

Rhode Island Historical Records Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes – March 1, 2017

(Draft)

Department of State

eGovernment & IT Division Conference Room

West River Center

148 West River Street

Providence, RI 02904

Attending: Maria Bernier, Allison Cywin, Donna DiMichele, Stephen Grimes, Michael Hebert, Marlene Lopes, and Gwenn Stearn, chair

Not attending: Russell Franks, Jonathan Galli, David Maslyn, and Lori Urso.

Public attending: Michele Chiles, RI Historical Society.

Meeting called to order: 10:10 a.m.

I Presentation on the Department of State reorganization of information divisions and initiatives going forward

-Kaitlynn Ward, Director of State Archives, Library, and Public

Information

Stearn introduced Ward, who further spoke to her background. The Department of State divisional reorganization was explained as bringing together all public access, transparency, and preservation functions, including Education and Public Programs, and Administrative Records.

Ward spoke to Secretary Gorbea's initiative for a new state-of-the-art State Archives facility and history center, in partnership with the RI Supreme Court Judicial Records Center, the RI Historical Society Library, the Providence City Archives, and possibly to include storage for the Department of Transportation's archeological collections, currently housed with the Public Archeology Laboratory (PAL). Additionally, Rhode Island battle flags on display at the State House for ca. 100 years, will undergo evaluation, conservation, and ultimately be stored at the new facility, and in the interim, at a fine arts storage facility. Currently, there is a Request for Proposal (RFP) with contract to be awarded for Architectural and Engineering Design Services for a Site Selection Study for the new archives facility. The scope of work is being revised, and selected bidding firms will be asked to submit their "best and final" offers. The study will include two selected sites, building renderings, and build-out costs proposals, with completion of this phase in August. Ward noted that the current State Archives facility final lease extension is August 2020, and therefore the State Archives must move by then. In answer

to Board members' questions, Ward explained that beyond providing archival storage in the new facility, there will be community meeting space, theatre/lecture space, permanent and rotating exhibit spaces, with the thought to have guest curators for shorter-term exhibits. She stated that everything is open to discussion at this point. She acknowledged that programming staff would be needed. And with respect to location, the facility would be within the city because of Providence City Archives participation. The RFP requires that I-195 Redevelopment Parcel 35 (at the top of the Point Street off ramp) and the Cranston Street Armory must be considered, in addition to other lots and buildings the bidders may propose. The "best and final" negotiations will determine whether the Armory is ultimately included in the study. Build-out costs will be needed in October, with RI Capital Plan Fund (RICAP) funding currently preferred. In answer to a question about a planning committee, Ward remarked about input from the project Steering Committee, stakeholders, and Friends.

Ward spoke about the current and planned State Archives onsite exhibits, including borrowing items from other repositories. The 2017 theme is Activism in RI, and the next exhibit, opening in early May, possibly in conjunction with Gallery Night, will be World War I on the battlefield and home front. She also spoke briefly about education and public programs, including possibly offering one-on-one tours to interested parties.

II Minutes of meeting – January 4, 2017

Bernier moved to approve the minutes. Cywin seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.

III Resuming Protecting the Past-RI community meetings – report from Donna

DiMichele

DiMichele reported that she plans to organize and resume the Protecting the Past-RI program and begin holding community meetings in the summer. She had met with RIEMA contractor John McCoy because of his involvement with ESF 17 and he has taken an interest in Protecting the Past-RI. The meeting took place at the Fusion Center, which houses the FBI, Homeland Security, National Guard, and State Police among others. He suggested meetings around the state with stakeholders, with assurances of RIEMA buy-in and support.

IV WebEOC – updating cultural heritage organizations’ information

Stearn and DiMichele recapped the parameters and purpose of WebEOC with respect to Protecting the Past-RI. Under its aegis, information from 200 cultural heritage organizations was collected in 2012/13 and entered into RIEMA’s WebEOC, so that in the event of disaster, cultural heritage organizations locations were known and contact could be made. With the passage of time, that information

needs to be verified and/or updated. Additionally, responses were not received from other cultural heritage organizations. The data collection form and list of those responding and non-responders was distributed. In discussion, the matter of dPlan and dPlan-RI's status arose. This being the "standard" for disaster plans in Rhode Island, but under the purview of NEDCC, both Bernier and Cywin, who sit on NEDCC committees, offered to bring the matter up when those committees next met, and report back at the Board's May 3rd meeting. Means of undertaking the WebEOC update work as a Board project were discussed, with further discussion also to take place in May.

V News and announcements

Bernier reported that Westerly Public Library was holding events in celebration of their 125th anniversary. A Tour Through Time features the library's history and building. Events include exhibitions, as well as featuring special collections and local history. As part of the run-up to Westerly's 350th anniversary in 2019, a program this fall called Bricks and Murals will bring artists and sign makers to paint murals in historic downtown that honor the history of the community.

DiMichele remarked on the Helping History and Heritage Happen programs held monthly on 2nd Wednesdays. Organized by the RI Historical Society Education Department, the next workshop will be Exploring Issues of Charitable Giving and Fundraising. DiMichele will

present on disaster planning May 10th.

DiMichele also reported on a survey to be conducted by the Office of Library and Information Services and two stakeholder meetings to inform their strategic plan.

Stearn reported that Warwick City Clerk and former City Archivist Judy Wild, and former Protecting the Past-RI Project Manager Theresa Woodmansee's names had been put forward to the Governor for Board appointment consideration, along with reappointments for DiMichele and Franks. She also mentioned that Bernier would participate on March 24th in a New England Archivists conference session – State Historical Records Advisory Boards Summit.

VI Adjournment

Bernier moved to adjourn the meeting. Cywin seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.