

# **TRUSTEES OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON**

**Meeting of the Trustees Special Collections Committee  
Tuesday, May 1, 2018 at 8:30 a.m.  
Commonwealth Salon, Central Library  
Boston Public Library, 700 Boylston Street, Boston, MA**

## **DRAFT MINUTES**

A meeting of the Boston Public Library Trustees Special Collections Committee (“Committee”) was held in the Commonwealth Salon at the Boston Public Library (“BPL”), 700 Boylston Street, Boston, MA on Tuesday, May 1, 2018 at 8:30 a.m.

Present at the meeting were: Committee Chair William Stoneman, and Committee Members: Trustee and Representative Byron Rushing, Lilly Johnson, Brian Clancy, Michael Ewald, Cheryl Nixon, Stanley Cushing, and President David Leonard. Not present were: Vivian Spiro, Barbara “Muffy” Glauber, Brenda Lawson, Jarvis Kellogg, and Mary Lentz.

Also in attendance were BPL staff: Chief of Collections Laura Irmscher, Head of Special Collections Beth Prindle, and Clerk of the Board Pamela Carver, along with members of the public.

### **I. Welcome/Approval of Meeting Minutes for April and September 2017**

Committee Chair William Stoneman presided, called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m., and addressed the order of business. Mr. Stoneman confirmed there was a quorum. He reminded committee members that conference callers were not eligible to vote and emphasized that members’ presence at the meetings is vital. The members discussed the possibility of decreasing the size of the Committee to avoid quorum issues moving forward.

Mr. Stoneman called for a review of the meeting minutes of April 26, 2017 and September 12, 2017. He offered edits relative to the minutes and, upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Minutes of the April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017 and September 12, 2017 meeting were approved. Mr. Stoneman requested that the minutes be written in order of the agenda for clarity.

### **II. Capital Projects in FY19 Budget**

Mr. Leonard discussed that the renovation to the Rare Books Department started last year and was completing the design phase. They are currently looking at new best practices to accommodate the size of the collection and the current insufficient space to house it. He mentioned they would be annexing more space on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of the Johnson building to increase the footprint of the Rare Books space. He reiterated that the department remains closed to the public.

Ms. Irmscher gave a brief update on the inventory project. She explained each book was assigned a code to ensure safe packing and moving for the renovation. They are seeking proposals for the packing, moving, and secure storage of the collection. They hope to have a longer review of some newly discovered items such as the Five Prints of Separation and the textiles from the mills of Massachusetts.

Mr. Leonard discussed the McKim 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor project. He noted the Mayor had budgeted \$400,000 to begin the McKim Master Plan programming study to determine the best use of the funds. The former

renovation stopped at the Sargent Galleries and this new study will include the McKim plaza and the Courtyard fountain repairs.

The committee members asked questions regarding estimated closures to the Rare Books Dept. Mr. Leonard explained it will be discussed more in detail in the fall when they have a better sense of construction timeline but anticipated it to be closed for approximately four years.

### III. Special Collections Report

#### A. Loans to support MFA

Ms. Prindle introduced Ms. Helen Burnham, Curator for the Museum of Fine Arts (“MFA”) Ms. Prindle noted the information indicated there were 350 exceptions and learned 7.5% is assessed as damaged in the collection. She explained there are lots of augments, swords, glass frames, masks, weathervanes or loose things such as the Wiggin collection.

Mr. Stoneman invited Ms. Beth Prindle and Ms. Helen Burnham to brief the Committee on an upcoming Toulouse-Lautrec exhibition. Ms. Prindle gave a brief background on the collection of the BPL’s 350 pieces of artwork, 109 have been requested for loan for the collaborative exhibition at the MFA. Some pieces are in more dire condition than others, and the MFA has offered to conserve some of these pieces. Mr. Leonard added that we will be able to take our collection to the next level by being able to showcase it, despite the challenges of the department being closed to the public. This collaboration would grant access for the public to view the collection through digital efforts. The MFA has committed to have a registrar for this collection.

Mr. Clancy noted that seeing these collections made accessible to the public was very inspiring. Rep. Rushing asked about the cost for the BPL patrons to see the exhibition. Ms. Burnham explained these details are being discussed with Mr. Leonard. The committee had some discussion over cost, education and outreach efforts. Mr. Stoneman called for a motion to vote on approving the loan of 109 items. The motion was duly made and seconded and,

**VOTED: “that, the Trustees Special Collections Committee recommend that the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston, pursuant to the terms of the Exhibition Loan Policy, approve the Loan of 109 original works by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston for purposes of an exhibition running from April 2 to August 4, 2019. The total loan duration will span August 2018 through September 2019 for preparation, installation, and de-installation requirements.**

#### III B. Approval of “The Caprichos Purchase”

Ms. Prindle asked the Committee to join her at a display table to view the actual collection. Ms. Karen Shafts, Assistant Keeper of Prints showcased the prints and gave a little background on the collection. She noted there are 53 prints in the full series of Emily Lombardo’s collection. The request was to purchase the remaining prints to complement the BPL’s existing collection of 27 prints. Mr. Stoneman made a motion, it was duly made, seconded and unanimously voted,

**VOTED: “that, the Trustees Special Collections Committee approve the purchase from Childs Gallery of 53 etchings from the series “The Caprichos” by Emily Lombardo. This purchase will complete a partial set of 27 prints in the series which were previously purchased by the library.**

Mr. Leonard and Rep. Rushing excused themselves from the meeting.

### III C. Rare Books Renovation Update

Ms. Prindle explained they brought in a stacks specialist to ensure they were informed of best practices regarding proper storage. She explained the industry standards for the shelves and that we were currently inadequately storing our collections. They discussed adding more storage to the blueprint of the space to allow for proper storage moving forward.

### III D. Special Collections Inventory

Ms. Prindle gave a brief update on the inventory that was coming to a close. She noted it was in the phase of identifying what and where items are. She was hopeful it would be completed by the end of the fiscal year. She added they have migrated it to the cloud base so staff can utilize it. She added that with the Associates of the BPL’s assistance, they are making these collections accessible. They have started the inventory of the photo collection (conservatively estimated at over 1 million) but noting that the negatives have been prioritized due to a quicker degradation. She offered to send a link to the committee of the newly digitized items.

### IV. New Business/Public Comment

Mr. Stoneman wanted to let the committee know that Ms. Nixon should be able to attend meetings moving forward. He expressed the importance of attending the three meetings each year to ensure we have a quorum so that the committee’s recommendations can be presented to the full Board of Trustees. The committee members asked for clarification on trusts and annual draws from them. Ms. Irmischer explained the 170 specific funds and the range of restrictions. The members asked if she might break it down for them in a future meeting. Mr. Stoneman asked if there was any Public Comment. Ms. Louisa Stephens, Executive Director of the Associates of the BPL told the Committee members about their public event “M.C. Escher: The Art of Perception” on May 8, 2018.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:02 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela Carver, Clerk of the Board