

Public Records Advisory Commission (PRAC)

Minutes of the September 18, 2017 Meeting

Alexandria City Hall, 301 King Street, Room 1102A

Present: Jackie Cohan (Archivist), Rich Brune, Monica St. Dennis, LiMin Fields, John Hocker, Jen Walsh

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

Appointment of Secretary: John Hocker was appointed Secretary

Minutes: Minutes of the June 19, 2017 meeting were reviewed and approved

Annual Report: The Public Records Advisory Commission (PRAC) Annual Report covering July 2016 through June 2017 was reviewed. The annual report and attendance were due at the end of August. The commission members had no additional inclusions or exclusions for the report.

Updating Archives and Record Center Webpage: The commission discussed potential updates to the Archives and Record Center webpage on the City of Alexandria's website. Recommendations included:

- updating the Archives and Record Center's mission statement;
- consider providing descriptions of records available rather than just a list of records; and
- consider reorganizing the sections of the webpage to prioritize certain sections:
 - determine whether the regulatory authority language is required, move the statement to the bottom of the page, and include a FOIA statement;
 - move the Gifts and Donations section closer to the top of the page, consider adding images of types of archived records—specifically those related to property records; and
 - update the Other Sites section.

Suggested changes can be coordinated within the Archives and Records department. A draft of changes will be shared with PRAC members prior to the next meeting.

Historic Alexandria Resources Commission (HARC) Meeting: Jen will be attending HARC on Tuesday, September 19, 2017. She will discuss PRAC's Annual Report and potential updates to the webpage.

Office Historic Alexandria (OHA): Rich attended an OHA focus group during the summer which covered how departments within OHA worked with each other—described as a report card on OHA. OHA also held a retreat at The Lyceum for various departments' staff in which improvements to the office were discussed, along with team building activities. City Council has also discussed the need to invest in Historic Alexandria—which should include Old Town as well the West End/Fort Ward—but this was not communicated during the focus group or retreat.

New Business:

- City Records Management Training: A live training will be held on October 17 for city employees. The event will be posted on AlexNet, the City's internal website, and should be recorded for future use. Typical attendance for training sessions is about 50 but up to 75 to 100 people could attend.
- New Retirement Rules: As a result of new retirement rules, there could be an increase in City retirees. Typically records from retirees are handled by department records officers; however, the number of retirees could create a challenge. The number of retirees will also result in new hires that will require records management training.
- Archives and Records hires: A 30 hour/week position was filled by merging two positions. The hope is to make this position full-time. An intern from the University of Kentucky is also assisting the department conducting various work.
- Fire Department Training Facility: There is a concern about the risks associated with the Records Center being located next to the fire department's training facility. This has been an open and contentious issue. Concerns include risks to paper records due to water, smoke, or fire damage which has caused building damage in the past. Another concern is the need to coordinate access for document destruction during training activities. There is also an ongoing concern that the sanitation department will need the land where the Records Center is currently located and that the records management program could be split up. The priority would be to keep a centralized records management program and identify a new facility.

Action Items:

- Jackie will send a draft of the webpage to PRAC members for review.
- PRAC could take up the issue to advocate for a safe, permanent location for a central records management program. This would need to be a 5- to 10-year plan and a multi-departmental effort since OHA and the Archeology department utilize the current facility. Archaeology currently stores some artifacts at with records management but also rents storage space. PRAC can also look at HARC as another partner. Actions needed include:
 - Organizing a statement for HARC
 - Developing a letter campaign to City Council

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 PM

Respectfully submitted,

John W. Hocker, Secretary