

## **Friends of the DC Archives Meeting**

**June 11, 2014**

**5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

Mary Beth Corrigan (Co-Chair) called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

### **Report on DC Council and funding for new building (Bill Rice)**

- Bill distributed “Current State of Money for DC Archives” and discussed the current approved funding structure.
- The funds have been approved for a 3-year planning and construction period to produce a new building.
- Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie proposed changes to reduce the appropriation for 2015 and 2016 but added a year to the overall budget and put in \$14 million; **Net reduction of the funding by \$6 million. The budget was passed.**
- FDCA should lobby to get the original budget amount restored and increased for the overall project
- The implementing legislation still has to be approved but this is the final approved budget for the DC Archives as of the fiscal year beginning on 10/01/2015
- Capital funds carry over from year to year but as of now, the project must be completed by 2017. It is unlikely that DC has to spend the full money this year but that point is not completely clear yet.
- No space has yet been identified for the new archives. There was a meeting with the DGS representative and Cynthia Brock Smith, the Secretary of the District, where ideas were exchanged but rejected; this issue is also unclear at this point.

### **Report on “vision” and work of consultant (Trudy Peterson, Co-Chair)**

- DC Archives falls under the Secretary of the District but the building construction falls under the jurisdiction of DGS
- Without consulting the Secretary’s office, DGS contracted a consultant at the beginning of 2014; Trudy has a copy of the contract materials
- DGS used a law firm to hire the contractor—Dr. Greg Hunter, a certified records manager and archivist from Long Island University in New York
- According to the contract:
  - Consultant was tasked with program development for the DC Archives working with various stakeholders for the new 21<sup>st</sup> century archives
  - Contract does not set a firm delivery completion date but instead uses the phrase “as soon as possible.”
  - Contract presupposes 8 meetings with stakeholders
  - Dr. Hunter is to come up with a vision statement

- Trudy wrote to Greg and asked him for a status update but his response was very vague—he does not want input until he has a draft document; don't know where visioning process is going
- Dr. Hunter is supposed to present a draft document by the end of June; he is being pushed to put something out for public consumption—this was an oral agreement
- FDCA met with Dr. Hunter on May 15, 2014 and Dr. Hunter has also met with records group officers, and is slated to meet with directors of agencies (Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, Dept. of Health, etc.)

Questions were raised about any possibly conflict with D.C. Public Library and the possibility of housing the two facilities together but colocation is not an option because the DC Archives' holdings are too extensive

There are several locations for the records; conducted study where records are located which will add to the collection; Trudy will review that assessment and make a recommendation

**Report on inventory of records not in DC Archives custody (Clarence)**

- Bill Branch distributed a copy of the current DC Archives registry; this is the inventory of what is currently held by the Archives back to 1790
- Land records, records from board of commissioners era, probate, marriage, wills, birth and death, city council, departmental file records of some agencies, metro police department, Mayor Barry's files, building permits, architectural plans, etc.
- Not included on the list are: AV records of the city, including videos of council hearings, emails or digital records
- The records are located in several locations:
  - Permanent records in the DC Archives
  - Washington National Records Center—additional holdings not listed
  - National Archives
- The new archives has to include the capacity for modern media
- DGS contracted a consultant to do an inventory of records in other locations; completed 8 locations at this point and the current contract has ended; it will be extended to do additional locations
- Locations finished at this point are:
  - DC Village
  - DC General Hospital
  - DC General Hospital Building 6 warehouse
  - Oak Hill
  - One Judiciary Square
  - Penn Center
  - Reeve Center

- St. Elizabeth's
- The inventory does not include police, firemen, schools, etc. and cannot confirm the quality of the inventory
- There are a lot of additional records located in storage closets and hidden spaces in offices and smaller agencies throughout the city (e.g. Public Service Commission)
- A lot of digital records have already been lost
- At last count (10 years ago) there were approximately 42 locations where records were located but that inventory did not account for the random closets and storage spaces within offices; still a lot of work to be completed before the inventory may be considered comprehensive
- Looking ahead, if all records were to be accounted for and placed on a schedule, DC Archives' growth would be substantial at first and then switch to 3-5%--this will not apply until after the building is built to anticipate all of the permanent records in the field
- Agencies need records management policies or they will not retain the appropriate records-- Every agency is supposed to have someone responsible
- DC Law 619 governs retention of records and sets records management regulations—every agency is required to have a records officer but the majority do not have a records officer because they have not yet been appointed
- According to Clarence, 15-20% of records are scheduled
- When the inventory is completed, the decision-making process will be complicated
- WNRC: 132,000 cubic feet of records and about 1/3 are unscheduled—the facility currently engages in courtesy storage for several agencies
- Unscheduled records are not yet appraised for historical value; makes more work to be done later and will have a big impact on the design and construction of the building
- Only the DC Archives can make a final decision on whether to retain or destroy agency records and the Archives reviews and signs off on retention schedules (most are out of date)
- In order to move forward to get schedules developed, contracting archivists (Clarence)
- Group discussed that it might be useful to create a visual to help people understand the amount of materials and the enormity of the issue
  - 52,000 cubic feet in Naylor Court—25% of total
  - Other sites—how many are in DC? One in DC, MD, VA, St. Louis
  - Majority of the records are not in DC

#### **Publicity and outreach plans (Bill Rice)**

- Bill will continue to be the Public Information Officer
- Important to continue bringing attention to the Archives as something that is a desperate need within the city

- Received good exposure in the Washington Post with the column written by John Kelly
- Trudy was on WAMU discussing the Friends group
- National Archives Day press release
- Commitment is strong but could be stronger within council to have the new building come to fruition
- Extended planning period provides opportunity to deal with the immediate needs of Archives, including the substantial repairs (roof, air conditioning) and staffing shortage
- Should schedule a tour for media including Tom Sherwood and John Kelley so they may see the both the treasures and problems of the archives; stimulate the government to address immediate needs
- Lame Duck Administration—have to keep this going somehow; publicity is crucial between now and new administration
- It will be important to highlight the vast stories people can uncover at DC Archives in order to connect with broader public
- Publicity Campaign idea (Trudy): Utilizing YouTube, create 30 to 60-second commercials that show someone's eyes and demonstrate personal connections to the DC Archives, using the phrase "You are the 'I' in Archives"; Trudy has written about 15 different segments which, once created, could be rolled out on a schedule to maintain and encourage interest in this movement
- Think strategically about connection with city government--narrow campaign this year may complicate this movement

### **Interim Friends organization (Mary Beth)**

- Goal for this meeting: come to a consensus on a steering committee; begin to work out questions of basic governance; define and clarify roles within the group. At this meeting, focus was to establish working committees.
- Trudy Peterson: Oversight
- Bill Rice: Media
- Mary Beth Corrigan: Membership and Outreach
- Jennifer Krafchik: Secretary for larger meetings
- Bergis Jules: Twitter archivist (moved to California; need to get a FB administrator and website administrator)
- Need to define what we hope to accomplish and expand the leadership
- Group will continue to work closely with DC Archives, represented by Bill and Clarence
- Distributed a draft mission statement that will need to be refined and solidified by the next meeting; the group asked to include family history and personal connections; not just the democratic process but the ability to know your story, your neighborhood; this aspect will make citizens care about this movement and interest younger generations
- Attendees signed up for the following teams as a way to split tasks and reduce the burden on the group:

- Oversight (reviewing inventories, contracts to better understand the level of work needed to create this facility)
- Governance
- Social Media
- Outreach and Membership
- Publicity
- Government Relations
- Research (looking into the history of the DC Archives and recordkeeping in the District; providing comparison to other municipalities)
- Each group will need a representative to schedule meetings and report at the bigger group meetings
- There was discussion about becoming incorporated as a non-profit but at this point, the co-chairs want those interested to feel free to join and float away from the group as necessary; non-profit status would make this a little too formal at this point; the groups can discuss this further over the next few months
- MBC will follow up with the group via email so everyone will know where they stand

**Next meeting (Mary Beth)**

- The next meeting will be held on a Wednesday evening in September to allow time for individual groups to meet
- MBC will provide a date via email.

The meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.