

Mayor's Blue Ribbon Committee on History Archives

Meeting March 24, 2023

Meeting called to order at 9:02 by Vince Lombardi

Attendees: Vince Lombardi, Richard Candee, Jeff Keefe, Tom Watson, Elizabeth Farish Susan Skerry, Chuck Doleac, Tom Hardiman, Christine Friese, Alan Cohen

Absent: Emma Stratton, Kristen Peterson

Guest: Karen Conard, City Manager

Minutes were accepted with corrections; Jeff was omitted from attending last meeting clarification of comments attributed to Tom Watson and Tom Hardiman were made

Open Discussion:

Karen has begun a discussion with the city's legal department regarding what the city is obliged to keep, and where. She noted that the city is bursting at the seams and is very motivated to find a solution and is very supportive of the work of this committee.

Some of the city's documents are stored off-site in a storage unit in Greenland, which she admitted is not a good solution.

We are not tasked with finding a location, but it would be helpful. A note was introduced between Kristen Peterson and David Choate regarding available commercial real estate. Currently there is nothing suitable, but he will continue to look and we will remain in touch.

Vince will put larger documents and RSA's on our website for further review

Discussed other institutions which may have collections, like Black Heritage Trail, whose needs should be considered. Other collections belonging to individuals are not represented.

We still have a lot of discovery to do before moving on.

Tom Watson suggested that using (employing?) an archivist whose job it will be to accept or reject pieces, would eliminate the need for an administrative entity

Funding sources are not necessarily focused on archives, but on educational purposes...ought to be explored.

Collection policies of the three major institutions need to be synthesized into one simplified statement...everything we do should be driven by money and space, and operating costs

discussion evolved into primary objective: Do our collections tell our story?

Susan: Cemetery Committee...cemeteries represent an outdoor archive. The city owns three, and the city has a total of 37. Point of Graves Cemetery is the oldest cemetery on the east coast, part of the original 13 colonies. The cemeteries are part of the archives collection. The city cemeteries have a grant of \$40K to do testing on water levels and its impact on the existing graves.

This led to a further discussion and it was affirmed that conservation is essential to our mission and should be part of our work product. The cemeteries currently identify the graves and the photos are expected to be part of the city's database.

Richard wondered if we should be in touch with the New England Genealogical Society which does a good job at identifying and cataloging graves.

Open discussion continued, Christine suggested that the work in other cities and towns should be explored as well as funding, fundraising...perhaps a 501(c)3

Alan mentioned that he and Kristen had contacted the state archivist, Ashley Miller, for the purpose of getting any perspective on what other cities or towns in NH may have done with a similar project to ours. She is willing to assist us and even attend a meeting (zoom). She may not, however, be the best resource, in that she has been on the job for 2 weeks and her background is the Concord Public Library. We will reach out to Brian Burford, the recently retired state archivist, who may be a better resource.

Tom Watson: We ought to push the city to provide their parameters of required space by the end of April.

Richard agreed to quantify the amount of space needed for three dimensional objects.

Christine will try and quantify the amount of space for documents

Tom Hardiman: Digital collections are growing so fast that the amount of space should be doubled every 2 years. The Athenaeum currently has 10 TB and they will outgrow it in a couple of years. Its storage currently resides in a server farm in PA.

Christine will put together a draft of the library's collection policies.

Our default meeting space will be at the city hall conference room A

meeting adjourned 10:29

Alan Cohen