

Mountain Arts Community Center
Strategic Plan
Signal Mountain, Tennessee
September, 2011

Introduction

The Mountain Arts Community Center (MACC) Board of Directors met in two sessions with University of Tennessee’s Municipal Technical Advisory Service facilitation consultants Pat Hardy and Ron Darden during April and September in establishing goals, objectives, and a mission statement.

The purpose of the sessions was to develop a 5-year strategic plan for MACC. The plan was to include a realistic set of 5-year goals as well as action steps required to achieve these (including identification of costs and funding alternatives, responsibility for coordination of the goal’s achievement, and a target date for reaching each goal).

The following MACC, MACC Foundation, members and citizens participated in developing the strategic plan:

Norma Witherspoon	Ellen Heavilon
Charles M. Dunlap	Tammy Rardin
Dick Gee	Patrick Emanuel
Sandy McCrea	Matt Fox
Glenn Baird	

The MACC Director Barb Storm and Mountain Arts Foundation representative Patrick Emanuel also participated.

Background

The MACC Board of Directors was appointed by the Town Council to act in an advisory capacity to the MACC director and the town manager in providing and facilitating artistic, cultural, civic, and educational activities that foster personal growth and benefit the community. The board consists of seven (7) members, at least five (5) of whom reside in the town, including a representative from the Friends of MACC and a representative from the Signal Mountain Playhouse as recommended by those organizations.

The MACC board works with the MACC director and town manager in recommending policies, programs and other functions to benefit the advancement and success of the MACC as an active and viable arts center for the Town of Signal

Mountain. The board solicits, accepts, and recommends gifts and memorials consistent with the memorial policy.

Reviewing Where We Are

The development of the plan began by asking two questions. The questions and answers from the group are below:

1. *What are the two most significant things you see happening in the next three years that will have a critical impact on MACC?*

- Funding constraints/limited resources.
- The cost to operate MACC and to provide for capital improvements.
- Changes in our population and related demographics.
- Public/private partnerships.
- School cutbacks.
- Local politics and the roles of each of the agencies /individuals involved with MACC.
- The relationship between our local governments.
- Our strategic planning process and how it is used.
- Community buy-in to MACC.
- The MACC Foundation and their level of activism.

2. *What is the community saying about MACC? What suggestions have they made that we should listen to?*

- Comments from people who live “off the mountain” are generally positive.
- Those who live “on the mountain” seem to take MACC more for granted.
- Users of the facility are OK with MACC and appreciate what MACC is all about.
- Many say it’s “Just a facility.”
- Many know about MACC and many do not.
- A lot of people see it as a historic building.
- Many people confuse MACC with Bachman.
- For most folks their view of MACC is associated with their single experience – they don’t have a broad or comprehensive understanding of MACC.

5-Year Strategic Goals

This portion of the process began by reviewing the MACC *Mission Statement*. The Statement is important because it provides the foundation against which goals are established. The MACC Mission was established by the MACC Board of Directors at some point in the past.

The mission statement is to provide and facilitate opportunities to explore arts, culture, civic and educational activities that foster personal growth and benefit the community.

Goal Setting

The goal-setting process itself then began by reviewing the outcomes of the community-wide “Visioning” sessions conducted in late 2010 and early 2011. The group was then asked a set of three questions:

1. *The single most important goal we could accomplish in the next 5 years is:*
2. *If we could eliminate one problem we will be facing in the next five years it would be:*
3. *If I were King of MACC for 1 year, here’s the first thing I would try to accomplish:*

Based on these questions and the input of the “Visioning” process, a series of goals was established. Following establishment of the goals the group prioritized goals in order to identify no more than five which would focus MACC efforts over the next five years. Consideration was also given to the order in which goals should be addressed. Here are the three goals in priority order.

I. Improve MACC governance – work toward a defined MACC structure with defined roles for each related agency or group. Develop the appropriate documents to support this.

1. Increase the number of MACC member directors from 7 to 14.
 - a. Request the town council to increase board membership.
2. Develop a committee structure to include committees for finance, marketing and public relations, facilities, activities and programs and other committees as deemed appropriate.
 - a. By-laws should provide that the chairperson make committee assignments from the MACC board.

- b. All committee recommendations should be directed to the MACC Board of Directors for action.
3. Develop an effective memorandum of understanding with the Foundation and others.
4. Seek an amendment to the town ordinance that created MACC making the MACC board advisory to the town council as well as the town manager and clarify the policy on receiving and using donations.

II. *Upgrade MACC facilities.*

1. Bring the MACC building/facility up to municipal code standards.
 - a. Complete architectural drawings
 - b. Install fire alarm system
 - c. Install a fire sprinkler system
 - d. Undertake structural repairs to the ceilings and floors, including floor system support
 - e. Identify American Disability Act (ADA) compliance needs and implement
 - f. Improve the climate control system
 - g. Improve the electrical system to municipal code requirements
 - h. Improve the plumbing system to municipal code requirements

III. *Develop and implement a public relations and marketing strategy (which should be flexible and responsive to MACC growth as well as changes in community needs).*

1. Conduct a growth assessment plan within 18 months.
2. Support the Jasper Marketing project currently ongoing.
3. Identify other strategies for marketing and public relations.

The accomplishment of specific goals is revenue dependent and the MACC board lacks a stable source of revenue to undertake specific objectives. Objectives will have to be accomplished as revenue becomes available.

Additional Goals

A number of additional goals were established and were not included in the initial 5-Year Plan, but should be considered important. They are:

1. Renovate the MACC auditorium.
2. Increase facility utilization for a wider variety of purposes.
3. Deliver services that exceed expectations – this goal should be applied to those who use the facility as well as to the operation of MACC itself.
4. Develop a comprehensive land-use policy to guide future development of the land around MACC. Development of adequate parking should be a part of this plan.