**Local History and Archives Advisory Committee**

**Friday, March 2, 2018 at 10:00 am**

**Byers-Davidson Room, Saunders House**

**2 Dale Avenue, Gloucester MA 01930**

**Attendance**: Stephanie Buck, Peggy Calkins, Molly Hardy, Beverly McKean, Martin Ray, Archivist Katelynn Vance, and Library Director Deborah Kelsey

**Not Present**: Sarah Dunlap and Carol Kelly

1. Call to Order. This meeting is being recorded.
2. Welcome and Introductions.
3. Approval of the minutes for January 19, 2018. B. McKean moved to approve the minutes as presented. S. Buck seconded and the minutes were approved unanimously.
4. Update on LSTA Preservation Assessment grant:
   1. The Mayor signed the contract letter with NEDCC;
   2. Need to fill out pre-assessment surveys for each institution on the state of the collections;
   3. They will be here and at City Hall on June 27
      1. This will give us enough time to report back to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) on the five-year strategic plan at the end of September;
   4. Katelynn asked Committee members to brainstorm visions for the archives for the strategic plan: mission statement, policies and procedures, placement;
   5. Discussion on the role of the City and of SFL in housing and providing access to local history archives
      1. SFL is working on a collections policy;
   6. Katelynn will send grant specifications, working definitions, and an outline to Committee members to help with drafting the archive portion of the strategic plan.
5. Update on current digital initiatives
   1. Foundations: City Hall collections guide (physical format) were derived from a database which Katelynn migrated to a sustainable database; she has been doing data editing/cleanup for easier user-access; she’s also working with City IT to provide a public user-interface allowing people to search the archives from anywhere.
   2. Eight volumes of the oldest City records are available on the City Hall website.
   3. We’ve used SFL connections to provide free online access through NOBLE Digital Heritage.
   4. Katelynn is drafting the landing page for City Hall Archives Digital Connection which is hosted by SFL; will include wording that the materials are owned by the City archives and online access is made available through SFL.
      1. Through the NOBLE connection the records will be available on a statewide database (Digital Commonwealth) and a national database in the Digital Public Library of America.
      2. They are keyword-coded to come up with a search for the word “Gloucester”.
   5. How the systems and catalogs are connected should be part of the strategic plan.
      1. Discussion of offering training or instructions for finding records in the online archive.
   6. Optical Character Recognition (OCR): need to be able to keyword-search within the document. There is very expensive (to the point of being unavailable) software for hand-written documents.
      1. We need volunteers to type up hand-written documents. B. McKean volunteered to work on the first volume (not original) of the history dated in 1642.
   7. Other record types:
      1. City directories, dating from 1860, will be available online;
      2. Military record finding aids have been completed. Katelynn thanked Peggy.
      3. Highway records finding aids will be updated.
   8. The upgraded SFL website will include links to all digitized archival content.
   9. The Committee will create a list of records to be digitized and set priorities for digitization.
6. Discussion of LSTA Conservation and Digitization grant
   1. We’re applying for a $30,000 grant to digitize City records.
   2. Katelynn has sent the next volume of records to NEDCC to review and provide a quote on digitization by the end of March.
   3. Katelynn called attention to MBLC’s concerns about returning volumes to the vaults based on the condition of the vaults and the lack of a fire suppression system.
      1. We need a temporary solution for housing records until a permanent solution can be found. Precedent has been set for storing records outside of City Hall. Katelynn recommends storing records in SFL’s archive cabinets. The City insures the library buildings.
   4. There was discussion defining archives volunteers versus Archives Committee members (Sarah Dunlop, Stephanie Buck, and Juanita Rivera) who are appointed by the Mayor.
   5. M. Hardy made a motion that, following the recommendation from the preservation specialist from the MBLC, the mentioned volumes be temporarily moved to the Sawyer Free Library archival storage cabinet to secure the LSTA grant for conservation and preservation. P. Calkins seconded it. Discussion: the motion should include language that this is temporary storage until a permanent archival repository is secured. M. Ray made the motion to add the amendment; S. Buck seconded it and the amendment was approved unanimously. The motion as amended was approved unanimously.
   6. M. Hardy moved that the conserved volumes currently housed at City Hall be temporarily moved to the archival storage cabinet at Sawyer Free Library until permanent archival storage is secured by the City. B. McKean seconded it and the motion was approved unanimously.
   7. Temporary storage at SFL will not limit accessibility. Temporary storage in SFL’s archival storage cabinets show a good-faith effort in protecting the documents will make a stronger case to LSTA for awarding the grant to Gloucester.
7. Open Discussion
8. Next Meeting: Thursday, April 6, 2018 at 11:00
9. Adjourn. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Tracy Bowen

**Motions Summary**

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**Actions Summary**

K. Vance will send grant specifications, working definitions, and an outline to Committee members to help with drafting the archive portion of the strategic plan.

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