

Public Records Advisory Commission (PRAC)

Minutes of the February 3, 2026 Meeting

Location: Alexandria Archives and Records Center

Time: 7:35 PM - 8:38 PM

Present:

Sean Ferguson (Archivist); Lynn Jorden, David Kovalik, Samuel Giovannucci, Kelsey Hamilton, Maoria Kirker. Quorum established.

Excused Absence:

Karen Paul, John Conner

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at **7:35 PM**.

Appointment of Secretary:

Kelsey Hamilton was appointed secretary.

Approval of Minutes:

The January 6, 2026 minutes were reviewed with no edits. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Lynn Jorden and seconded by Samuel Giovannucci.

Policy and Procedure Updates:

Sean provided an overview of draft policy and procedure documents for processing, appraisal, accessioning, and access at the Archives and Records Center (ARC). He explained his intent to create finding aids primarily at the series level for municipal records, consistent with government archival practice, while maintaining flexibility for certain collections, such as historic police department records, where a collection-level finding aid may be more appropriate.

Sean also discussed development of a Historical Guide to Alexandria's Departments and Divisions to provide administrative context for records and support finding aids.

Sean reviewed proposed appraisal criteria for retaining records beyond the state retention schedule. In addition to traditional archival value categories, he outlined Alexandria-specific considerations, including historic districts, documentation of public engagement, audiovisual materials, records supporting Office of Historic Alexandria initiatives, representation of underrepresented voices, and materials reflecting Alexandria's proximity to the federal government. Commissioners discussed the need for clear examples and consistent application of criteria, as well as balancing preservation goals with storage limitations. Sean noted that reprocessing backlog collections will include reappraisal.

Sean provided an update on access initiatives, including his proposal to allow researchers to access historical records without filing FOIA requests and to establish a research kiosk at ARC. Both matters are under review by the City Attorney.

Records Management Survey:

Sean reported that ARC is approximately halfway through surveying City departments to assign records series under the state retention schedule. As the survey progresses, ARC is encountering challenges in identifying the official record copy when multiple departments contribute to drafting and review. Discussion focused on determining which department holds the authoritative final version and clarifying responsibilities through designation of departmental records officers.

Intern Project – Historic Deeds:

Sean introduced new intern from George Washington University, who is piloting the new processing manual on a collection of historic deeds involving the City. Commissioners discussed useful indexing elements for deeds, including grantor and grantee, date of execution, property address and legal description, and type of deed. Sean will refine metadata guidance based on this input.

HARC Representation:

David Kovalik reported that he will not continue serving as PRAC's representative to the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission. Commissioners discussed the importance of maintaining representation and will identify a replacement.

New Business:

Sean shared updates on backlog processing and legislative developments that may affect Alexandria's archaeology code as it relates to affordable housing. He will continue monitoring the legislation and coordinating with City staff.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for **March 3rd, 2026**.

Adjourn:

A motion to adjourn was made by Lynn Jordan and seconded by Maoria Kirker. The meeting adjourned at **8:38 PM**.