

Friends of the DC Archives

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City Intends to Spend \$3 MM to Stabilize DC Archives

The DC Department of General Services intends to spend \$3 million for much-needed basic repairs to the District of Columbia Archives. Acting DGS Director Admiral Chris Weaver made the pledge at a recent meeting with members of the Friends of the DC Archives, a private group that advocates for the Archives. The repairs are intended to make sure the records and artifacts of the District Government are preserved and accessible while a new, state-of-the-art Archives is planned and built. The current Archives building, at 1300 Naylor Court, NW, just west of the Walter E. Washington Convention Center, has suffered from years of inadequate basic repairs and maintenance.

“This is very good news indeed,” said Fynnette Eaton, a member of FDCA who met with Admiral Weaver. “FDCA thanks him, City Administrator Rashaad Young and Mayor Bowser for understanding the need for a functioning Archives while we all work together on the new facility. Our next step is to increase access with more hours and upgraded equipment and staff.”

Planning for the new Archives has begun with Mayor Bowser’s July announcement that DGS has engaged Hartman-Cox Architects and EYP to design the new facility. A draft report is due shortly and DDGS agreed to solicit comments from FDCA and the public as soon as it is available.

“FDCA looks forward to collaborating with Secretary of the District Lauren Vaughan, the new Public Records Administrator Becky Katz and all interested parties to produce a plan for the new Archives that has widespread support and can be smoothly implemented,” said Eaton. “We also very encouraged by Admiral Weaver’s statement that ‘we want to do right by our history.’”

The holdings of the Archives include birth and death records, land and marriage records and the wills of Alexander Graham Bell, Francis Scott Key, James Madison, Dolly Madison, Woodrow Wilson and Frederick Douglass as well as Duke Ellington’s birth certificate.

In addition to upgrading the Naylor Court facility and building a modern Archives, FDCA advocates for modern records management to the District Government, a key responsibilities of the Archivist/Public Records Administrator.