

Public Records Advisory Commission (PRAC)
Minutes of the May 20, 2019 Meeting
Alexandria Archives & Records Center, 801 S. Payne St.

Present: Jackie Cohan (Archivist); Rich Brune (Chair); Cam Cook; Lynn Jordan; Barbie Keiser; Monica St. Dennis; Susan Hellman

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:27PM.

Appointment of Secretary: Susan Hellman was appointed secretary.

Minutes: The minutes of the April 15, 2019 meeting were approved, with Jackie clarifying that the Carlton Funn collection consists of film posters not part of the onsite Alexandria Black History Museum Collection. Jackie also noted that Gretchen Bulova, Director of the Office of Historic Alexandria (OHA), hired a museum professional to catalog/organize the collection. Monica made the motion to approve the minutes as amended; Rich seconded the motion.

Laserfiche/Records Management Subcommittee update: Jackie reported that the subcommittee has intensified efforts to move the process along. They meet two hours each week to discuss a new records management database. City departments, including Archives & Records, Planning and Zoning, Code Administration, and Transportation & Environmental Services, and others, are evaluating their standard operating procedures to streamline them and reduce duplication. The City will retain the existing Laserfiche system, but will not add new plans to the old system. Instead, there is a new Laserfiche system and an old Laserfiche system, creating some issues with systems integration.

Talking Points for City Council: The Commission agrees that Jackie's bullet-pointed list is a useful summary of the history of records storage issues. Jackie would like to change the title and make some tweaks. Lynn suggested that Jackie include mention that providing more storage for Archives & Records delivers more than just financial benefits. It would also save valuable staff time and improve City services by allowing staff to respond more quickly to research inquiries. Lynn asked if the Commission will petition City Council as a group or as individuals. Jackie explained that the last time Archives & Records got additional space, the Commission acted as individuals. Barbie asked if we should create a letter, but Jackie would like to make some changes to her list first. Barbie recommended making the changes prior to the June Commission meeting so that we can act upon it sooner.

HARC Update:

- There is a proposal to convert 10 Duke Street into a shopping mall. As it is not code compliant, someone suggested recording it, taking it down, and rebuilding it exactly the same but to code.
- The City is using GIS to survey all sidewalks and types of sidewalks: concrete, brick, cobblestone.
- The 4/17 Board of Architectural Review (BAR) meeting only had 4 cases; the 5/1 meeting had none so the Board members undertook FOIA training; the 5/14 meeting reviewed the 619 S. Lee

Street case; two properties on S. Fairfax are arguing over their property line and taking their case to the BAR.

- 5G cell towers will be installed throughout the City. They are approximately six feet tall and will be installed three per block in the Old & Historic District. The BAR can weigh in on design.
- The Historic Alexandria Foundation is fighting to reverse the BAR decision approving alterations to 619 S. Lee St. They also oppose Christ Church's plan to demolish the existing Ross Dress for Less and build high-rise condominiums on the site. HARC will compose a letter to the church requesting they adhere to a fifty foot maximum height, and follow the standards set in the George Washington Memorial Highway National Register of Historic Places listing.
- Freedom House now has rotating exhibits on the third floor. OHA staff is also looking into ways for less-mobile visitors to access the cellar exhibit/holding space.
- HARC and the rest of the historic preservation community have grave concerns regarding proposed changes to the National Register of Historic Places nomination process. The proposed changes will make it easier for businesses and other entities to oppose the listing of sites.
- HARC members would like a field trip to Archives & Records, as well as to other sites represented on the commission.

New Business:

- a. As discussed earlier, a museum professional is processing the **Carlton Funn collection**. She is organizing by theme, and doing an excellent job.
- b. The **building repair/HVAC** issues are at the stage of price negotiation with the top firm. If the cost exceeds budget, the City may have to go with the second choice firm. They will meet to discuss this on 5/21/19. New HVAC can be particularly worrisome, as Archives & Records requires a proper system that will not damage or degrade the collections.
- c. There is no new news on **records management training**. Jackie will check with Gretchen.
- d. As to the **records destruction update**, Jackie and Gretchen met with the new City attorney, and Annette provided the attorney's staff with additional information. There had been some problems with the process, as some things had not been forwarded to the City attorney. Jackie received an email from a member of the City attorney's staff today, with proposals to move forward. Jackie and Annette will evaluate the proposed changes and act accordingly.
- e. An **intern** from the University of Maryland will begin her internship in Archives & Records on 5/28. She had previously worked for Alexandria Archaeology. In Archives & Records, she will mostly work on planning tasks, but will also scan OCR Council minutes and undertake other miscellaneous tasks.

Adjourn: Barbie made a motion to adjourn at 8:06PM; Rich seconded.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Hellman