

## COOK COUNTY



## ARCHIVES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### Report to the Cook County Board of Commissioners First Quarter FY 2018

#### **Introduction**

This report is required by County Board Resolution 16-3645 establishing an Archives Advisory Committee (AAC).

The mission of the Archives Advisory Committee (AAC) is to capture the history of Cook County Government and the role it played in the growth and development of the region, state and the nation. Additionally, the AAC is to coordinate documentation of the historical significance of each County agency and office, providing a context for County residents and employees for understanding the importance of their agency's role in County government, past and present.

The AAC will determine and develop methodology and standards for historical evaluation of Cook County documents and records, and will identify options to preserve and store materials determined to have historical value and make those materials accessible to members of the public interested in researching county history.

The resolution indicated that AAC shall work closely with the President, the Board of Commissioners and all County elected and appointed officials to achieve goals of the Advisory Committee, taking into consideration all existing efforts at historic preservation by elected and appointed officials.

#### **Goals Timeline and Current Progress**

Goals are placed into a timeline format to indicate *completion* of the goal, not the start. It is anticipated that all of the listed goals are to be started as soon as possible. Updates on the first year of AAC goals are:

- **Immediate goals (0-1 year)**
  - Assignment of Archive liaisons across all offices: Departments have identified Historic Archive Liaisons to assist the AAC in the execution of the committee goals.
  - Identify and document best practices and current practices of other jurisdictions around the region and country: Committee staff is examining examples of Cuyahoga County, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Seattle, Washington and others. Established a Twitter account (@CookCoArchives) and Instagram account (@cookcountyarchives) for the County Archives Project.
  - Set standards and guidelines for document retention: The current instruction to HALs is to utilize the Records Retention Schedule and their Department Histories to determine which documents should be identified for historic retention.

- Determine universe of potentially historical documents: Several pallets containing boxed documents identified as belonging to the Secretary to the Board and several former presidents have been examined and those documents repatriated to appropriate departments. Departments are being asked to evaluate these documents for retention.
- Determine spaces for storage and display of historical documents: Space on the 30<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> floors of the George Dunne Building was initially identified by the Real Estate Management Division, Bureau of Asset Management. Recently, Chairman Daley's office has provided space under their control for additional Archives work, and Commissioners Morrison and Tobolski also made storage cages on 3M available to the Archives Project for temporary storage while reviewing documents.
- Assemble county history timelines, within departments and for County overall: The following departments have prepared Historical Timelines for the project: Administration, Administrative Hearings, Animal Control, Auditor, Budget and Management Services Circuit Court, CCHHS, 14<sup>th</sup> County District, Independent Inspector General, Law Library, Medical Examiner, Public Defender, Technology. Collection and refinement of additional timelines is ongoing.
- **Near term goals (2-3 years)**
  - Catalogue documents deemed historical: The Department of Facilities Management turned over control of master reel to reel audio, video tapes and DVDs to the Secretary to the Board for County Board meetings dating back to 1983. A complete inventory of these recordings is being undertaken by Archives Committee staff. Once the inventory is complete, the process of converting the older analog versions
  - Archive staff also took possession of records from former President George W. Dunne which were in the Rockwell Warehouse. Those items are now stored in cages on floor 3M.
  - Preserve virtual and physical versions of historical documents: All documents which were identified as Secretary to the Board documents in the Rockwell Warehouse are now housed on Floor 3M. The process of reviewing documents for historical value and preservation is ongoing.
  - Establish Cook County Historical Archives, both virtual and physical: Discussions are underway with the Bureau of Asset Management to determine physical space which could display County Archive material as well as space which would continue to store catalogued items deemed historical but not meant for public display. Possible locations include the Cook County Building, 69 West Washington and the Medical Campus Redevelopment. Actual storage of historical documents required a repurposing of space already under control of the Secretary to the Board. With the cooperation of Chairman Daley and a number of other commissioners, significant space has become available on floor 3M to accommodate the Archive Project. Additionally, the space at the Rockwell Warehouse is being configured for maximum usage by the Project.
- **Mid-range goals (five years)**
  - Identify every outside source of data and information, articles, clippings related to Cook County Government. Upon completion of the inventory of documents, this information will be compiled by the committee.
  - Identify outside entities as partners or funders of historic preservation effort

- Maintain an online, searchable database of Historical Archives
- Identify education partners who may wish to engage in research projects to help fill in County history
- Complete the second volume of the Cook County History document
- **Long term goals (10-15 years)**
  - Celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Cook County Government, with celebrations, recognitions, events in the year leading up to and during the January 2031 date.
  - Explore if the cornerstone of the County Building still contains a time capsule
  - Complete the third volume of the Cook County History document

### **Staff Contacts**

For further information and suggestions regarding the County Archives Project, please contact

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### **Follow the Project**

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