

VINEYARD



GAZETTE



Museum had held fundraising events at future site on Lagoon Pond. Mark Lovewell

Forums Shine Spotlight on Martha's Vineyard Museum Move

Remy Tumin Tuesday, November 5, 2013 - 4:14pm

Preliminary plans for the Martha's Vineyard Museum's move to Vineyard Haven will be the subject of community forums beginning next week.

The forums run for two weeks starting Wednesday at the Chilmark library at 5:30 p.m. There are also forums in Vineyard Haven, West Tisbury, Edgartown and Oak Bluffs.

David Nathans, executive director of the museum, said the goal of the sessions is to solicit community feedback and highlight the importance of the move to the former Marine Hospital on Lagoon Pond Road.

"We want to talk to people about what we're trying to accomplish in our programs, how the current facilities create limitations to our mission, to public access and how we see this property making a huge difference in solidifying these kinds of service goals," he said. "We think of ourselves as a cultural service organization — we just happen to use objects and art and history to provide that service."

The museum, which is currently located in downtown Edgartown, purchased the former Marine Hospital from the St. Pierre family in 2011. According to the Dukes County registry of deeds, the museum bought the property for \$2.9 million. The museum has raised \$6 million to date for the overall project, Mr. Nathans said, including the portion of funds dedicated to the purchase of the site. The remaining funds are a combination of donations and pledges, he said.

The 10,000-square-foot main building includes 29 rooms and sits on 4.5 acres of land about a half mile from downtown Vineyard Haven. The 1895 house served as a hospital to soldiers, sailors and families in peacetime, World War I and World War II. A large brick building was added in 1938.

The museum has hired Oudens Ello Architecture to design the renovation plans, and architects will be on hand at the forums to answer questions. The firm also designed the new West Tisbury Library.

“We’re able to do better programing, collections, classrooms for educational series — all of those things will be enhanced in terms of our service offerings by renovating those facilities,” Mr. Nathans said. “And by taking advantage of that incredible site, praising that, keeping that and figuring out how we adapt it for contemporary use.”

Developments of designs and fundraising will occur in the next two years, Mr. Nathans said, with renovations slated to begin in early 2016 and opening in the middle of 2017.

“That’s the ideal plan,” he said.

Mr. Nathans did not give a total dollar amount for the renovations and said the museum is in the process of refining the figure.

“We’re in that process now and we’ll know more probably by the middle of next year,” he said. “We’re on our way to what’s not going to be an inexpensive project, but I think a balanced campaign that will include ramp-up costs and endowment and building. It’s a campaign that’s not just bricks and mortar.”

Residents from all six towns are invited to the following meetings, all of which begin at 5:30 p.m.: Nov. 13 at the Chilmark library, Nov. 14 at the Vineyard Haven library, Nov. 18 at the West Tisbury Congregational Church, Nov. 19 at the Federated Church in Edgartown and Nov. 20 at the Oak Bluffs library.