

Public Records Advisory Commission

Annual Report

July 2019 - June 2020

Summary of Accomplishments

The mission of the Public Records Advisory Commission (PRAC) states “The Records Advisory Commission provides advice and guidance to the City Records Administrator and Archivist on records management matters and implementation of the records program in the City. The commission is comprised of professional archivists, records managers, historians, research specialists, and citizens.” Within these guidelines the PRAC membership completed the following activities during its 2019-2020 year.

PRAC Policy and Membership Accomplishments

Membership remained steady throughout the year. The commission gained a new member in September 2019 while two members departed in the spring of 2020, one of whose term expired. The vacancies have been posted on the Boards and Commissions web site. A Quorum was achieved at every meeting.

PRAC Member Activities

The internship program, supported by PRAC, worked very well. There were a couple of requests for internship or volunteering. One intern completed her internship during the fall 2019 semester and the second completed her internship spring 2020 semester. Both were graduate students in Information Management and Library Science—the first from the University of Maryland and the other from the University of Tennessee—and scanned a total of 2,236 pages of City Council Minutes, Dockets and Transcripts from 1940 through 1958 (a volunteer working on earning a certificate from the Society of American Archivists also

assisted with this project in the fall of 2019). As a result, there is now an effective keyword search index to the City Council's work record from 1922 to 1958, where none existed prior.

Program or Legislative Accomplishments

The Public Records and Advisory Commission assisted with determining what physical improvements would most benefit the facility and storage of records. The Archives and Records Center worked with the City's General Services Administration as well as a contractor hired by the City (Cole and Denny Architects) to plan renovations to the Records Center and bring the building up to ADA, professional archives and records management and energy efficiency standards. The first phase of the project—the replacement of all the 20-year-old flat roofs and replacement of damaged and missing tiles on the pitched roof plus repairs to the cupola—began in May 2020. By the end of the fiscal year, the roof replacement project was 75% completed.

With the go-ahead from the Commission, the Records Administrator and Archivist petitioned for street parking to fully accommodate staff that work onsite or visit the Payne Street Facility—which includes the staff of the Archives and Records Center, ALIVE, the other divisions of Historic Alexandria and Voter's Registration—as well as all other visitors to the facility. The City removed all the parking restriction signs and added parking on the West side of South Payne Street so that it is now easier and safer for visitors to the building. The additional parking proved critical to mitigating parking issues, particularly in the spring at the height of the pandemic when there were many more visitors and staff to the food bank.

The Commission reviewed and approved a prospective presentation to City Council on on-site and off-site records storage needs that it would like to conduct in the future.

The Commission assisted with efforts to establish an effective Records Management training process for Department Heads, departmental Records Officers and all other City employees (during the 2019 fiscal year, the Commission assisted the Records Administrator and Archivist in developing three Records Management training modules to address each of the above constituents). At the end of February 2020, City Manager Mark Jinks sent a memo to the City's Department Heads to inform them that a new Records Management

training process was soon to commence and that they would receive training during the spring. Unfortunately, the pandemic precluded the training for the time being.

Goals for 2020 – 2021

The Commission will advise and assist in the implementation of the new Records Management training process.

Work with the Records Administrator and Archivist to re-establish the Records Destruction process and to conform with other Virginia jurisdictions' practices.

Find opportunities to engage City Council, City staff and the public awareness of current Archive activities and both short-term and long-term Archive and Record Center personnel and financial needs.

Leadership

Rich Brune is currently serving as PRAC's chairperson.

The role of secretary is rotated between the members monthly.

There was one new member: Sean Ferguson 9/2019.

Barbie Keiser resigned 2/2020.

Susan Hellman's Term expired 06/2020.

During the course of the year the Commission membership consisted of the following people:

Rich Brune, Barbie Keiser, Monica St. Dennis, Susan Hellman, Cameron Cook, Lynn Jorden and Sean Ferguson.

Jackie Cohan (Records Administrator and Archivist) acted as the staff liaison to the Public Records Advisory Commission during the course of the 2019-2020 year.

Attachment

PRAC Annual Attendance Report 2019 - 2020