensively. It reads as follows:

The mission of this organization shall be to promote and honor the history and heritage of the town of Hampton, New Hampshire and its founders and inhabitants; and to preserve such history for future generations.

After considerable discussion the Committee decided that this statement does not adequately describe the Society as it functions now, nor as it is envisioned to develop in the future. While agreeing that the recording and preservation of the history of Hampton is a key task of the Society, it is even more important to communicate that information to a wider audience. The guiding philosophy of an organization’s strategic plan is its mission statement. Therefore the Committee recommends the adoption of this new mission statement:

The mission of the Hampton Historical Society is to increase public knowledge and understanding of the history and cultural heritage of the town of Hampton, New Hampshire from its earliest inhabitants to the present generation. We will communicate that history through an active museum, educational programs, and a resource library.

The central idea of the new mission statement is to envision a more proactive role for the Society: that of public education with community outreach as the primary strategy for obtaining that objective. Communicating and recording history are not independent functions; the objects and historical information which a historical society collects shape the subject matter that it teaches.

The Hampton Historical Society serves many audiences. Two groups are characteristic: One, out-of-town visitors to the Tuck Museum. Typically on vacation, these visitors are often descendants of Hampton families and want to research their family lineage. Genealogical information is the primary service requested. A second group is the casual visitors, often local. This walk-in audience receives a welcome and a brief resume of the history of Hampton as presented in the exhibits at the Tuck Museum. These two audiences are representative of those who customarily visit town historical societies and their affiliated museums. Preparing for them

falls under the traditional function of historical societies: that of preserving and honoring the history and heritage of their town. Serving these audiences is important but not the sole function of the Society. It should be noted, too, that our telephone and internet inquiries from these two groups are increasing each year and constitute another method by which we are reaching our traditional audiences.

Although services for these two audiences are important to the Society, more emphasis should be placed on our outreach to Hampton's adult community and school-age children.

The Committee believes that information about the Hampton Historical Society, the Tuck Museum and Hampton history should be central to the content of the Society's outreach effort. The message should be what the Hampton Historical Society/Tuck Museum is and what resources are available physically at the Tuck Museum or electronically through the Society's web page. The enhancement of the Society's message through an increased public outreach effort, improved exhibits at the Tuck Museum, and education programs for school age children and adults will not only serve the Society's target audiences; they also will benefit the traditional audiences. Effective outreach requires a message with interesting and informative content. The Committee believes that the Society must have something to tell and show before we ask people to listen and see.

The Committee recommends the following goals (all of equal importance) as approaches to implementing the Society's mission:

Goal One: Expand Current Audience

The Historical Society should increase its audience by expanding its outreach to the Hampton community and by making its resources more available to the target audiences.

Goal Two: Increase Active Membership

The Historical Society should increase its *active* membership by more participatory activities and by involving more members in the functions of the Society.

Goal Three: Dynamic Exhibits and Activities

The Historical Society should make its exhibits more dynamic and should aim to make the interpretation of the objects more illustrative of the history of Hampton. We should also include more interactive exhibits to appeal to more audiences.

Goal Four: Volunteers

The Historical Society should recruit more volunteers with specific skills to fill new needs required to meet our strategic goals.

Goal Five: Funding

The Historical Society should increase its endowment and financial resources to accomplish new goals and supporting activities.

To achieve these goals the Committee has identified some strategies, but others may emerge in the future.

Goal One: Expand Current Audience

Strategies:

- Give formal presentations about the Society to community organizations.
- Make an active outreach to the Hampton educational community through an in-school presentation or by teachers' materials about our education programs (this outreach should include Sacred Heart School).
- When volunteers are available, open the museum more days in the week.
- Consider an essay or photo contest aimed at Hampton's school age children or possibly a web-based activity through the Society's web page.

- Create adult programming which can be presented off-site during organizations' meetings or in places such as nursing homes.
- We should try to reach our local residents by better signage for our events.
- We should actively support efforts to create and maintain a community-wide calendar or newsletter.

Goal Two: Increase Active Membership

Strategies:

- Conduct a public member recruitment process aimed at individuals who could become involved members.
- Develop an enhanced member orientation program, with an informational packet for new members and possibly a summer "opening," perhaps when the outbuildings are first open for the season.
- Offer hands-on workshops, such as chair caning, archaeology, or genealogy, for example, which might attract new audiences and potentially new members.

Goal Three: Dynamic Exhibits and Associated Activities

Strategies:

- Make more use of technology in the museum exhibits with the intent of making the objects displayed tell the history of Hampton on multiple levels.
- Develop smaller, changing exhibits that focus on themes or significant objects.
- Make greater use of the internet by more interactive programming using electronic technology.
- Expand the collections electronically, i.e. oral history.
- Add to the library collections to improve our position as a local-history resource.
- Reorganize space in the museum or build new space as needed to accommodate new activities.
- We should consider mounting exhibitions off-site, such as in the Library or the Town Hall or at other locations in town.

Goal Four: Volunteers

Strategies:

- Rejuvenate and reorganize the committee structure as it presently stands to make these volunteer committees responsible for the growth in Society programs.
- Identify those skills needed to accomplish new Society goals.
- Work with interested members to encourage volunteering for defined projects.
- A priority will be to retain a coordinator to oversee the volunteers.

Goal Five: Funding

Strategies:

- Form a fundraising committee with a specific mandate to raise the funds necessary for the Society's needs.

When considering the path which the Historical Society should take over the next five to ten years, the Committee has assumed that it will continue to be staffed by volunteers and that the accomplishment of these goals will require recruitment of additional dedicated volunteers to carry out the plans. Financial support will also be necessary, and the Committee felt that a board-level committee to oversee our fund-raising is essential.

The Committee recommends that the implementation of this strategic plan involve all the standing Committees and that those committees be specifically tasked with the development of

the programs and processes needed to successfully implement and accomplish the goals. In addition, the Committee recommends that the Strategic Planning Committee be incorporated into the HHS Board as a standing committee, whose purpose is to provide advice and support to aid in the implementation of this strategic plan.

Members of the Committee:

Elizabeth Aykroyd, Board Member, Chair
William Keating, Program Committee Chair, Secretary
Percy Annis, Board Member
Lynn Blume, Member
Tracy Emerick, Member, Planner
Richard Hureau, Board Member and Webmaster
Dona Janetos, Member
Sammi Moe, Board Member and Education Committee Chair
Ben Moore, President
Betty Moore, Executive Director
Candy Stellmach, Member, Volunteer Researcher
Martha Williams, Member

Addendum

A possible standing committee structure as suggested by the Strategic Planning Committee:

1. Museum Committee – to have oversight of collections, exhibitions, and the library
2. Education Committee – to plan and conduct both adult and school programming
3. Buildings and Grounds – to care for the Society’s buildings and the grounds
4. Communications Committee – to be in charge of newsletters, the website, publicity, and other types of communication with our members and the community as a whole.
5. Membership and Volunteers Committee – to recruit and manage both members and volunteers
6. Fundraising Committee – to plan for the finances needed for expanded activities
7. Strategic Planning Committee – to plan for the future of the Society and to aid in implementation of goals and strategies
8. Audit Committee – to conduct an annual audit of the Society’s accounts
9. Nominating Committee – to recruit candidates for the Board of Trustees and report to the membership at the Annual Meeting

We believe that each committee should have a board member as an active participant on each of these committees.