

Friends of the DC Archives
Budget Hearing: Office of the Secretary of the District/DC Archives
Committee on Government Operations,
Councilmember Brandon Todd, Chair
Friday, April 5, 2019

Good day, Chair Todd and members of the Government Operations Committee. (I am Trudy Peterson appearing on behalf of the Friends of the DC Archives (FDCA), a group of professional archivists and concerned citizens interested in the preservation and management of DC Government contemporary records and historic archives. We advocate for: a) a new, state-of-the-art Archives; b) significantly more staff and upgraded facilities for the current Archives; and c) comprehensive records management for the DC Government.

FDCA joins in supporting the Bowser Administration's commitment to a modern, state-of-the-art District Archives and to move the Archives to a new facility at the University of the District of Columbia (UDC). Mayor Bowser has dubbed it a "win-win" for both institutions, UDC President Mason mentioned it in his budget testimony and we ask the Council to confirm this important step.

Regarding the budget, we offer the following comments and requests:

***District Historical Records Advisory Board Funding.** The FY20 budget does not appear to contain any funds for the District Historical Records Advisory Board (DHRAB), created by the Council at Councilmember Todd's behest. It needs \$200,000 to begin operations, most importantly to study the state of *all* of the District Government's archives and its records management program, an essential task as the Archives prepares to move into a new facility.

***Office of Public Records Funding.** With only six staff-members, the Office of Public Records is grossly understaffed. It should be planning the move to the new archives facility, but its staff is stretched so thin that it is forced to use volunteers to carry out basic functions. We ask the committee, at a minimum, to double OPR's funding and staff positions. This would be a down payment on bringing OPR to par with similar state archives' staffs.

***Archives Capital Budget.** The new Archives facility project is in the in capital budget (AM0-AB102-ARCHIVES) for \$65.4 million, \$7 million less than last year. We ask the Committee to query the Administration on the budgetary and planning status of the project and why the proposed reduction.

The FDCA understands that construction of the new Archives depends on the purchase by UDC of the building at 4250 Connecticut Avenue, where the UDC staff now in Building 41 will move, freeing the Building 41 site for the new Archives. We support the funding for that purchase.

In closing, we want to report on the very productive meeting FDCA had with Senior Advisor Beverly Perry and Secretary Kim Bassett. FDCA stressed the imperative of involving the Office of the Chief Technology Officer from the inception of the planning for the new Archives. FDCA is pleased to expand the involvement of OCTO and other stakeholders in planning for the new facility and a revitalized archives and records management program.

Your questions are welcome.

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