

Testimony of the Friends of the DC Archives
Before the DC Council, Committee of the Whole, Phil Mendelson, chair
DC Archives, FY17 Budget
Monday, April 11, 2016

Good day, I am Fynnette Eaton head of the Friends of the DC Archives (FDCA) here to testify on Mayor Bowser's FY17 budget for the DC Archives and the Office of Public Records. FDCA advocates for upgrading the building and staff at the current Archives at Naylor Court; creating a new, state-of-the-art Archives building for the District; and developing a records management program for the DC Government.

The Mayor's operating budget proposes the same funding and staffing levels as this year; the capital budget keeps \$55 million for a new Archives building, with a small decrease of \$216,000 from last year and a move of the spending to FY19 and FY20. Our recommendations for each budget item are briefly discussed below.

The operating budget does not begin to meet the need to build up the Archives staff to serve the public and undertake immediate records management priority, namely inventories of the holdings at Naylor Court, the Federal Records Center and in the DC agencies. This will tell us which records do and don't have retention schedules, and, by scheduling all of them, thereby know what to move to the new facility or, by following the applicable schedule, can be destroyed. The Hartman Cox report noted that there were approximately 8,500 feet of temporary records at Naylor Court and that the Federal Records Center at Suitland, Maryland held more than 119,000 feet of Temporary DC Government records and at least 14,000 feet of unscheduled records. The architect's report recommended that the 119,000 feet at Suitland needs to be reviewed and appraised.

Thus, we recommend hiring a reference archivist, a processing archivist and a records manager, as well as an assistant, to tackle the Naylor Court inventory and processing backlog and to start to work with the agencies on their inventories and retention schedules.

The capital budget wisely retains the commitment to a new Archives building at the \$55 million level. However, we have serious reservations about the Penn Center building that the Department of General Services is looking at for the new building. These include questions about general location and access (including by transit), whether it can accommodate research and exhibit activities and whether it

is the right place and building to be the center for, and principal repository of, the history of our local government. These questions need to be fully discussed before the site/building is selected. We would like suggest a forum like the earlier one at MLK.

We again want to thank District Secretary Lauren Vaughan and Administrator of the Public Records Rebecca Katz for their cooperation and the Department of General Services for the Hartman/Cox study and the \$3 million for temporary fixes at Naylor Court.

I am happy to take your questions.

Fynnette Eaton