

Archives, Reference and Research Advisory Board
June 9, 2020
Minutes

Present: Robert Snyder, Lillian Jean-Baptiste, Pamela Cruz, Richard Moylan, Kenneth Cobb, Sylvia Kollar, LaTonya Jones, Pauline Toole

The meeting was held via video conference.

Description of Archives/Library activities between March 16 and the present:

Sylvia Kollar reported that due to COVID19 all Archives staff are working off site. They have been quite productive because there is the time to focus on work that is necessary but usually put off.

The archivists are working on:

- Transcribing various photograph and mayoral collection inventories.
- Creating digital galleries, blogs, and livestream for outreach.
- Researching and writing WomensActivism stories.
- Continuing production of digital vital records and photograph to fulfill patron orders.

When will the Archives re-open to the public?

Commissioner Toole said that the agency is planning to bring a limited number of staff back to the facilities toward the end of June and that teleworking would continue for the foreseeable future. The space is being re-organized to ensure a social distance is maintained.

When the public is readmitted, probably in late August or September, there will be changes that include the wearing of masks and making advance appointments. The number of patrons in the research rooms at any one time will be limited and gloves will be required for "frequent" touch points.

Kenneth Cobb reported on DORIS in the Media from December 2019 to the present:

- March 5 - National Public Radio's – Person Place and Thing program – hosted by Randy Cohen, taped a show at the opening reception for the "Ebb & Flow" exhibition – co-curated with American Museum of Finance. Randy interviewed Vinny Sapienza, the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection.

-April 2, New York Times article by Michael Wilson used images from the NYC MA and Library that had been posted in Commissioner Toole's blog on the subject in March 2018.

-NY Times journalist John Freeman Gill revived Christopher Gray's 'Streetscapes' column in the Real Estate Section and used tax photos in an article about a cast-iron fronted building in SoHo (April 24); and about the long-lost building plans of Ebbets Field that eventually made their way to the NYCMA (March 27).

-TimeOut New York featured the image gallery, specifically the Tax Photos, in an article about what do to during the quarantine.

-Week of 19 May -- Julia Weist – the agency’s Artist in Residence received several mentions for her photographs she calls “The Public Record.” The photographs are part of Commissioner Toole’s records and are subject to FOIL. One of Ms. Weist’s intentions was to make her work available through the OpenRecords FOIL portal.

--Several articles resulted from journalists inquiring about and/or researching Mayor Bloomberg’s emails during the period he was running for the democratic nomination for president. Notably, Yoav Gonen a writer for 'The City' and Dominic Holden for 'Buzzfeed' published stories. Several other journalists started the research but abandoned it when Bloomberg dropped out of the race.

LaTonya Jones provided an update on Outreach and the Women’s Activism project:

Exhibit: The Language of the City Immigrant Voices

December Public Programs

Book Talk: War, Refugees and U.S. Policy in Life & Literature

Behind the Stories: HBO's Latino Series "HABLA"

January Public Programs

Fashion Mosaic: Immigrant Voices in NYC’s Fashion Industry

February – Black History Month Exhibit

Book Talk- Tim Murphy

Film Maker- Alberto Ferraro

Incorrigibles pop-up exhibit featuring panel discussion on women and incarceration (Feb. & March).

Public Programs

Screening of the film “PUSHOUT: The Criminalization of Black Girls in School” in conjunction with the Incorrigibles exhibit.

Guest Speaker Regina Wilson – African American Woman Firefighter in the FDNY and 9/11 responder. Regina is the first president of the Vulcan Society, a fraternal firefighter association composed of African American FDNY members. She has been a member of the FDNY for 18 years, and 1 of only 57 women in a workforce of 10,700 firefighters.

MARCH

Exhibit Opening: Ebb and Flow: History of NYC’s Water /Person Place Thing

Person, Place, Thing Recording with Andy Cohen and Commissioner Sapienza DEP

Public Programs

WomensActivism.NYC Outreach Booth & Story Writing Lab - New York History Day - Museum of the City of New York. Engaging with approx. 500 high school students.

WomensActivism.NYC Outreach Booth & Story Writing Lab - Battery Park Public Library.

WomensActivism.NYC Outreach Booth & Story Writing Lab – Grand Central Public Library.

APRIL Public Programs

National Tell-A-Story Day Digital Storytelling Workshop with WomensActivism.NYC.

MAY Public Programs

Mother's Day Eve Digital Storytelling Workshop.

Panel discussion and virtual exhibit in connection with the 20th Anniversary celebration of Ordinary People, Extraordinary Lives- A Pictorial History of Working People in New York City.

WomensActivism.NYC:

In addition to public programs and outreach efforts noted above, the agency also completed the following:

Daily News article, along with write-ups in community and local outlets about upcoming events

Number of Stories Written as of May 28, 2020 – 1,684

Commissioner Toole noted the success of engaging diverse groups of people and ensuring that continues through diverse programming

Commissioner Toole invited Board members to reach out to any organizations of which they may be part of to participate in WomensActivism goal of 20K stories by the end of the year.

To Do:

- Ken Cobb to connect Rob Snyder with Julia Weist and NYC Design Commission

Solicitation of brief video (using I phone or android) from members

- Commissioner Toole invited board members to record themselves promoting the use of archives and what they miss most about working in archives

To Do:

- Rob Snyder and Pamela Cruz will create short videos

Appointments process and timeline

Mark Winston Griffith, Mary Yearwood, Gregory Yost, Kayhan Irani, and Johanna Fernandez have left the Board. The Mayor's Office of Appointments is working on identifying new board members.

Next steps re Annual Report

- Pamela Cruz noted that there is minimal content for annual report and require photos, an updated calendar of events.
- Minutes of December meeting would be helpful in adding content
- Richard Moylan is part of the Annual Report committee

To Do:

- Pamela to include LaTonya in email for contributing updated calendar
- DORIS will forward December minutes
- DORIS will supply agency event photographs

Other business?

- Consider a change in time for meeting. Doodle will be forwarded.