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Contact: Katy Fuller, Operations Director
Address: 59 School Street, Edgartown, MA 02539
Phone: (508) 627-4441 x123
URL: www.mvmuseum.org



**MUSEUM RECEIVES MAJOR CONSTRUCTION GRANT,
INVITES PUBLIC TO GROUNDBREAKING
Ceremonial Groundbreaking: Saturday, May 27th at Noon**

Edgartown, MA—May 18, 2017 — The Martha’s Vineyard Museum will soon break ground on its new home at the former Marine Hospital/St. Pierre School of Sport. The ceremonial groundbreaking, set to take place on Saturday, May 27th, coincides with the announcement today by Governor Charlie Baker that the Museum is the recipient of a six-figure grant from the board of Mass Development, the Massachusetts Cultural Council’s partner in the administration of the Cultural Facilities Fund. The capital grant, totaling \$225,000, will support construction costs and must be matched with funds from private and/or other public sources.

The Museum purchased the Marine Hospital property in Vineyard Haven in the fall of 2011 with plans to provide for greater public access, more public programming space, and the capacity to preserve collections according to the highest museum standards. Following years of planning and fund-raising, including a \$500,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and generous support from Island Community Preservation Act funds, the Martha’s Vineyard Commission recently voted to approve the project in an unanimous vote.

“This grant is a wonderful endorsement at the perfect time as we move ahead with the next stage of the project, and put a shovel in the ground,” said Museum Executive Director Phil Wallis. “It is encouraging to have the Massachusetts Cultural Council reconfirm their belief in a community project they helped design.” The Museum received a \$191,000 planning grant through the Cultural Facilities Fund in 2013.

“The Cultural Facilities Fund supports the Commonwealth’s priceless cultural and historical resources, which create jobs, draw thousands of visitors to Massachusetts, and grow the state’s creative economy,” said MassDevelopment President and CEO Marty Jones. Grants remain highly competitive. The Fund received 131 applications in this round seeking nearly \$28 million for projects. 61 capital grants totaling about \$8.9 million were funded with grants ranging from \$7,000 to \$225,000.

The Museum’s groundbreaking ceremony will officially kick off the first phase of construction. The first phase will consist of the complete renovation and restoration of the historic 1895 Marine Hospital as well as construction of a pavilion for the 1854 First Order Fresnel lens (originally used in the Gay Head Lighthouse) that will feature a small café, a multisensory room for children, and an outbuilding to store the Museum’s vehicles and vessels. The Marine Hospital will provide exhibit space, curatorial work space, collection storage, a classroom, research library, and gift shop. On four acres on a grassy hill overlooking the Lagoon, the property will feature a park-like setting for outdoor events and the general enjoyment by the Island public.

The second phase, consisting of entirely new construction, will complete the Museum's master plan, and add a spacious exhibit gallery wing and additional collection storage that meets contemporary museum standards of light and climate control.

The ceremonial groundbreaking of the Museum's new home will take place rain or shine on Saturday, May 27th at noon on site at 151 Lagoon Pond Road. The event is open to all.

Visit www.mvmuseum.org for more information about upcoming programming and exhibits. The Martha's Vineyard Museum inspires all people to discover, explore, and strengthen their connections to this Island and its diverse heritage. The Museum is open year round. Off-season hours are Monday-Saturday 10am to 4pm. Admission is free to Members; admission for non-Members is \$8 for adults, \$7 for seniors, \$5 for children 6 to 12 and free for children under the age of 6.