

Friends of the DC Archives
June 17, 2015

Attending: Johanna Bockman, Andrew Cassidy-Amstutz, Erik Stoykovich, Jon Powell, Derek Gray, Doug Long (sitting in for Daryl Wiggins), Barbara Reck, Trudy Peterson, Bill Brown, Fynnette Eaton, Mary Beth Corrigan, Katie Thomas, Jay Stewart, Carl Bergman, Dan Randle, Charles Hendricks, Laura Barry

Update on Facility Planning

Consideration of the proposals submitted by the RFP developed by the Department of General Services is ongoing. DGS is enlisting architectural design firm before site selection so that it can be consulted in that decision. Carl Bergman, staff of Council chair Phil Mendelson, stated that a firm has been selected. He also explained that the contract will become public since any contract of more than \$1 million has to be placed before council.

Mr. Bergman further explained that the Mayor's office is playing catch up. There are a few concerns: 1) ongoing search for public administrator. It is not a confirmable position; 2) absolute need for having a data system for all archival holdings.

Mr. Bergman further explained that Mayor Gray had given Office of Technical Support \$600,000 to develop a system and so far they have not answered any questions about what they are doing with that money. CB has encouraged FDCA to ask questions about this appropriation to ensure that money is used and documented. It must be find-able.

Search for new Public Records Administrator

Fynnette Eaton explained that FDCA has asked the Secretary of the District of Columbia to establish a search committee that includes representatives from the National Archives, Smithsonian, and Martin Luther King Library. The Secretary has instead designated a committee of four to assist with the interview process. This group includes Ms. Eaton, Anthony Stevens, Joy Holland and the CTO officer.. There were 17 applications; 5 finalists. The committee will select the two top people. Fynnette does not know how they winnowed it down to five people. There is time-sensitivity as the job search must be completed within 90 days of its initial posting and the successful candidate must start by end of FY (September 30).

Community Engagement Forum, May 21

The group discussed the community engagement panel and made the following observation:

- The panel was not truly a community engagement panel, rather an informational session.
- The questions asked by Secretary of the District of Columbia Luran Vaughan to the panelists provided a good indication of the types of questions she was willing to give attention.

- The turnout, a standing room only crowd, was impressive and demonstrated that support for a new facility.
- It was the first time that we heard that the DC Archives was important to Mayor Bowser.
- Tony Harvey writing for The Intowner made interesting points: <http://goo.gl/KiwhCn>
- The panel discussed the DC Archives as a history center, but neglected to consider all of the functions of the Office of Public Records, particularly records management. FDCA should address this in their messaging.

Review of Budget Appropriation

Council Chair Philip Mendelson has changed the amount of money budgeted for a new facility from \$34 million to \$48.4 million. Despite this increase, there was a reduction in the appropriation for the DC Archives. For FY 2016, the budget is \$2 million -- \$12 million less than Mayor Bowser's proposal. Mendelson has delayed the disbursement of funds for the new facility until 2019/20. It is possible that the disbursement will be restored if the planning has taken place.

Jeff Bonvechio will be leading the planning process for DGS and has done a very good job on the libraries; he is a good person for us to talk to about the planning process.

Tour of the DC Archives

Lauren Vaughan hosted a tour of the DC Archives for Council Members Mary Cheh and Charles Allen. Led by Bill Branch and Jeff Bonvechio with FDCA members Bill Rice and Sarah Schoenfeld in attendance, the council members saw treasures (wills, ball and chain, etc) and vivid demonstrations of the problems with the facilities: the ad hoc nature of the use of space; large amount of unprocessed papers; and structural problems such as leaks. The tour impressed Council Member Cheh who wants to take a tour of a facility where records are properly housed. Council member Brendan Todd and other council members want to see the facility

Renovation of the Martin Luther King Library

There was general discussion regarding the plans to renovate the Martin Luther King Memorial Library. Barbara Reck reported that two architects have been selected to design the new library. At this time, the final design is not complete and the architects are working with historical preservation boards, including NCPD. The public has been engaged during this process. The Children's Department will double in size; staff office space will be reduced. Some functions of the library are going to other places in the city. They have narrowed down the location of interim facilities. The renovation will take place over 3 ½ years. Staff, trustees, and advisory board will move in unison.

Next steps

- Bill Rice will work with Rebecca Sheir of WAMU Metro Connection to set up a tour and help her develop a story on the DC Archives.
- Mary Beth Corrigan will work with Britney Crawford to set up a luncheon meeting for archivists at NARA.
- Mary Beth Corrigan and Katja Hering will work with Andrew Cassidy-Amstutz to set up a program for Archives Week (October 3 at McGowan Theater) where it is possible for FDCA to participate in a forum presentation and have a table.
- Trudy Peterson suggested that we examine the survey of the records and should try to find holes in it. For instance, we should ask where the recordings of the Mayor's speeches and council hearings are held? What about electronic records?