

City of Norwalk

Museum Restructuring Committee

Tuesday, November 27, 2012

Attendance: Judith Bacal, Patsy Brescia, , Jim Brown, Mary Alice Fitzgerald,
Mickey Koleszar, David Park, David Westmoreland, Charlie Yost

Staff: Erin Halsey

Guests: Ralph Bloom

Call to Order

Mr. Westmoreland called to meeting to order at 5:33 pm. The minutes from the October 16th meeting were approved and the minutes for November 13th meeting were tabled until the next meeting.

Mr. Park asked if Mr. Brown had gotten the Norwalk Museum Management Policies. Mr. Brown said yes, the policies looked good. Then Mr. Brown **summarized written comments (emailed to committee members 11/25/12) about economic and access advantages of moving the archives to the library.** Ms. Bacal asked about room size and where the items would be placed. Mr. Brown said that the principle room was 650 square feet with a second room of 350 square feet if needed. The library hopes to have the archives open, under staff supervision, for some hours each day that the library is open (Mon.-Sat) one of which would be an evening. Mr. Brown then reviewed an extensive list of professional staff and volunteers at the library who would help with the archives project.

Mr. Brown estimated that full cataloging of the archives will take about 5000 **hours, nearly 4 years.** Mr Westmoreland said that he needed the number of hours per week that would be spent cataloguing and asked about additional hours. Mr. Brown stated that about 30 hours per week would be spent on cataloging. Mr. Westmoreland noted that the staff will also have to service people at the library at the same time. Mr. Brown said that current estimates were that an additional 10 **hours per week would be needed to serve archive users.**

Ms. Bacal led a discussion of the timing for the cataloguing. She also said there will be a clear savings, and suggested that someone be hired just to get the process started. Mr. Brown said that the library has requested funding from the City for 19 1/2 hours of staff time each week to work in archives, much of which will go to cataloging. There will also be some volunteer cataloging and the library **is filing a planning grant in the hopes of expediting the process.** Ms. Bacal suggested that additional funding be put into the City's budget as a capitol budget item, and Mr. Westmoreland concurred as the citizens will benefit from it for years to come. He also mentioned hiring a consultant. Ms. Brescia said that the decision should be up to Mr. Brown. Mr. Brown said that actually this decision must be made by library administration

Atty Koleszar asked about if there would be enough room to house the archives with the current number of employees at the Library and Ms. Bacal asked where it would physically located; she forgot what the space looked like. Mr. Brown explained that there is enough room to house the archives, about 1,000 square feet of storage space. There was a discussion on adding, discarding and preservation. He said that the policies and procedures are on-line and available to the public on the Library website.

Mr. Westmoreland asked if OCR scanning would go across microfilm. Mr. Brown said that he was not sure of all the technical and copyright issues but that an OCR index of the Hour would be superior to browsing reel after reel on a microfilm **machine.**

Mr. Westmoreland wants to alleviate concern about disposing of items and said that any item that would be moved to general circulation has to be passed by the Historical Commission (HC), and would require permission for de-accession. Mr. Brown said that short term that would be fine, but long term, it could become an issue. Mr. Westmoreland talked about the years of history, rumors, things being moved, sold, etc and then Ms. Bacal asked about gaining approval of first right of refusal. Mr. Brown discussed the transfer and Ms. Brescia stated that it is the **City's decision, not the committee's.** She voiced concern about if there is a decision to turn things over to the HC, that there needs to be a mechanism in place with a defined structure about how decisions are made and how to carry them through the next 50 years. She felt it was important also to deal with the here and now.

Mr. Westmoreland noted that there needs to be a very specific systemic process regarding de-accessioning and putting things into general circulation. Mr. Brown said that 90% of the archive is primary source material and it will remain in the collection. Some secondary research material will be upgraded over time but generally speaking, once at the library, the collection will be growing not shrinking. It was agreed that Mr. Westmoreland and Mr. Brown would discuss this issue further with the library director, Ms. Bradley.

Mr. Westmoreland asked the question of how to make the transition palatable to the public and Ms. Brescia noted that the committee had been very supportive and we should move on.

Mr. Brown said that there would be acquisitions and that the archives would not be static; that items will be added, and changed up to improve the collection so at the end of the day, the City is left with a solid collection.

Ms. Brescia asked about the space at the Library that is used for book sales, what type of access people have, for security reasons. Mr. Brown talked about access to the collection being behind a staffed desk, and/or locked door. Ms. Brescia said she was concerned about security and Mr. Brown said it would remain behind a locked door. Mr. Bloom mentioned that there was an elevator and also spoke about security.

Mr. Brown moved on to try and attempt to answer questions regarding economics, then moved on to next steps. The HC will draft a proposal to manage the collection at Lockwood House, Mill Hill, at their December 12th meeting, the MRC will be meeting on December 18th.

Ms. Brescia brought up Alan Lo to find out if the contract had been awarded for the HVAC in the Health Department, and who would do that. Mr. Westmoreland said some space will be utilized at the Health Department and that Mr. Tim Callahan is in charge of that building. He also said that the building will be used for reassessment and re-evaluations next year.

Mr. Brown asked about the Board of Directors meeting for the HC on the 12th and wondered if this would influence a merger with the museum collection. The HC is a separate 5013C, and the discussion moved to the "other" part of the collection.

Mr. Brown said that in many ways cataloging the archives will be much easier than

cataloging objects in the museum collection. Ms. Brescia asked if the committee would be able to make a recommendation by budget time and Mr. Brown said that if the City doesn't fund the 19 1/2 hour collection manager position the entire archive undertaking will get a lot harder. Mr. Westmoreland said that the City has to make a commitment. Mr. Brown asked if the moving costs had been determined yet. **Mr. Westmoreland said that he would be attending the next BET meeting.**

Ms. Brescia made the motion to adjourn at 6:30pm and Mr. Park seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted by Erin Halsey