

Public Records Advisory Commission (PRAC)

Minutes of 21 April 2025 Meeting

Present:

Jackie Cohan (Archivist), Emma Parsons, Carl Rohde, David Kovalik, John Connor, one unnamed member of the public

Call to Order, Appointment of Secretary & Minutes:

- The secretary was appointed.
- The meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM.
- Minutes from the 18 March 2025 meeting were approved.

4. Records Management training update

- History: been trying to get systematic records management for all new people in the city on a regular basis
 - Working w/ ITS and the City Attorney
 - Plan will be virtual training w/ at least one in-person meeting
 - Goal is members understanding records management and their responsibility concerning records as per state law.
 - Project will be finished w/ the new Archivist, but it's overall going well.

5. Facility Update

- Overview of recent renovations at the Archives
 - New sprinklers, new HVACs, placement of outdoor fire-escape
 - Great for control of temperature and humidity
 - New areas opened for use, including more storage
 - Fire Department replacing its burn building south of Archives
 - Trouble w/ leakage: groundwater from fires as well as leaking pipes
 - Replaced w/ PVC
 - 2 new hatches 2 new sump pumps

- Replacement of a damaged hatch on the floor
- Overall, project also going well

6. Hiring (Staff) Updates

- Jackie willing to come back as consultant to help w/ the new Archivist
- 6-7 good candidates

7. Digitization Project Update

- Still looking for funding w/o ITS support
- Current estimate is \$180,000 for 500+ boxes of materials
- City unsure about findings, particularly w/ a potential loss of tax revenue from former federal workers that may relocate from Alexandria.
- Current records management software system since 2005-06

8. Public Access to Records Update

- Still interested in putting permits on APEX
 - Users are still restricted to searching only their own properties
 - Concerns about security particularly w/public facilities

9. HARC update

- Updates for major events in Alexandria were provided for April and May
- HARC refining a letter of introduction of the group to newly elected and re-elected city leaders
- Waterfront Flood Mitigation Project also to be monitored by an Ad Hoc Commission
 - 2 upcoming BAR meetings for the project
 - 7 May
 - 4 June
- HARC monitoring the City Hall Renovation
 - This may be a joint-venture w/ Old Town Civic
- City Hall/Market Square renovation
 - 3 Sections
 - i. Restoration of the 1871 Historic Section
 - ii. Market Square

1. Completely reimagined
 - a. Fountain out
 - b. Permanent Stage
 2. Redoing Parking Garage w/ Geothermal Wells
- iii. The Building Itself
 1. Exterior
 2. Interior
 - a. Highlighting original internal walls
 - b. Separate 1961 from 1871 buildings
 3. A very thorough evaluation before any renovation
 - a. Anything built
 - i. Should last 100 years
 - ii. Should represent the present
2. OHA (Office of Historic Alexandria)
 - a. 2 Federal Grants
 - i. Termination for the IMLS Grant for Black History Museum received (\$99K)—Appeal initiated
 - ii. Second Grant: Save America's Treasures is still currently active

10. New Business

- Commission Membership changes
 - New Commission Member: John Connor
 - Departing Commission Member: Carl Rohde, relocating to Ohio

Next Meeting: 19 May 2025

Respectfully submitted:

David Kovalik, 6 May 2025