

Public Records Advisory Commission (PRAC)
Minutes of the March 18, 2024 Meeting

Present: Jackie Cohan (Archivist); Cam Cook; Lynn Jordan; Dennis McDonald

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM.

Appointment of Secretary: Lynn Jordan was appointed secretary.

Minutes:

Fire Escape: There has been much progress made on construction of the fire escape; it now extends to the top of the building. It still needs to have a cage built around it. Jackie expressed concern about the stairs' iron supports, which are bolted into the brick, continuing to rust.

HARC: New member David has applied to be the PRAC's representative to HARC. Jackie explained how the approval process worked for a commission member to be appointed to another commission. A discussion ensued about the process of volunteering for the City and the kinds of background checks required.

Renovations: Interior renovations have largely been completed, except for the elevator. There are still small issues to be addressed, like doors that still have temporary construction keys. Jackie said the construction crew doesn't have a foreman, which means that there's not much organization as to how projects get done. Cam asked if they were putting carpeting in the elevator, because he was concerned that the chemicals in the sealant could be a problem in a cramped elevator shaft. Jackie didn't think so, but said she would check, because there were other inexplicable items in the renovation, like HVAC mounted to the ceiling—which meant that ARC would lose some shelving space. Jackie expressed additional concerns about the possible carelessness or neglect among the construction crew. Lynn asked if there was any kind of final inspection to ensure the construction company did a good job; Jackie said that they were required to have outside inspectors come in.

Jackie also noted that the crew was leaving supplies all over the place, like pipes and nails. She noted that the company couldn't find a piece of equipment in the clutter and ended up having to buy a new one. The company is doing some other projects for the City and Jackie noted that they would have to shape up. J

Jackie also noted that the company will not be doing deep cleaning when the whole project was finished, so they would have to bring in a cleaning contractor. The current contractor quoted \$1,200, which was the lower price among contractors asked. Jackie hoped to have this done soon once the crew fully cleared out, even if they had to do it room by room.

A new water heater has also been installed, though it's taking a while for the water to truly warm up.

Internships: Jackie is considering an MLIS student for an internship in the fall. She would have the student to continue working on City Council and planning records.

Jackie's tenure: Jackie brought up her plans to retire and said she would probably stay as long as Annette stayed on. Annette had planned to leave last year but now was looking at this year.

Open Data Project: Gretchen recently asked Jackie about our discussions around open data and AI. Jackie explained to her our goals of getting many records directly online, and that we had discussed a potential state grant to explore AI applications for archival work.

Dennis said he had talked with the chair of the IT Commission recently. On open data, Dennis said the IT staff is working on a proposed policy statement to forward to the City Council. He also explained to the chair of the IT Commission about ARC's hope to upload public records independently. The IT Commission was concerned about standardization across departments—a understandable concern, but it was impossible to get 100% standardization coordination. Dennis encouraged Jackie to just start on her own getting records online. Jackie said she had explored the software to do so but needed guidance from IT professionals.

Dennis also talked about the state directive on AI and his investigation into what that could practically mean for PRAC. His hope was that there might be a grant program of some sort to help local governments explore AI applications, but he had not yet been able to get in touch with the state official in charge. Jackie asked how Dennis thought AI would work for archival work. Dennis believed it could help analyze, synthesize, create, edit, produce schedules, produce project plans, and help sort through complex policies and regulations—which of course would have to be edited and reviewed. Jackie asked Lynn and Cam if they had used AI technology, but they had not used it significantly. Lynn expressed general concerns about AI, particularly the amount of quality control necessary. The commission members discussed the benefits and drawbacks of AI technology, but everyone agreed it was worth looking into.

Next meeting: The next meeting was April 15th.

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 8:34pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Jorden