

Testimony of Bill Rice for the Friends of the DC Archives,  
FY2016 Budget Hearing, DC Council Committee of the Whole, Chairman Phil Mendelson  
Re: Secretary of the District, DC Archives  
April 15, 2015

Good day, my name is Bill Rice and I am testifying as a member and for the Friends of the DC Archives, a group of professionals and others who advocate for the DC Archives and good record management in the District Government (<http://www.friendsofdcarchives.org/>). FDCA believes that a strong Archives is necessary to promote an understanding of our history and ensure accountability of our public officials. We support the preservation and accessibility of our historic and contemporary records, in all formats, and the proper management of the District Government's records by a high-quality, professional staff. A new Archives is an essential part of this program we strongly support the \$40 million allocated for this purpose. We also urge the appointment of a new, qualified archivist, reactivating DC's State Historical Records Advisory Board and meeting the desperate physical and staffing needs at the existing Archives at Naylor Court.

We have looked at Mayor Bowser's FY2016 budget and are pleased that the new Archives is in the capital spending plan, but dismayed that public records operations is to receive less money than last year. In fact, as far as we can tell, the Bowser Administration continues to pursue the existing procurement for the new Archives despite FDCA and Council objections (such as by Councilmember David Grosso) about the leadership and public planning for this iconic facility. Specifically, the Department of General Services (DGS) is soliciting bids for a new facility without an Archivist/public records administrator in office and without any public input as to the new facility's size, location, functions and programming. Where is the general records management plan? What about possible cooperation with related institutions, such as the DC Public Library (which is planning for a major renovation of the Martin Luther King Memorial Library, which includes the Washingtoniana Division) and the Historical Society of Washington.

FDCA has stated these objections previously and offered whatever assistance we can to solve these problems. This includes testimony at the oversight hearings before this Committee and the Committee on Transportation and the Environment (for the DGS procurement). We reiterated these points in a follow-up meeting with Beverly Perry, the Mayor's Senior Advisor, Lauren Vaughan, the District Secretary and Joy Holland, deputy Secretary. One of our suggestions was for two-step procurement as suggested by Councilmember David Grosso; first develop a plan, with public input, that would lead to a specific statement of work that would then be put out for bid.

In closing I want to bring to your attention the attached photos of conditions at Naylor Court--please visit the Archives to see for yourselves how our heritage is in danger.

Thank you. I am pleased to take your questions.

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