

Public Records Advisory Commission
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Alexandria, Virginia 22313
(703) 746-4591

MEMBERS, PUBLIC RECORDS ADVISORY COMMISSION , JACKIE COHAN, RECORDS ADMINISTRATOR & ARCHIVIST

SUBJECT: MEETING ON MONDAY, MAY 19, 2025

There will be a meeting of the Public Records Advisory Commission on Monday, May 19th at 7:30 PM. The meeting will be held in person at the Archives and Records Center at 801 South Payne Street. Parking is available either in the small lot, alongside the north fence that borders the property, on the street in front of the facility or on Jefferson Street nearby.

Commission members are required to attend 75% of the meetings. If you are ill, or will be out of town, please call the Records Administrator & Archivist at (703) 746-4591 to be excused. People with disabilities requiring special accommodation or arrangements should contact the Records Administrator

Meeting minutes

1. Records management meeting with ITS continues; the new PRAC needs to keep pulse on that with the progress. If we don't, record management will run with it out without consulting PRAC so we need to touch base with Dee Crawly.
2. Continuity Book: First section is placed on the public website; second part should also be placed for destroying records standard operating procedures. Third, Jackie is leaving continuity book for her successor.
3. Old PRAC building discussion: Building that was burned has been barricaded/contained. The workmen, who cannot park at our office parking lot, so they must park down the hill. Although there is a sidewalk, they placed gravel, which makes it dangerous walking down. The construction workers left a pile of gravel, so the trucks came in the door, so Jackie told Annete to ensure they removed the gravel.

Architect working for planning and zoning (previously), Al has 8-10 pallets that are from the 18th century that need to be preserved. They wanted to place it in the PRAC storage, but Jackie said no. The problem is planning and zoning needs to be considered; not PRAC's responsibility.

4. Staff Updates: job closed on May 9th. 116 applicants right now. Jackie's last two months: May and June/ July and August no meeting. Summer two months on meeting. The last meeting is in June. We contract Gretchen. Meet on the 3rd of September for our next meeting.

Currently the hiring process will be completed, and the new person will be the lead for the PRAC. Gretchen Bulova is coordinating with the hiring panel to select the top 5 days. Jackie is considering working as a consultant if the transition is not smooth between the new person and Jackie's predecessor.

Two weeks of interviewing the records center clerk position. Jackie and the rest of the hiring panel picked a potential candidate. This individual has worked with the Black History Museum, currently pursuing a Ph.D. A couple of more administrative actions need to be completed but closer to hiring the clerk.

5. FOIA Request Process: ITS is not going to provide us with funding to make it easier for FOIA requests. But to prove its value, PRAC department will provide 3K to do 10 boxes, from different time periods. The company that has the software is called Preservica, who has another company that also provides a scanning service.

Last week, Barbara, the IT rep, did not want to move forward with the 10 boxes until they get permission from the agency. Jackie had to justify that FOIA requests are continuous so the 10 boxes should be preserved in case there is a future FOIA request. We don't want to tell our requestor that we have destroyed those records.

As of last week, the 10 boxes can go public facing websites. Laser fiches are only available for city staff for research, but future other departments might be capability to use it and then roll out the rest of the boxes for public facing/FOIA requests. Most folks who want to do FOIA request go to APEX so the city wants to align with the current requests. Other funding sources, such as Grants, which we used to rely on, are no longer available—Grants are no longer being dropped.

The problem with APEX, the city attorney only allows for your property for FOIA requests. The discussion between the PRAC FOIA request restriction and the city attorneys were discussed because the intent of FOIA request should not be so restricted so that others who are doing research can get more data off Alexandria's architectural plans via APEX.

There was some transition up to 1996 so that more transparency was provided, however, there was a big gap ever since. A lot of places like Del Ray and Rosemount are considered historic places.

6. EHT tracery, a consulting firm, was here a couple of times at PRAC and then periodically for research reason. A week ago, they produced a delivery and gave a copy to PRAC along with a flash drive.

7. Future discussion point for positions: current positions might not match the current needs, for instance, Jackie's successor should not have to do FOIA requests but hire another person who does just FOIA requests management. The process is to work through HR to request those positions. The process for changing positions or adding positions is considered job analyst inputs.