



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

**Minutes**  
**Monday, March 26, 2012, 3:35 p.m.**  
**Piemonte Room, City Hall, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor**

**Members Present:** Maureen Feeney (City Clerk), Jeanette Bastian (Public), Bill Sinnott (Law), Meredith Weenick (Admin. Services), James O'Toole (Public), Mary Frances O'Brien (Boston Public Library), Christopher Cook (Arts & Tourism), Patty McMahon (Registry)

**Others Present:** Assistant City Clerk Alex Geourntas, Deputy Archivist John McColgan, Asst. Archivist Dave Nathan, Asst. Archivist Marta Crilly, Project Archivist Gretchen Carney, Charles Childress (Boston Public Schools), Patrick Collins (Dept. of Innovation & Technology), Kevin Corridan (Law), Dean Huggins & Ruth Edele (Boston Redevelopment Authority)

**Call to order.**

**Maureen Feeney:** Welcomed Commission members and guests and, noting this was the first Commission meeting over which she presided, stated she looked forward to working with members

**Acceptance of Previous Minutes:** The minutes for December 5, 2011 were reviewed and accepted.

**Deputy Archivist Quarterly Report:**

Feeney directed attention to the agenda and that the main topic of discussion is the report on current activities of the program previously distributed to members. She then introduced Deputy Archivist John McColgan.

- Introduced newly-hired Project Archivist Gretchen Carney
- Highlights of Quarterly Report
  - Physical & Intellectual Control: 30 to 40 % of Archives holdings now documented in detailed finding aids. We have also drafted comprehensive security policies to address the risks involved in occupying a large and multi-tenanted building.
  - Promotion of holdings use is a priority activity. For example, Asst. Archivist Marta Crilly recently explained at a BPL genealogy series the holdings

information available through various media including our Web site, Facebook, and Flickr.

- Goals For City-Wide Records Management And Archival Transfers are done in concert. The emphases for records management are confirming that all agencies have Department Records Officers, that they are educated in the use of the DRO Toolkit site for developing File Plans, and that all are cooperating with DoIT's initiative to create an electronic records repository. Training sessions for DROs are critical for Archives and agency staff to be on same page and to increase Archives visibility. Our message is that we want to build relationships, work with agencies on their individual needs such as streamlining procedures. A weekly DRO bulletin is already in progress and trainings for DROs begin in April The message is we have valuable expertise that we want to share with agencies
- The latter goal of archival transfers includes identifying permanent archival records—including electronic records—with the help of our NHPRC project archivist. The focus is on 30 agencies and the physical transfer of up to 3,000 cf. Recent transfers have included a private donation of a portrait of Mayor Samuel Eliot who was Mayor at the time of the 1837 Broad St. Riot.

## Q & A

- Q: What do training sessions for DROs consist of?
- A: One hour sessions; trying to convey information in digestible bits via for instance the weekly DRO bulletin, training sessions to emphasize acting on dispositions of records to Archives or Records Center.
- Q: McMahan suggests a resource publication of advice for DROs
- A: Toolkit site has policies & procedures, schedules, forms, etc. to serve that purpose
- Q: Sinnott suggests it's not just a DRO issue; also a management issue. He recounted that transfer of former Corporation Counsel records was cancelled due to concerns for legal privilege and personal privacy. The incident did lead to speeding development of a written policy for inactive files evaluation.
- A: Feeney agrees that lots of training needed and that the agency itself needs to do some self-assessment
- Q: Bastian (supported by McMahan) suggests a pilot training project of five agencies of varying complexity and functions to use for creating a model plan for building "buy-in."
- Q: Sinnott asked whether 2010-2011 agency trainings were effective.
- A: Methodology needed to be refined to focus on a narrower field of issues
- Q: McMahan offered to sit down with her assistant and Project Archivist Gretchen Carney to review her office's retention needs.
- Q: O'Brien asked about the Archives' collection development policy and its current storage capacity.
- A: Targeted materials must be official City records or material related to municipal government activities. As for storage we are now about 60% full with little room for drawings and plans. We don't currently have a long range capital plan in place for further facility development
- Q: O'Toole asked about the current NHPRC project timetable.
- A: Calendar year 2012
- Q: Cook sees need to educate agency management in what we can purge to reduce records space needs.

- Q: Cook & McMahon delighted to cooperate with Archives in exhibits to promote historical records appreciation
- Q: Patrick Collins of DoIT was asked about related activities and he mentioned the imminent trainings and roll out of email retention folders

**Archives Staff Classification:** Feeney reported that there is no news other than that the classification request has not been acted upon.

**Adjournment:** Feeney moved that, if there were no other observations, that the meeting be adjourned; it was seconded and passed. The next meeting is yet to be determined. Meeting adjourned at 4:50 pm.

#### **Documents & Exhibits**

- Agenda
- Minutes of December 5, 2011 meeting
- Deputy Archivist's Report