

Public Records Advisory Commission (PRAC)  
Minutes of the January 6, 2026 Meeting

**Present:** Jackie Cohan (Archivist); Lynn Jordan, John Connor, Karen Paul, Samuel Giovannucci, Kelsey Hamilton

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM.

**Appointment of Secretary:** Lynn Jordan was appointed secretary.

**Minutes:**

**Access Policy:** Sean gave an update on the access policy that he had drafted; the next step is approval from the City Attorney. Sean also discussed how OHA Director Gretchen Bulova's candidacy for the House of Delegates and how the department was ensuring smooth operations. One change is Sean will now be handling OHA's legislative affairs. Sean also discussed how he planned to add a researcher kiosk at ARC, but IT had questions about security and what kind of records researchers would be able to access. Subsequently, it has become a bit of a larger project than originally envisioned, and has implications for the access policy.

Karen and Lynn asked if there were other departments that had similar public research terminals, such as the library and Clerk of Court. Sean said that they did, as did Planning & Zoning. Sean believes they will continue to make progress, but likely at a slow pace.

**Processing Manual:** Sean explained that he was drafting a processing manual for the archives, which would explain how as collections come in, the process for the public to see them. Sean presented PRAC with a document explaining the context for why a processing manual was necessary, and his proposed changes to processing at the archives. Currently, boxes are prepared by City staff, and they get documented on a transfer list, which describes the contents. The current system is somehow flawed, with each box individually documented and transfer lists being rewritten when boxes are modified.

Sean's proposal was to group boxes together by the series in the retention schedule that they are. This would make them more discoverable and more suited to finding aids, which would include more detail about the contents of the boxes and folders. Sean would also implement some standardization of dates, titles and proper nouns. Finding aids would include a title for the series, date range, folder and box list, list of subjects, brief history of the document that created the records, subdivisions as needed, and additional administrative information. Lynn commented that such a system would be particularly helpful for FOIA requestors. Finding aids would also be grouped by the department that created them.

Sean also has proposed changes to the transfer lists for accessions, including treating transfer lists as fixed records that cannot be changed, and add questions to the transfer lists that describe the contents in more detail.

Samuel asked about who currently supplies most of the information for the transfer list. Sean explained that it's mostly the departments that send the boxes, but he wants to implement additional description at the archives level.

Sean also provided examples of the current transfer lists for PRAC to look at. Karen noted that that in order to save ARC an immense amount of work, most of the descriptions should come from the department level, and gave some suggestions that would make adding additional descriptors easier for other City departments.

**Records Management Trainings:** Samuel asked whether official record copies had to be physical, and if there was a specific policy on that. Sean said there was no policy, and that they were ramping up records management training in order to educate people about destruction policies for digital and physical records.

**Interns:** ARC has an intern starting in a few weeks. Sean said he would like her to pilot some of the processing manual changes. Historically, the ARC intern program has been somewhat informal and interns mostly focused on digitization. Sean would like to formalize the program and have interns do more processing, allowing them to build a portfolio through the internship. Sean said there had been some discussion about having public program interns help with some public-facing projects, but he preferred to have interns focusing on processing.

**HARC Update:** David, PRAC's HARC representative, was absent at this meeting and therefore there was no HARC update.

**New Business:** Sean shared that he had found some interesting records while going through unprocessed boxes—a permit application for Gerald Ford when he lived in Alexandria, shortly after he became vice president.

**Next meeting:** The next meeting is scheduled for February 3, 2026.

**Adjourn:** The meeting adjourned at 8:08pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Jorden