



## **CITY OF BOSTON** **Archives & Records Advisory Commission**

Agenda and Deputy Archivist' Report  
Monday, 25 June 2012, 3:30 p.m.  
Piemonte Room, City Hall, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor

- I. Call to order
- II. Approval of [Minutes](#)
- III. Report of Chair
- IV. Report of Deputy Archivist

### **1. Priority Issues**

- 1.1. Amendments to City-wide Retention Schedule
- 1.2. Proposal for Central Archives Scanning Services
- 1.3. Archives Staff Reclassification
- 1.4. Registry Division Archives
- 1.5. Law Department Records and Archives
- 1.6. BPS Records and Archives

### **2. Statistics**

### **3. Outreach to Departments and the Public**

- 3.1. Web Site Update
- 3.2. Publications
- 3.3. Exhibits
- 3.4. Social Media
- 3.5. Presentations
- 3.6. External Collaboration

### **4. Training and Consultation**

- 4.1. DRO Training
- 4.2. Pilot Departments
  - 4.2.1. Public Works
  - 4.2.2. BFD
  - 4.2.3. BPS
  - 4.2.4. Landmarks Commission
  - 4.2.5. Property and Construction Management
- 4.3. Other
  - 4.3.1. City Records at BPL
  - 4.3.2. New Records Center Services Contract

**1. Priority Issues.** *(Archives staff perceive issues described in this section as important initiatives urgently requiring the support of the Commission.)*

**1.1. Amendments to City-wide Retention Schedule:** A draft revised [City-wide Records Retention and Disposition Schedule](#) contains the following amendments for the Commission's approval:

The disposition of HR-06, job applications of persons not hired, is changed from "Retain three years from date of creation, then destroy", to "Retain 1 year following filling of position or cancellation of vacancy, whichever is later, then destroy." This disposition complies with the Supervisor of Records schedule item number 01.086 for the same records series.

Items CSTR-01 through CSTR-16 have been added. These records series constitute a new section of the Retention Schedule consisting of construction-related records. The Schedule section was developed by a committee of construction managers from the Capital Construction Department chaired by the Department of Neighborhood Development Records Manager. The schedule items have been reviewed and found satisfactory by the Archives and Records Management Division.

**1.2. Central Archives Scanning Services:** To meet the growing need among several departments to have legacy documentation available for current operations in electronic format, the Archives Division should be equipped with the resources for digitizing such records. The Archives has particular need for the efficient handling of TIFF files. The Rivermoor facility already has space designated for a digitization lab. Needed are the proper equipment and software. The following is an incomplete list of agencies with qualifying circumstances:

- Landmarks
- Public Works
- Registry
- Parks
- Art Commission
- Fire Department

**1.3. Archives Staff Reclassification:** The [reclassification request](#) submitted by the City Clerk to the City's Personnel Review Committee in December 2011 has not been acted upon to date. At the December meeting of the Commission the public members agreed to consult together to fashion a communication in support of a reclassification review.

**1.4. Registry Division Archives:** The Registry Division is currently exploring a capital project for scanning its vast holdings of birth, marriage and death records. The Archives has proposed an initiative for the preservation and access of Registry Division archives from the 17<sup>th</sup> through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century not required for the Registry's current operations. Modeled after statutory arrangements between the Massachusetts Archives and the State Registry of Vital Records, ninety+ - year old records would be transferred every five years. This would alleviate Registry workload, enhance user access at both the Registry and Archives Divisions, and fulfill the NHPRC grant commitment to transfer hardcopy historical records most at risk.

**1.5. Law Department Records and Archives:** The Archives Division is prepared to assist the Law department with the disposition of nearly 800 boxes of records stored off-site and ripe for either destruction or transfer to the Archives. This involves obtaining State authorization to destroy records which are clearly obsolete; evaluating litigation files for selective retention; and developing protocols for legal records transferred to Archives but which may be subject to attorney-client privilege or other legal restrictions.

**1.6. BPS Records and Archives:** Important archives and records management action awaits BPS executive level decision. This includes disposition of some thousands of cubic feet of obsolete or archival records stored offsite.

## 2. Statistics

### 2.1. REFERENCE REQUESTS SUMMARY, JULY 2008 – June 2012

CLIENT CATEGORY	FY12 (thru June)	FY11	FY10	FY09
<i>Public</i>	1510	1429	1580	1527
<i>City Agency</i>	224	185	145	162
<b>Total</b>	1734	1614	1725	1689

CONTACT MEANS	FY12 (thru June)	FY11	FY10	FY09
<i>Telephone</i>	820	836	858	963
<i>E-mail</i>	684	562	635	555
<i>In-person visits</i>	206	168	172	129
<i>Mail and Fax</i>	24	48	60	42
<b>Total</b>	1734	1614	1725	1689

### 2.2. State Authorized destruction of records since 3/26/12:

City Clerk	1
Civil Rights	15
EEPA	128
Public Works	30
Registry	108
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>282 cubic feet</b>

### 2.3. Archival Accessions since 3/26/12:

DEPARTMENT	SERIES	Cubic Feet
Public Works	Contract Books & Misc. materials	42.00
	Correspondence, photos, drawings related to Gas Street lighting	8.00
	Public Works and Bridge & Ferry Division Contracts	50.00
	Survey Files	18.00
	Street Lighting records	1.00
Fire Department	Board of Fire Commissioners / Fire Commissioner minutes (15 vols.)	1.00
ISD	Commissioner Bill Good's Correspondence, 2006-2011	12.00
DND	Director Administrative Subject Files	19.00
	Operations Manager's Adm Subject Files, 1984-2008	2.00
	Dpty Dir.-Homeowners, Real Est. Mgt & Sales Adm Files, 1994-2006	6.00
	Reports, 1979-1996	7.00
	Building Sales, 1998-2008	2.00
Mayor's Office	Mayor's briefings, 2006-2009	16.00
Private Donor	Nine framed photos of West End Demolition	.25
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>184.25</b>

## 2.4. Processing Projects Completed or being processed by staff or volunteers:

Processor	SERIES	STATUS
Kristen	City of Boston v. Keane (City asbestos litigation 1980s)	Completed
Marta	Flynn Mayoral files	In process
Marta	Street Lighting Records	In Process
Marta	West End Demolition Photos	Completed
Gretchen	BFD: Commissioner files and Mayoral approvals	In process
Beth	City Council Committee Records	Completed
Beth	Public Works	In process
Stephen	City Council Docket Documents	In process

## 3. Outreach to Departments and the Public

**3.1. Web Site Update:** The Guide to the Records in the City Archives is now available directly on our webpage and is searchable: [www.cityofboston.gov/archivesandrecords/guide](http://www.cityofboston.gov/archivesandrecords/guide).

A page called “Boston Facts” was recently added. Subpages include Mayors of Boston and Annexations. The Mayors of Boston include links to images of all the Mayors.  
[www.cityofboston.gov/archivesandrecords/facts](http://www.cityofboston.gov/archivesandrecords/facts)

**3.2. Publications:** The Division has produced an “[Information Sheet](#)” on services to departments; “[File Plan Guidelines](#)” distributed to DROs at training; and the “[DRO Bulletin](#)”, a one-page topical newsletter distributed via email to all DROs.

**3.3. Exhibits:** Online exhibits now number four:

- “Educating the Hub: Three Centuries of Boston Public Schools” <http://cityofbostonarchives.omeka.net/exhibits/show/educatingthehub>
- “Jesse Harding Pomeroy: Massachusetts Youngest Killer” <http://cityofbostonarchives.omeka.net/exhibits/show/pomeroy>
- “Celebrating Hyde Park: Documents and Images from the City of Boston Archives” <http://cityofbostonarchives.omeka.net/exhibits/show/hydepark>
- “Fighting Fire: the Establishment of Boston’s Modern Fire Department” <http://cityofbostonarchives.omeka.net/exhibits/show/firedept>

In the physical exhibit space at Rivermoor, “Educating the Hub”, which was displayed for several months, has been taken down and replaced by “Fighting Fire”.

**3.4. Social Media:** the City Archives can be friended on Facebook and followed on Twitter. It has posted nearly 800 images on Flickr arranged in sixteen topical sets, and posts a “Treasure of the Day” on Tumblr:

<https://www.facebook.com/cityofbostonarchives>  
<http://twitter.com/#!/archivesboston>  
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/cityofbostonarchives/sets/>  
<http://cityofbostonarchives.tumblr.com/>

**3.5. Presentations:** Assistant Archivist Marta Crilly addressed the BPL Local and Family History Lecture Series on March 21<sup>st</sup> with an illustrated talk on genealogical sources in the City Archives. BPL staff afterwards thanked Marta for “an excellent presentation” and for “making our series more successful”, stating they “had an unusual number of staff willing to stay after work for this one, so you know the topic was of

interest. That they stayed till the end indicated they were learning and enjoying. And on top of that, we had more than our usual number of public attendees.”

On Saturday, April 14<sup>th</sup> Deputy Archivist John McColgan and Assistant Archivist Kristen Swett addressed the Hyde Park Historical Society. Dr. McColgan gave an account of the Archives program, while Ms. Swett presented an illustrated talk on official Town of Hyde Park records and other Hyde Park-related materials at the Archives. A follow-up presentation and tour at the Rivermoor facility was arranged and held for the Society on June 7<sup>th</sup>.

**3.6. External Collaboration:** In April the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) invited the Archives, along with other organizations (BFD, BPL, Boston Fire Historical Society, Fire History Museum, author Stephanie Schorow, Mass General Archives, etc.) to form a coalition commemorating the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Coconut Grove fire. John and Marta attend meetings. Marta authored the group’s mission statement, which is to facilitate access to archival documents, images and artifacts relating to the fire. This would be accomplished by means of a website acting as both access portal and index to materials and collections at various archives and special collections. In the process of the work the Archives hopes to strengthen connections with the Fire Department, build public visibility, and discover and pursue leads in the search for official City records relating to the fire curiously missing from archival series at Rivermoor.

## 4. Training and Consultation

**4.1. DRO Training:** A one-hour training class has been devised to familiarize DROs with basic records & archives procedures, the role of the Archives & Records Division in government administration, and the use and functionality of the on-line “DRO Toolkit”. The Toolkit is a SharePoint site consisting of the central file plan database and links to relevant resources. Over several days in April and May Archives staff reserved the DoIT training room in City Hall affording attendees with PCs enabling direct on-line access to the Toolkit and to their own respective file plans within the database. Thirty-seven officials representing twenty-six departments attended the training. Arrangements are being made for further trainings in the near term targeting the remaining DROs and division liaisons in large departments, viz. Fire and Schools.

**4.2. Pilot Departments:** At its March meeting the Commission suggested a pilot project to focus on five agencies of varying complexity and function with a view to creating a model plan for building wider department “buy-in”. Based upon impressions gained at the DRO training, as well as ongoing interactions with several agencies (and without prejudice to the consultation needs of other agencies) the Division has compiled the following tentative list of agencies for the pilot:

**4.2.1. *Public Works:*** Several excursions to PWD facilities in South Boston and Brighton have revealed unorganized holding areas for non-current records exceeding 1000 cubic feet. In addition to the 120 cubic feet of accessioned PWD records reported above, further accessions of permanent material will include sixty cubic feet of Commissioner Cassazza’s files. Division staff are working with the PWD DRO to inventory other non-current material and develop disposition procedures.

**4.2.2. *BFD:*** The Division’s current initiative with the Fire Department began earlier this year with the accession of important archives formerly stored at the Fire Alarm Division in the Fenway. Arrangements are under way to plan DRO training at Fire Headquarters with a view to developing divisional file plans and identifying permanent records. The Archives Division hopes to further its relationship with the Fire Department through the NFPA Coconut Grove memorial initiative mentioned above.

- 4.2.3.** *BPS:* As with the Fire Department, arrangements are under way for DRO training for BPS administrative units and school office staff. Other important archives and records management action awaits BPS executive level decision. This includes disposition of some thousands of cubic feet of obsolete or archival records stored offsite.
- 4.2.4.** *Landmarks Commission:* In its tasks as preservation agency for Boston's historic buildings, places and neighborhoods, the Landmarks Commission requires long term access to large volumes of documentation on historic properties. The Archives is currently drafting solutions for affording efficient access while relieving office space and ensuring preservation of vital and historical information. While some materials are sufficiently inactive to be conveniently transferred to the Archives, the Commission is among a growing number of departments requiring scanning services for the same purpose.
- 4.2.5.** *Property and Construction Management:* The enthusiasm displayed by this department's DRO at the training to address a backlog of non-current and obsolete records merits a focused consultation promising to be an apt model for other agencies.

### **4.3. Other**

- 4.3.1.** *City Records at BPL:* BPL and Archives Division staff are arranging a meeting to plan the return of historical Boston municipal archives to official custody.
- 4.3.2.** *New Records Center Services Contract:* The City's records center services contract with Retrievox, Inc. expires 30 June 2012. The bid for the new contract, opened Tuesday, 19 June, revealed Retrievox again the winner. The contract will run for three years and give the City the option to renew for two successive years. This is a fortunate outcome for the City and its taxpayers. For the past decade Retrievox has rendered a high quality of service at exceedingly economical costs. A change in vendor would have meant laborious adjustment for dozens of records liaisons. It would also have meant expensive departmental retrieval fees under the existing contract. A provision has been built into the new contract protecting the City from jumbo retrieval expenses in the event of change of vendor at contract termination in the future.