



CITY OF BOSTON
Archives & Records Management Advisory Commission

Minutes
Monday, October 3, 2016, 3:00 P.M.
Boston City Hall – Curley Room – 5th Floor
One City Hall Square, Boston, MA 02201

Members Present: Maureen Feeney (City Clerk), Henry Luthin (Law), Julie Burros (Arts & Culture), Patty McMahon (Registry), Laura Imscher representing David Leonard (Boston Public Library), Brendan Haley (Public) and Jill Snyder (Public)

Others Present: Assistant City Clerk Alex Geourntas, Archivist John McColgan, Archivist for Collections Management Kristen Swett, Archivist for Reference & Outreach Margaret Crilly, Records Management Analyst Chris Carter.

Call to order at 3:08 PM.

Chair Maureen Feeney welcomed Commission members and guests

Motion offered by Brendan Haley to approve the minutes of the previous Commission Meeting and seconded by Jill Snyder. All voted in favor.

Archivist Report: John McColgan distributed a report comprehensively outlining Archives program status, goals and requirements. John referred to the many positive developments have occurred since the last Commission Meeting as it relates to records management, collections management and access management.

John referred to an electronic file processing service called Valora which will identify and classify electronic data citywide. This application truly supports Mayor Walsh's mandate for records/collections/access management with executive and department support, because it enables the City to manage and defensibly dispose of digital records past legal retention requirement. Secretary of State will still need to approve destruction of records on a case-by-case basis. The Clerk elaborated on Valora and its many positive attributes. Brendan Haley asked for clarification on what Valora actually can do and a "statement of work" for Automated File Classification was distributed during Commission meeting.

Space limitations at the City Archives have become quite evident and there is only 2000 cubic feet left for archival storage. Staff has been working hard to identify documents that can be destroyed with approval of the Secretary of State. City will be conducting an Archives Space Study through Property Management and its Capital Budget appropriation.

John further pointed out the importance of assuming custodial responsibility for early town records, early vital statistics records and building permit plans. Building permit plans are currently housed at the Boston Public Library and need to be moved to the Archives to enhance their preservation in temperature-controlled storage rooms. The second floor of Archives building was mentioned as a possible storage and processing location for the building permit plans. Pat Brophy, Mayor Walsh's Chief Operating Officer, is spearheading the effort to relocate the early vitals from City Hall to the City Archives. Family Search has expressed willingness to scan the early vitals for online access.

Processing the increasing amounts of public documents at the Archives continues to bring to the forefront the need for additional staff at the City Archives. Processing the backlog of documents is the single most labor-intensive activity at the Archives. Staff must also perform administrative duties that take away time from their duties as Archivists.

City Clerk Maureen Feeney was grateful to the Administration for their strong support of implementing a citywide records management plan and the work that has been completed thus far to facilitate this process and thanked all of the Archives staff for all they have done. Early vital records at City Hall, 1629-1920s, will be moved to the Archives as a result of meetings between Property Management and the Mayor's Office. The Archivist's report will be reviewed by Commission members before submission to the Mayor and City Council. This will become a policy directive for citywide records management.

Archives staff continues to build relationships with various entities to create web-based exhibits and digital resources promoting the use of City Archive collections. Collections recently processed include Mayor Hynes' files, Finance Commission records, 1920-1970, and Boston City Hospital photos.

The need for more staff is critical to address increased responsibilities and to implement the executive mandate. Managing the City's electronic records is the new frontier requiring the cooperation of department heads, various department staff and DoIT in establishing the framework for digital records management.

City Clerk Maureen Feeney and Archivist John McColgan expressed their gratitude to the Commission member's support of the Archives and their efforts.

Motion to Adjourn Meeting offered by Jill Snyder and seconded by Brendan Haley. All voted in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 4:35 PM.