



**Boston Public Library Collections Committee Meeting
Wednesday, October 27, 2010, 12 Noon (Luncheon) – 1:30 p.m.
Trustees' Room, Johnson Building, 3rd floor
700 Boylston Street, Boston, MA
Mr. Brian Clancy, Chair**

AGENDA

1. **Welcome** **Mr. Brian Clancy**
2. **Review and Approval of Minutes for the Collections Committee Meeting on November 10, 2009**
Mr. Brian Clancy
3. **Review, Refinement and Approval of Revised Sub-Committee Structure and Process Proposal**
Mr. Brian Clancy
4. **Sub-committee reports:**
 - *Collections Management Sub-committee:* **Mr. Brian Clancy, Ms. Susan Glover**
 - *Access Sub-committee:* **Ms. Vivian K. Spiro, Ms. Beth Prindle**
 - *Conservation Sub-committee:* **Michael B. Keating, Esq., Mr. Rishi Bhalerao, Mr. Stuart Walker**
5. **BPL Affiliate Special Collections Related Activities**
 - **Associates Update: Ms. Vivian K. Spiro**
 - **Norman B. Leventhal Map Center at the BPL: Ms. Jan Spitz, Mr. Ronald Grim**
 - **Boston Public Library Foundation Update: Mr. Brian Clancy, Ms. Daria McLean**
6. **Other Business** **Mr. Brian Clancy**
7. **Schedule of future meetings:**
 - **Wednesday, January 26, 2011, 12 – 1:30 p.m.**
 - **Wednesday, May 4, 2011, 12 – 1:30 p.m.****Mr. Brian Clancy**
8. **Adjournment** **Mr. Brian Clancy**

Documents to be presented at the meeting are available to the public at: Boston Public Library, Office of the Clerk, Room 503, McKim Building, Copley Square, Boston, MA

TRUSTEES OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

Minutes of Meeting
Boston Public Library Collections Committee

In Board of Trustees
Tuesday, November 10, 2009

DRAFT

The meeting of the Boston Public Library Collections Committee was held at the Boston Public Library, Trustees' Room, Johnson Building, 3rd floor, 700 Boylston Street, Boston, MA on Tuesday, November 10, 2009 at 12 Noon.

Present at the meeting were: Committee Chairman Brian Clancy; President Amy E. Ryan; Ms. Elizabeth B. "Lillie" Johnson; Ms. Vivian K. Spiro; Susan Abbott, Esq.; Ms. Betsy Hall; Ms. Daria McLean; Ms. Elizabeth Snyder; Javis P. Kellogg, Esq.; Ms. Joan D. Wheeler; Ms. Judith Tick; Ms. Mary Pfeifer Lentz; Mr. Mike Ewald; Mr. Rishi Bhalerao; Mr. Robert Pemberton; Ms. Susan Glover; Ms. Beth Prindle; Mr. Stuart Walker; and Mr. Jamie McGlone, Clerk of the Board.

Chairman Brian Clancy presided.

Chairman Clancy addressed the first item on the order of business pertaining to the review and approval of Minutes for the *Collections Committee Meeting* held on September 9, 2009. Following discussion, on a motion duly made and seconded, the Minutes of the *Collections Committee Meeting* held on September 9, 2009 were approved.

Mr. Brian Clancy, Chair, *Collection Development Sub-Committee* reported that phase one has been completed pertaining to creating frameworks and processes for evaluating acquisition and deaccession candidates as well as creating policies and procedures with financial thresholds for structuring our decision making processes.

The Chair also noted that the frameworks which have been shared with the full Committee have been piloted and worked well in evaluating both acquisition and deaccession opportunities, including a fast tract process that was tested successfully with two important Adams Library volumes that were acquired in the last year.

Meanwhile, the Chair noted that the *Collection Development Sub-Committee* would be examining collection development strategies and collection management issues that fit within the broader context of the work that President Ryan is pursuing around a Strategic Framework for the BPL.

Chairman Clancy provided an update on behalf of the *Collection Development Sub-Committee* including the ongoing review and evaluation of the Boston Public Library's two copies of the Audubon elephant folio of the *Birds of North America* for completeness and

provenance and reviewed the highlights of a report entitled **Audubon's Birds of America Status Update** as follows:

By way of background, the BPL has two incomplete copies of this remarkable book in our collection. In total we have 433 of the 435 plates that constitute a complete volume. The missing plates are #91 (the American Swallow-tailed Kite/Swallow-tailed Hawk) and #236 (the Great Horned Owl). In addition we have 79 instances in which we have two versions of individual plates.

Approved Actions:

Complete a thorough review of all plates in our collection and select the finest versions of each to comprise a BPL "master copy" of our 433 plates which was approved by the full Committee at the Collections Committee Meeting on May 6, 2009 to explore completing the Thomas Appleton copy. Current Status: Underway through the leadership of Ms. Susan Glover.

Seek to complete this master copy by acquiring quality versions of plates #91 and #236. This would be a significant achievement and a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the library's collections. Current Status: In light of the BPL Collections Committee giving a green light to pursue this plan, the library has also reached out to the dealer community and received sophisticated advice on how to proceed on this front. Acquisition may be achieved through outright purchase and/or trading/selling those plates not selected for the master copy. At this point the specific plates we seek have not been identified in the marketplace.

Seek to establish valuations for all the 79 plates not included in the master copy by evaluating recent auction and dealer history and adjusting for plate quality/condition. Current Status: Preliminary online research and dealer outreach has been done, but further work is necessary to develop a reasonable estimate of potential sales proceeds and the most effective means of sale.

Develop a position paper on BPL deaccession that puts any actions we take related to this initiative into the context of both our internal policies and national cultural institution guidelines and standards.

Potential Ideas for Future Consideration:

Explore disposition of most or all of the remaining plates not in the BPL master copy and the reallocation of those funds to other appropriate collection development purposes.

Refine our internal policies to make explicit what such funds could be used for and what specific curatorial departments would have access to them.

Explore the role that any funds generated for new acquisitions could have in making our special collections more relevant and inspiring to the entire Boston community, e.g. better aligned with the diverse and vibrant city we have become.

Mr. Bob Pemberton, *Coordination Sub-committee*, reported that he has reviewed the *Charter* to the Collections Committee that was adopted by the BPL Board of Trustees on January 16, 2007 and noted it was made very clear that the Committee was to be focusing on how the collections can be made meaningful to Boston's various communities.

Mr. Pemberton underscored the Committee has run into its own success noting when the Committee was established the Boston Public Library did not have an accession and de-accession policy which has been successfully addressed by the *Collection Development Sub-Committee*.

Meanwhile, now that the policy is in place, the Committee is trying to look at the whole process of dealing with both the big picture and the details of accessioning and de-accessioning of collections at the same time underscoring that most museums have a separate committee that deals with the details of accessioning and de-accessioning separately from the Committee that addresses collection policies.

Mr. Pemberton made a motion to form a Sub-Committee of the Collections Committee to look again at the *Collections Committee Charter* with a view to examining its future purpose, composition, governance, areas of focus and process. Following discussion, on a motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: “unanimously to establish a Sub-Committee of the Collections Committee to review the *Collections Committee Charter* to explore the Collections Committee future mission, governance and purpose”

To further that end, the Chair asked the Clerk of the Board to poll the members of the Collections Committee seeking their interest in serving on the newly established *Sub-Committee* reviewing the Collections Committee mission, governance and purpose to ensure it fits within the strategic work the Boston Public Library is embarking upon over the next six months.

The *Preservation Sub-Committee*, Michael B. Keating, Esq., Mr. Rishi Bhalerao and Mr. Stuart Walker, shared a *Report to the Collections Committee* on the history and current status of preservation initiatives at the Boston Public Library. In a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Stuart Walker provided an executive summary noting that preservation has been an ongoing activity at the BPL for over 25 years and the effort has yielded many notable successes, including restoration of the *John Adams Library*.

Recently, a lot of preservation work has been driven by donors given our resources are fewer than peer libraries coupled with structural problems due to HVAC issues being a major constraint and staff numbers reduced from historic levels.

The Associates of the BPL have played a pivotal role in several preservation efforts; these efforts are being supplemented by a 10-point strategic plan that calls for centralizing all preservation initiatives under the supervision of a preservation officer.

The *Preservation Sub-Committee* strongly urges this committee to support its recommendation for filling this preservation officer position.

Mr. Stuart Walker, *Book Conservator Project Director for the BPL*, reviewed the ten elements of a strategic plan in which a preservation officer would be the “anchor” of bringing the preservation plan to fruition and include undertaking the following measures: collection survey; paper conservation services; disaster plan; digital preservation strategy; environmental assessment; cleaning of collections; review of offsite storage; update of conservation lab; and creation of staff training program to promote system-wide preservation practices.

Mr. Stuart Walker shared copies of a draft *Boston Public Library: Preservation Strategy* prepared by Ms. Susan L. Glover which is in the process of being further developed and refined toward a new strategic vision that will provide a framework in charting a future course of action to meet the BPL’s overall preservation needs for its collections.

The members commended the *Preservation Sub-Committee* on an extremely clear and correct level of detail in the *Report to the Collections Committee* on the history, current status and recommendations for enhancing preservation strategies and initiatives at the Boston Public Library.

President Amy E. Ryan reported on the Affiliates that support the Boston Public Library as requested at the last meeting and shared the following report prepared by Ms. Koren Stenbridge, Director, Partnerships and Communications:

Affiliates of the Boston Public Library

Associates of the Boston Public Library

Mission:

Founded in 1972, The Associates of the Boston Public Library is a community-based organization dedicated to expanding the role of the Boston Public Library in the intellectual life of the City. Over the past thirty years, it has been the creator and underwriter of a wide array of programs, including:

- Regularly scheduled art and architecture tours
- Poetry readings
- Lectures, public discussions and symposia
- Music events
- Book signings and readings
- Other activities that celebrate the spirit of the Library and heighten public awareness of its resources

The Associates also oversees the David McCullough Conservation Fund, and supports the Library in its ongoing efforts to acquire, conserve and restore materials for its special collections. In addition to Literary Lights and Literary Lights for Children, more specialized programs are also offered to Associates members through the Friends of Music and Friends of Art & Architecture at the Boston Public Library.

City-Wide Friends of the Boston Public Library

Mission:

The City-Wide Friends of the Boston Public Library was founded in 1987 for the purpose of:

1. Promoting public awareness of the Boston Public Library system and its resources,
2. Furthering appreciation of the value of the Library as a cultural and educational asset,
3. Supporting and linking the activities of Branch Library Friends groups, and
4. Encouraging volunteers to assist the Library.

The Friends run a number of programs to support the Library and community, including:

- Friends Forum – a quarterly newsletter,
- Booksales
- Adult Literacy Program,
- Communications with Branch Friends.

Boston Public Library Foundation

Mission:

The mission of the Boston Public Library Foundation is to enhance the public visibility and to raise public and private funds in support of the revitalization of the Boston Public Library. The Board of Directors, composed of business and community leaders, develops the Foundation's strategies and steers its development initiatives. Since 1992, the Boston Public Library Foundation has raised more than \$80 million.

Areas of Focus:

- To update the facilities and services of the Central Library and 26 neighborhood branches, with an emphasis on enhancing youth and family programming.
- To improve access to the array of BPL resources, including special collections, through 21st century technology.

- To complete the restoration of the National Historic Landmark McKim Building in Copley Square.

Youth education programs funded through the BPL Foundation:
Homework Assistance Mentoring Program, Collaborative Schools
Creative Writing and Design Program, Drop-in Science, Read Your Way
to Fenway, BPL Early Reading Program, and Guy's Read.

Norman B. Leventhal Map Center at the Boston Public Library

Mission:

The Norman B. Leventhal Map Center at the Boston Public Library is dedicated to the creative educational use of the Boston Public Library's cartographic holdings, which extend from the 15th century to the present.

In pursuit of its mission, the Center collects and preserves maps and atlases, promotes research in the collection, and makes its resources available to the public through its website, exhibitions, publications, lectures, and other programs.

The Center has a particular interest in developing innovative uses of maps and geographic materials to engage young people's curiosity about the world, thereby enhancing their understanding of geography, history, world cultures, and citizenship.

President Ryan shared copies of a report presented at the last Trustees Meeting on September 16, 2009 entitled "*The Boston Public Library: A Proposal for Developing a Strategic Framework for the BPL*" that reflects the first step in working together to develop a strategic framework for the Library toward identifying core principles for excellence that will guide the BPL's overall direction for success within the context of financial sustainability.

The strategic framework will result in a public document that identifies core principles that build on existing strengths and advance a customer driven service commitment to make the Boston Public Library the best library in the country.

The Chairman noted that the major topics for the next meeting would include updates by President Amy E. Ryan on the Boston Public Library's strategic work for developing the Boston Public Library: Principles for Excellence and the ongoing capital planning assessment study for McKim IID in collaboration with the City of Boston.

Chairman Brian Clancy scheduled the next *Boston Public Library Collections Committee meeting* for **Wednesday, January 13, 2010 at 12 Noon**. There being no other business, the *Collections Committee meeting* adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jamie McGlone

Clerk of the Board