

(postponed)

Office of the Mayor, Senior Advisor
Oversight Hearing, Committee on Government Operations
Councilmember Brandon Todd, Chair Re: DC Archives
(Wednesday, February 19, 2020)

Good day, I am Bill Rice. I am testifying about the DC Archives new facility and DC's archival program. I am an active member of the Friends of the DC Archives (FDCA) and support its advocacy for a new facility, upgraded staff and facilities for the current Archives at Naylor Court and for a comprehensive DC records management; however, I speak only for myself.

I have appeared before the Council many times since the Council approved money for a new Archives some seven years ago. And while there is consensus that the District needs a new building *and* a greatly upgraded records management capability virtually nothing has happened. This impasse exists despite the numerous studies on a new facility and the FY2020 budget's approval for a new facility at UDC, which FDCA and I support.

The current problems are, apparently, higher-than-anticipated costs for the new facility and the need to coordinate the actions of UDC, the Archives, the Department of General Services and the Office of the Chief Technology Officer. I believe the only way out of this dilemma is for this Committee to convene the participants and thrash out what needs to be done.

In addition, I recommend the following:

-- **Fund DHRAB:** In 2018, the Council, under Councilmember Todd's leadership, created the District Historic Record Archives Board (DHRAB) to examine *all* of the DC Government's holdings and records management practices, including the Council, the Courts and the independent agencies (DCPS, UDC etc) and develop a comprehensive Archives plan. I ask the Committee and Council to fund the embarrassingly small \$200,000 needed to activate this panel.

-- **Work with DCPL:** One of the biggest tasks for the Archives at Naylor Court is moving its invaluable holdings to a new facility and/or temporary storage. The Washingtoniana Collection of the DC Public Library has had to move its materials several times while the Martin Luther King building is renovated. I therefore urge the Archives to take advantage of this expertise.

-- Consider the **Washington Research Library Consortium:** This group (<https://www.wrlc.org/preservation>) includes the local universities of Catholic, Gallaudet, Georgetown, George Washington, Howard and UDC. DCPL is an affiliated member. WRLC offers a high-density, environmentally-controlled, retrievable storage for all matter of materials and a shared online catalogue. The WRLC might be a place for cost-effective off-site storage of DC materials as well as be a model for the new DC facility.

In conclusion, it is time to move with *more* than deliberate speed to create the new Archives and records management capability for our great city and be worthy of the 51st State. I am happy to answer any questions.

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