

This is the third in a series of updates about the Star of Hope Foundation, which was established by the artist Robert Indiana prior to his death. The purpose of the Foundation is to support arts education and working artists in Maine.

Real Estate Holdings, Part Two

In addition to his art collection and personal papers, artist Robert Indiana left four properties on Vinalhaven to the Star of Hope Foundation, the sole beneficiary of his estate. All were in various states of neglect and disrepair. Last week, we provided an update on the “Sail Loft” at 3 Clamshell Alley. This update reports on the other three properties the Foundation inherited: The Star of Hope Lodge at 46 Main Street, 7 Windy Way, and 10 Main Street.

Perhaps the most well-known – and arguably the most historically significant – property now owned by the Foundation is the “Star of Hope Lodge” prominently located at 46 Main Street, Vinalhaven.

Known by many as simply “the Lodge”, the condition of the building was carefully analyzed and documented via video and written reports following Mr. Indiana’s death. The building was found to be in serious peril. The foundation was unstable, and years of neglect had resulted in water leaks and other significant damage.

The Lodge was quite literally in danger of collapsing onto Main St. within a few years if it didn’t receive immediate attention.

Working collaboratively with engineers, architects, and builders, the building has been stabilized and an initial round of cosmetic and functional improvements have been made. This was a top priority for the Foundation – and a costly one. The condition of the Lodge and the improvements made so far are well documented on our website, starofhopefoundation.org.

Now that the building has been structurally secured, the Foundation board needs to turn its attention to the proper transfer of other assets from the estate and other parties before finalizing plans for how the Lodge will be used. Further renovations to make the building accessible and functional will require significant funding.

This year, some additional improvements will be made to ensure that the Lodge meets building code requirements for use by the public. The Board will resume strategic planning that began in 2023 in early 2025. The Lodge will certainly play an important role in the Foundation’s future, but this pause will ensure that the board has an in-depth and realistic understanding of our financial assets before pushing ahead.

Another of our properties, a building at 7 Windy Way was razed last year due to its poor condition (the interior was damaged by a fire, it was structurally compromised, and it had no legal right of way) and the small piece of land on which it sat was sold to an abutter. A third property, at 10 Main St., is currently unoccupied and further investment will be needed to make it habitable. The Foundation intends to retain ownership of the building, while for now focusing on the renovation of the Lodge.