

Rhode Island Historical Records Advisory Board

Minutes of March 7, 2018

The members of the Rhode Island Historical Records Advisory Board met on March 7, 2018 at 10:00a.m. at 148 West River St. Providence, RI 02903.

Rhode Island Historical Records Advisory Board Members present: Maria Bernier, Alison Cywin, Donna DiMichele, Russell Franks, Steve Grimes, Ashley Selima, Theresa Woodmansee

Rhode Island Historical Records Advisory Board Members absent: Jonathan Galli, Lori Urso

Guests: n/a

I. Welcome/Call to Order

Ashley Selima called the meeting to order at 10:05a.m.

II. Approval of Minutes of the May 3, 2017 Meeting

Motion to approve by Ms. Cywin, Seconded by Mr. Franks. Motion carried unanimously by all present members.

Mr. Franks requested that draft minutes be shared prior to future meetings.

III. Vision for 2018

Ms. Selima asked members to share their thoughts on the goals of the Board going forward. Ms. Selima mentioned that there may be more that can be done as a Board to support the NHPRC initiatives and grant programs and asked how can the Board can best coordinate and increase collaboration and support of local historical repositories. Ms. Selima shared her goal is to ensure that organizations with historical records know that the Board is there as a support, and to make steps to increase collaboration.

Ms. DiMichele asked what the Board's role is with cities and towns. Ms. Selima shared that the Board can and should continue to work with cities and towns and assist in education on preservation and maintenance. Additionally, proposing that the Board could explore a webinar to update the former "Basics of Archives" course put out by the Board.

Ms. DiMichele shared that repositories with historic records appear to be growing but their missions are unclear. She also shared that RI Historical Society has expanded its outreach to the historical records community. Ms. DiMichele felt that the Board should further define its scope. Ms. Selima agreed that defining the scope and sharing a clearer vision of the Board would allow greater opportunity to assist and collaborate with the community. Ms. Cywin mentioned the Strategic Plan which was drafted in 2015 as a place to start. Reviewing the Strategic Plan at the next meeting was proposed to ensure that the goals, action items, and ideals are consistent with the current Board and climate. A review of any established timelines was also established as a priority.

Ms. Bernier stated that Basics of Archives was rolled out several years ago and since then there has likely been turnover in organizations and that there are new connections to be made. Ms. Selima agreed and proposed that broadening the platform and moving away from physical media, e.g. discs, would increase audience and accessibility. The question then arose if the Board should focus on updating the presentation and renew it or if a new presentation should be launched. Ms. Bernier said webinars have proved successful for most organizations, including NEDCC, and the platform could prove effective. Ms. Selima shared that the State Archives will be using WebEx soon and will explore if it can also be used for the Board.

Ms. Woodmansee requested a copy of the Strategic Plan prior to the next meeting. Ms. Selima will share it with the entire Board.

Ms. DiMichele asked if the Board could consider engaging in Preservation Week annually by sharing a poster, a program, or other types of outreach via the web. The Board should also consider doing something for May Day, to highlight archives and preservation. Ms. Selima agreed and shared that October, as National Archives Month, would also be a good opportunity and that piggy-backing on national holidays can assist. Ms. Bernier added that due a limited budget that the Board is limited in what it can do unless grants are involved.

Ms. DiMichele asked if the Secretary of State's Office would be able to support the Board with funding to print posters or other potential marketing materials. Ms. Selima said she would explore what funding options were available.

Ms. Cywin reiterated that reviewing the Strategic Plan is the best place to start and brainstorm what the Board needs to do to move forward.

IV. Membership Update

Ms. Selima informed the Board that several members of the Board, Marlene Lopes and Michael Hebert, decided not to seek renewal of their appointment and that additional members, Judy Wild retired and David Maslyn, resigned from the Board by February 2018.

Considering the four vacancies, recommendations were sent to the Governor with a request for appointment to the Board. Ms. Selima explained that the candidates will be reviewed by the Governor who may elect to appoint the recommended candidates or offer her own. Ms. Selima will inform the Board upon notice of appointment of new members.

Ms. Bernier shared that adding a city or town clerk would be positive for the Board composition. Ms. Selima said that a geographic diversity is also important and that the Board is continually building its representation.

Ms. Cywin asked who we recommended for appointment. Ms. Selima confirmed that Genna Duplisea, Michele Chiles, Loren Spears, Kate Wells, and Nina Wright were put forth as candidates. The request for re-appointment for Ms. Cywin and Ms. Bernier was also submitted.

If all are approved, membership would be at 14 members. Ms. DiMichele inquired if Jonathan Galli was still a member of the Board. Ms. Selima confirmed his appointment was still active.

Mr. Franks asked what the maximum number of members of the Board were.

V. RIHRAB Web Presence

Ms. Selima asked if the Board knew when the website was last updated. Ms. DiMichele shared that Kate Telford, from the Department of State, had previously managed and updated the site.

Ms. Selima asked the Board if any members were opposed to exploring updating the website and reviewing content. Ms. Selima shared that the only direct update recently was to remove Gwenn's contact information and that the website overall needs a facelift. Ms. Selima additionally shared her belief that the Board should explore updating the Directory of Historical Repositories. Ms. Cywin asked if the State Archives staff would be completing this work or what responsibility would fall to the Board. Ms. Selima requested that Board members assist in reviewing content to distinguish what may need changing.

Ms. Woodmansee mentioned that repositories currently can update information on their own and questioned how that operates. It was also said that as with any website it needs to be fresh and current, otherwise it does not present itself as a current resource. The Board agreed that the website does need addressing for this reason. Ms. Woodmansee additionally inquired how the minutes are posted. Ms. Selima confirmed that the minutes tab does lead to the Secretary of State's Open Meetings page.

Ms. Cywin confirmed that if willing members could review the web content and share at the next meeting what they have identified as necessary changes. Ms. Bernier asked if the Board would be restricted to a Secretary of State style sheet. Ms. Selima stated that currently the website does not reflect the Secretary of State's web pages and that there may be more broader options in design once content is addressed.

VI. RIEMA, WebEOC, Cultural Heritage Database

Ms. DiMichele provided an update on the WebEOC Cultural Heritage Database and is looking to give unique logins for members of the Board for the database.

Ms. DiMichele expressed that work in the database is an easy task. It is not repository collection information that needs updated, but first and second contact for reaching an organization in the event of disaster. Ms. DiMichele hopes that by the next meeting she will have logins for Board members to sign in and update information that they have. The Board discussed that confirming information for smaller organizations has historically been challenging.

Ms. DiMichele said that outreach would need to be done to confirm with contacts that they are listed in the database and an explanation of what that means. A letter campaign to educate may be the next step.

Ms. DiMichele will share further details at the next meeting.

Ms. Bernier shared that updating contacts for WebEOC could dovetail into updating the historical repository directory for the RIHRAB website.

VII. News and Announcements

Ms. DiMichele shared that she was contacted by Ann Marie Willer and William Veillette from NEDCC that they are funded and moving forward with updating the dPlan platform. They will be updating the Rhode Island version and also shared with Ms. DiMichele that elements of the Rhode Island dPlan will be added into the master plan. There will likely be a pay for use model, but the cost would be minimal.

NEDCC is seeking to make the dPlan more intuitive and require less drilling down of sub sections on the page. An update to the document upload tool is also being considered. The current dPlan could be very overwhelming to new users and the upcoming changes will make it much more accessible to institutions of all sizes.

Ms. DiMichele shared she is holding an OLIS Continuing Education program on May 1st on disaster planning and why planning is important for cultural institutions.

Ms. DiMichele shared information about the RIEMA Tabletop Exercises. Ms. DiMichele is exploring what questions she can ask to ensure the WebEOC is best prepared for all types of disasters and what partners may need to be brought in on the project.

Ms. Selima announced that the State Archives brought the Declaration of Independence Broadside to NEDCC for conservation, new housing, and high-resolution imaging. The project began in September 2017 and is now officially underway. The State Archives is also launching a partner exhibit with Brown University John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage students for a Historic Chinatown exhibit. There will be additional events and weekend walking tours involving the State Archives.

Ms. Selima shared that there will also be more public events at the State Archives for 2018. The first event was in February, which was a transcription party that thirty or so people attended. Ms. Selima hopes it will act as a kick-off for continued transcription programs, including another party during National Archives Month. There are other public events scheduled throughout the year.

Mr. Grimes informed the Board that with the assistance of Ms. Selima and the Attorney General's Office a record which was posted on eBay was not sold and returned to the Judicial Records Center (JRC). The Minute Book in question was returned to the JRC after the Attorney General's Office and Mr. Grimes completed an affidavit and filed a temporary restraining order to halt the sale. The record is currently in possession of the JRC pending additional litigation. Mr. Grimes and Ms. Selima hope that this situation will prove a positive precedent for any future cases.

Mr. Grimes announced his upcoming retirement from the Judicial Records Center and his intention to remain on the Board post retirement.

Ms. Selima announced the next meeting will be Wednesday, May 2, 2018 at 10:00am.

VIII. Adjourn

Motion by Ms. DiMichele and seconded by Ms. Cywin.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45a.m.

Hand-outs:

None

APPROVED