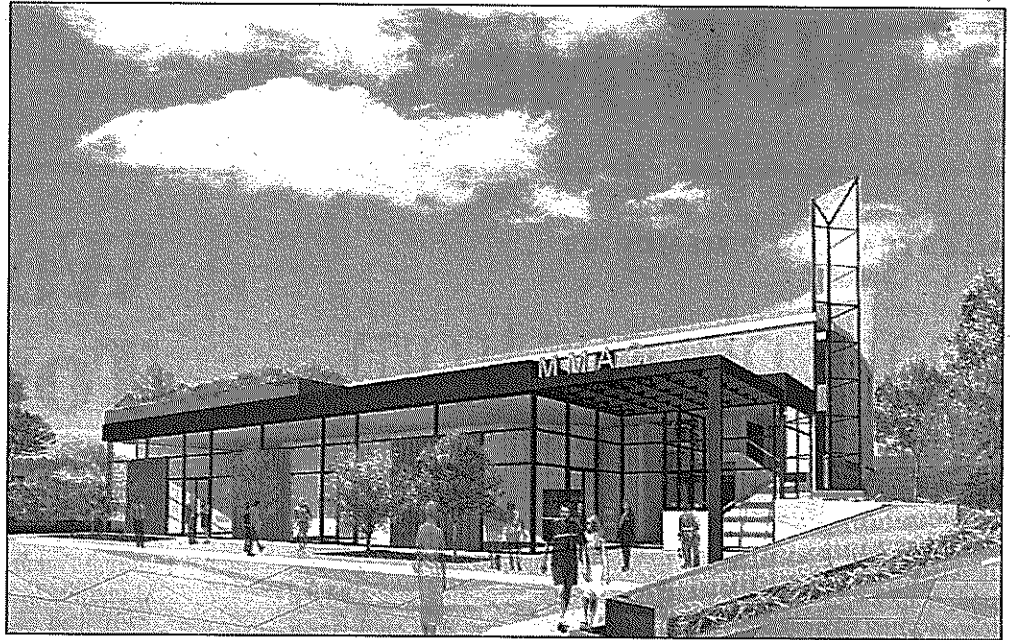




At the closing, from left are Khoury, Madoff & Khoury, John Reidy, Bishop & Reidy PC, seller Tom Souza, MMAS Executive Director Ken Butler, Frederick Armstrong, Seyfarth Shaw LLC, MMAS Development Director Abigail B. Young, MMAS Board President Dave Coccia, Mary L. Vales of Mansfield Bank and Ed Tartufo of Jack Conway Realtor. [COURTESY]



A rendering of the proposed new arts center building facing the Reservoir. [COURTESY]

# MMAS buys site for new arts center

**South Main Street site sold for \$1.6 million**

By Donna Whitehead  
dwhitehead@wickelocal.com

The Mass Music & Arts Society (MMAS) recently purchased 888 South Main St. to become its new home and an arts complex for the region.

MMAS has been renting the three-acre property, across from the Xfinity Center, for the past two years and using it for its academy programs, as a concert venue and for special events.

The arts organization plans to build a new state-of-the-art venue on the property that will feature a 250-seat theater, 3,000-square-foot art gallery, classrooms and a four-season VIP rooftop bar overlooking the Norton Reservoir.

The seller, Tom Souza, formally of Mansfield now living in Norwood, gifted back to MMAS \$100,000 off the purchase price and gave an additional \$160,000 in rent collected over the past two years towards the purchase.

This allowed MMAS to begin offering programs at the new location and generate revenue with a farmers market as well as parking cars for summer concerts at the Xfinity Center located across the street.

"He made this possible for us," MMAS Executive Director Ken Butler said.

"In my mind it would be perfect for MMAS," Souza said in an interview last year. "Ken has done a great job ... and they are ready

to take it to the next level.

Souza has also been working with Live Nation, which owns the Xfinity Center, L.L. Bean, the Mansfield Recreation and Parks Department, area colleges and others to create partnerships with MMAS.

The loan for the purchase was funded by Mansfield Bank with a guarantee provided by MassDevelopment.

Tentatively called the Arts Center at Great Woods, the building, designed by architect Gary Hendren of Hendren Associates passed the special permit process and received terms of conditions from the Conservation Committee in the fall 2017.

The arts center will feature a 3-D sculptured front overlay facing Route 140 and overlooks the Norton Reservoir, providing a scenic backdrop for the rooftop terrace. The upstairs educational spaces will also double as performance and function spaces as well.

The MMAS Building Committee chaired by Scott Ployer of Peabody Properties, includes Rudy Barajas of City Point Partners, Brian Kelly, assistant vice president for capital planning and facilities for Dean College, and lawyer Frederick Armstrong of Seyfarth Shaw LLP, and Hendren.

MMAS began raising funds in a silent phase spearheaded by Andy Card Jr., former chief of staff for President George Bush, with a campaign advisor Karen Cooper of Lozen Associates in early 2017.

Over the past two years, MMAS has raised nearly \$450,000 in pledges that



From left are property seller Tom Souza, Andy Card Jr., MMAS Executive Director Ken Butler, MMAS Development Director Abigail B. Young and Fred Armstrong. [COURTESY]

include a \$25,000 matching gift from the Spier Foundation of Foxboro. The gifts from Tom Souza bring the campaign total to \$710,000 raised toward the project.

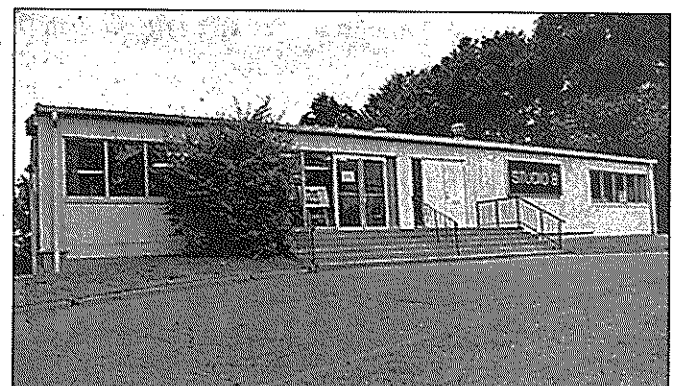
MMAS will have several other large gift announcements over the next month.

For more information about the MMAS arts center project, contact Ken Butler

or Abigail B. Young at the Black Box Theater 508-339-2822 or visit the MMAS website [www.mmas.org](http://www.mmas.org).

**MMAS recently purchased 888 South Main St. for \$1.6 million for a new arts center.**

[COURTESY]





**FOOD:** Enjoy classic French stew without the guilt. **B4**

**SPORTS:** Ten-game win streak ends for Foxboro girls. **B1**

# THE SUN CHRONICLE

TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2018

\$1 news

Attleboro-North Attleboro, Mass.

## Adding a little star power

### MMAS taps former White House official for fundraising

By RICK FOSTER  
rfooster@thesunchronicle.com

**MANSFIELD** — A local arts group has added some star power to its fundraising campaign to finance a new theater and arts space.

MMAS, formerly known as the Mansfield Music and Arts Society, has welcomed former White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card Jr. as honorary chairman of its capital campaign with a fundraising goal of \$3.8 million.

The nonprofit arts agency plans to break ground for a new headquarters in September on South Main Street opposite the Xfinity Center.

Card has been actively supporting MMAS's fundraising efforts during the past year said MMAS Executive Director Ken Butler, including making two donations that have been used as challenge gifts. Card's wife is the sister of Dori Bryan-Ployer, MMAS artistic and education director.

Early fundraising for the project has already yielded \$350,000 in pledges, Butler said. A public campaign is set to begin later this year.

Card, a former Holbrook state representative who now lives in New Hampshire, served as White House chief of staff from 2001-2006 and held the post of president of Franklin Pierce University from 2015-2016.

Card served as U.S. Secretary of Transportation and White House deputy chief of staff from 1989-1992. He was recently elected the new chairman of the National Endowment for Democracy.

MMAS plans to purchase a two-story, former retail building at 888 South Main St.



Andrew Card

The Canton-based center treats people with behavioral, emotional and psychiatric problems as well as those with developmental delays or who are on the autism spectrum.

As a condition of his probation, Scott was ordered to obtain anger management counseling, have no contact with the victims and is prohibited from obtaining employment with "vulnerable populations" including the elderly and disabled, according to court records. Weimer criticized the judge for her lack of criminal experience and said that may have something to do with the sentence she handed down.

Before being named by Gov. Charlie Baker to the bench in 2016, Connolly was a civil litigator in state and federal courts for 30 years. She served in top posts in the state Attorney General's office and U.S. Attorney's office after starting in private practice. She graduated cum laude from Providence College and Suffolk University Law School, according to the governor's office.

## MMAS: Star power

FROM PAGE A1

and enlarge and expand it to include a 264-seat theater and art gallery along with rehearsal space, a gift shop and other amenities. The building would host a variety of performances by professional, college and community groups as well as classes and art exhibits. The exterior of the site also hosts an outdoor discovery program and seasonal farmer's market.

The nonprofit group recently completed the permitting necessary to convert the building into an arts facility, Butler said. MMAS is currently using the building for some functions although a formal opening of the new facility is due in 2019.

MMAS was started by a small group of volunteers and arts enthusiasts in 1992 with \$8 collected in a coffee can. The group has collected more than \$3 million in additional donations over the years as well as giving out more than \$40,000 in local scholarships. Besides a regular schedule of plays, concerts and art shows, MMAS has produced a number of community arts festivals and helped create a 4,000 square foot mural on Route 106 depicting the history of the town. The group continues to operate its existing theater and art gallery on North Main Street as it prepares the new building.

RICK FOSTER can be reached at 508-236-0360.

### Briefs

**City flu shots** or short sleeves to provide

SEE MMAS, PAGE A2 ►