

Mass History Alliance, Inc.

JULY 5, 2018  
ANNUAL REPORT

Massachusetts  
History Alliance  
collaborate to achieve

*The Mass History Alliance reports a first year in which we became an “official” organization and made some gains. We ran a small advocacy campaign for the Community Preservation Act, pulled off a fantastic Mass History Conference, and grew to almost double in size. We did however, also suffer from low participation in committee work. Most of the work that was done, was done by very few people. If we are to survive and thrive the coming year and beyond, we need to step up our game considerably in strategic development, communications, regional work, advocacy, fundraising, and the development of our website. All of this needs to be done by a network of volunteers. The more active participants we have, the more readily we can make it happen. I am confident that this year, after our first election, we will solidify ourselves into a functioning organization and start making a difference.*

Pleun Bouricius, President, MHA

**Our last annual meeting took place in Worcester, MA, at the American Antiquarian Society on June 26, 2017.**

Twenty people were present.

The meeting set a series of one-year achievement goals, to wit,

- 1) Regionally Representative Board for MHA has been created
- 2) Regional networks are being worked on, i.e. a smaller or larger groups of people have some kind of plan (even if just to get together and sip wine and network /gossip). In the discussion, it seemed to be the general consensus that this should come from the regions and not be imposed although the Mass Humanities regions could be a guideline.
- 3) There's a board and a 501(c)3. (or that process is well under way—the board may have to come first)

[masshistoryalliance.org](http://masshistoryalliance.org)

- 4) There are internal and external communications plans and platforms for these have been developed
- 5) There is a budget and a fundraising plan/timeline
- 6) Membership and affiliation has been clarified, specifically there is some way for individuals to affiliate themselves. How can individuals and organizations invest/contribute? Names floated for the individual affiliation were affiliate, associate, ambassador.
- 7) The 2018 conference has been held and concluded with success as hosted by MHA
- 8) (This directly from the advocacy committee which is active and has gone through a process of deciding what advocacy looks like in the first instance) A local History Advocacy Day will have been held (likely in February, 2018) and plans are under way for further activities and a day for 2019
- 9) There are some concrete programming plans and a timetable.

### **Where are we on all this, now that it is one year later?**

1) and 3) — Board:

In working out how to create a board out of nothing (how do you hold an election without bylaws?) the Finance and Strategic Development Committee opted to create minimal bylaws, register the MHA as a Massachusetts nonprofit, and start the 501(c) 3 process with a short-term temporary board. The MHA became a Massachusetts nonprofit corporation on January 24, 2018, and the first board's terms expire at the annual meeting, on July 16, 2018. The first steps have now been taken towards registering as a 501(3)3 with the federal government. You can find the bylaws **here**.

2) Regional networks are being worked on in Boston and somewhat in Worcester county, but the committee that was in charge of working on this did not hold any meetings. It needs a chair and a board liaison.

4) Internal and external communications platforms have been developed:

- Public platforms: MHA has a website and a facebook group (should it remain a group or be a page?)
- Communications: A series of google group list-servs for the affiliates, members, committees. These need a new moderator.
- A communications plan was developed by the conference committee. However, a communications committee needs to be formed with a chair and a board liaison. Communications originate in our blog, MHA Public Occurrences (<https://masshistoryalliance.org/news-and-events/>), and are then disseminated on and through the various platforms.

- We have a proposal for a new and expanded website that is truly a networking hub for public history in Massachusetts.
- We have a temporary logo and a uniform color scheme, but need to do a contest for a real logo.

5) There is a budget and a fundraising plan/timeline.

- Since our inception, we have raised \$ 5,916. \$5,000 was destined, by contract, to support Mass Humanities in funding the conference this year. **Please see the Treasurer's report for details.**
- We have a budget for the coming year, which you can find **online**. For the coming year, we need to negotiate a new contract with Mass Humanities. The plan is to raise \$25,000 (including from Mass Humanities) and take on responsibility for the conference.

6) Membership and affiliation:

We started the year with 56 organizational members. As of July 5th, we have 102. Members are organizations, each with one vote. Affiliates are people who tell us they want to be on the list of affiliates on the website. We have a place on the website for affiliates, [and a way to sign up](#). We have not done outreach for that, yet.

7) The 2018 Mass History Conference, [People's History <=> Local History](#), was attended by 209 people. By all accounts, it was a good conference. The conference was organized by the MHA Conference committee, and hosted by the Alliance. We also did most of the outreach. Keynote speaker Franklin Odo gave a deeply personal talk about the importance of hearing people's voices in public history that motivated the participants. We received 76 evaluations, a higher percentage than usual, which confirmed that in the main, people participate to meet and share ideas with others in local and public history. As one person summarized it, the conference brings a "large amount of substantial and relevant information presented on such a wide variety of topics. I learned so much, and was so inspired in just one morning and afternoon." The conference committee needs new members, someone who is interested in doing conference outreach between January and June, and a fundraising strategy/person. Next year's conference will be held later, on June 24th, in part to avoid the eternal conflict with the Connecticut League of Historical Organizations' conference, which is on the first Monday in June. The board raised more than \$3,000 specifically for the conference, and sig-

nificantly raised revenue from the conference (to pay for itself) by adapting the fee structure.

8) The Advocacy Committee was active during the first part of the year, and held meetings to determine strategy and plans. The committee determined that advocacy includes collaborative and networked advocacy to the public, towns, regions, and the legislature. I.e. the MHA sets up opportunities and campaigns for people and organizations to participate in. Given limited resources and being new to the game, the committee decided the best strategy in the short term would be to a) meet legislators and b) advocate and encourage advocacy in the field for state legislation already proposed or in existence.

In the first instance, that was support for the Community Preservation Act. Members of the committee spoke with the Community Preservation Coalition and devised and implemented an advocacy plan that resulted in postcards being sent by the pioneer Valley History Network members. Members of the committee spoke with Senator Eric Lesser about the act and also about funding for the Preservation Grants for Veterans Collections, Monuments and Memorials, which has run through the State Historical Records Advisory Board. Members of the committee also spoke at length with members of the staff at the Massachusetts cultural Council, learning more about the MCC's grants that might be open to small organizations, and advocating for readily accessible funds to keep the doors open for tiny archives and museums.

9) Programming plans: The committee that has programming in its portfolio did not meet. In general, the Board has felt that our programming should be largely network-based, i.e. providing a statewide platform for organizations to share and support their programming opportunities.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pleun Bouricius, President  
Patty Bruttomesso, Treasurer  
Joanne Riley, Clerk  
Robert Forrant, Director  
Cliff McCarthy, Director