

Memorandum

TO: ANNA STETSON, CITY CLERK
FROM: PAUL CAMPBELL, CITY ARCHIVIST
DATE: DECEMBER 20, 2010
RE: NOVEMBER 2010 MONTHLY REPORT

For the first time in its existence, the Providence City Archives has a presence on the worldwide web. In November a considerable amount of time was spent developing web architecture for the site as well as writing content. Menu tabs being developed include an introduction to the city archives, our policies and procedures, a basic holdings document as well as our hours of operation and a location map. Soon to be added will be a walking tour of City Hall, a basic history of the city, and mayoral biographies. As the site evolves, we will add finding aids, an electronic catalog, and photo galleries. We are also evaluating records management/cataloging software to support the web site.

Over the years a number of mayoral paintings along with their ornate gold leaf frames have been damaged by improper storage methods. In an effort to address this issue, staff constructed a special painting storage cradle that now adequately protects these works of art. Cleaning and reorganization of storage areas continues. Last month, staff focused attention on the "Clerk's Room" where the City Council Final Papers are stored. These papers, from 1951 onwards, are now in sequenced order which greatly facilitates quick retrieval. We are also reboxing security copies of important documents for relocation to the NOVA Records Storage Center. In December we plan to reorganize the Personnel storage area. An additional 320 linear feet of storage shelving has been ordered and will compliment the 320 of shelving already in place.

Staff met with representatives of NOVA to implement a plan to review records stored at that facility. Our plan is to identify all records that have exceeded their record retention schedule. These records can then be destroyed, reducing overall storage costs. As of this writing, the staff has destroyed more than 550 boxes of records. Part of this total represents records shredded at the City Engineer's Office. Staff has been working closely with that office to reduce their storage problem. Staff also cleared an area of basement used by the City Controllers Office for storage.

The cataloging effort continues. During November the staff began the process of reboxing and cataloging a large collection of Returns of Births, Marriages, and Deaths. These records contain important information for genealogists and other researchers. The archives had 75 research visits during the month, despite closings for holidays. Students continue to find our collections useful along with title examiners, staff from RIDOT, historians, genealogists as well as many city departments. Internet requests should increase with our web presence.

Preservation bookbinding also continues and we have approved conservation work on two volumes of very early town records, many dating from the late 17th century. Staff is also busy reboxing permanent records into acid free boxes and folders and we are

applying stabilizer to old, worn leather bindings. Soon we hope to move some valuable records currently stored in the basement of the City Engineer's office. These records were threatened by the recent flood there. It also appears very likely that we will be moving forward with the submission of a \$200,000 grant application to the federal National Historical Publications and Records Commission. That application is due in June and, if funded, will help preserve and digitize our substantial blueprint collection. The City Clerk has provided a great deal of support to help us sustain our forward momentum.

IN CITY COUNCIL
JAN 13 2011

READ
WHEREUPON IT IS ORDERED THAT
THE SAME BE RECEIVED

C. M. State
CITY CLERK