

Mayor of Providence

David N. Cicilline

EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER 2009-7

July 8, 2009

Relocation of Historical Documents

WHEREAS, The Roger Williams Deeds, and other documents held in the Archives office, are vital and irreplaceable evidence pertaining to the founding of the City of Providence and the State of Rhode Island.

WHEREAS, It is crucial to protect and preserve historical evidence for use and enjoyment by this and future generations.

WHEREAS, The City of Providence Archives office is not currently equipped to properly protect and preserve historical documents of this age and importance; and

WHEREAS, The Rhode Island State Archives office is currently equipped to properly protect and preserve historical documents of this age and importance.

NOW, THEREFORE, do I, David N. Cicilline, Mayor of the City of Providence, order the following, effective immediately:

1. That the Roger Williams Deeds, and other similar rare documents, be moved to the Rhode Island State Archives office until such time as the City of Providence Archives Office is able to protect and preserve documents of this nature.

2. That the Roger Williams Deeds, and other similar rare documents, will be returned to the City of Providence Archives office at such a time as it is able to protect and preserve documents of this nature.

IN CITY COUNCIL
JUL 27 2009

READ
WHEREUPON IT IS ORDERED THAT
THE SAME BE RECEIVED

[Signature] CLERK

David N. Cicilline, Mayor

JOHN T. MYERS
City Archivist

DAVID N. CICILLINE
Mayor



Division of Archives and History
"Building Pride in Providence"

DATE: July 23, 2009
TO: Ms. Anna M. Stetson, City Clerk
SUBJECT: Archival Security
FROM: John T. Myers, City Archivist

In order to have a clear understanding of the duties and responsibilities of the City Clerk and the City Archivist, it is necessary to refer to the Providence Home Rule Charter of 1980. The City Archivist provides access to the materials in the custody of the division, under appropriate conditions and safeguards, to qualified individuals desiring to make use thereof.

The City Archivist operates under the complete jurisdiction of the City Clerk. The loan or removal of any books or documents must have the approval of the City Clerk.

Although Providence observed its 350th Anniversary in 1986 and was incorporated as a city in 1832, it was not until 1978 that a Division of Archives and History was created through a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

There is no question that security of books, documents, files and papers requires due diligence and perseverance. In that regard, I would like to add that during the 31 years since the creation of the City Archives, I have never been told of a break in or an unauthorized entry since the beginning of my time in the Archives.

On February 5th of this year, the Providence City Council established a Special Commission to review this city's storage system of records, documents, books and files. This Commission, which undoubtedly will be organizing in the near future, will assuredly be discussing a host of issues including the safety and security of our entire archival collection.

Two of our oldest documents are sealed in Mylar for preservation purposes. I am confident that these documents are well protected and stored in a locked room with numerous other books and documents.

COUNCILMAN
TERRENCE M. HASSETT
COUNCIL MAJORITY LEADER
25 DORRANCE STREET
PROVIDENCE, RI 02903
OFFICE: (401) 521-7477



COMMITTEES

Rules - Chairman

Finance - Vice-Chairman

Ordinances

City Property

City of Providence, Rhode Island

July 23, 2009

Honorable David N. Cicilline
Mayor
Providence City Hall
25 Dorrance Street
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Mayor Cicilline:

Please be advised that the City Council, through the Office of the City Clerk, is in receipt of Executive Order number 2009-7 (copy attached) concerning the transfer of certain archival documents to the State of Rhode Island for preservation and protection.

As you know, I introduced legislation that was approved by the City Council that created a special commission to review the city's archives, historic records storage policies and protection procedures with the intent of securing and protecting records that may be in jeopardy under current poor conditions in the office of the City Archivist in City Hall.

Pursuant to the Providence Home Rule Charter, the City Clerk has specific jurisdiction over all archival documents and has explicit authority through the appointment of the City Archivist to oversee the custody, management and preservation of all historical records of the city. Consequently, there is an obvious separation of your authority granted by the Providence Home Rule Charter. The executive order, while well intended, lacks jurisdictional authority and cannot be implemented.

However, as expressed through the resolution establishing the special commission, all efforts of the City Archivist, under the supervision of the City Clerk, shall make provisions for access to the materials in the City Archives under appropriate conditions and safeguards and shall establish a means wherein historical records are preserved and well maintained. Moreover, the commission is also requested to issue recommendations on how to achieve the successful maintenance and protection of such documents.

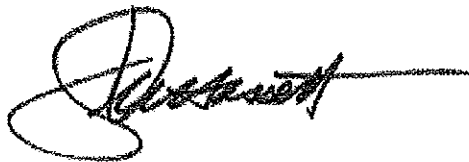
Hassett / Mayor Cicilline
July 23, 2009
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Therefore, I have requested the City Clerk to delay any action concerning the transfer of archival records until an established procedure is implemented to store records and, in the event a temporary transfer is contemplated to another agency, a specific agreement is secured addressing the custody of such records and including provisions for their safe return.

In the meantime, the city would be well served if a plan is implemented to address the poor conditions within the office of the City Archivist and other storage locations of historical documents.

It is my hope that collectively we can insure the preservation of important city documents.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terrence M. Hassett", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Terrence M. Hassett
Majority Leader

TMH:kr

Attachment