

**Society of American Archivists  
Council Meeting  
August 3, 2020  
Virtual Meeting**

**Consent Agenda: Ratify Council Interim Actions  
(Prepared by Governance Manager Felicia Owens)**

**BACKGROUND**

Current parliamentary policy agrees on validating board decisions made remotely, and ratifying the Council's online and conference-call decisions via the Consent Agenda does not conflict with any existing SAA policy.

**DISCUSSION**

Given the Council's use of an e-mail discussion list to function as a group and make decisions remotely, approving interim Council actions via the Consent Agenda contributes to streamlining the group's work and improves access to the interim decisions of SAA's elected decision makers.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT the following interim actions taken by the Council between May 15 and July 27, 2020, be ratified:**

- Approved "[SAA Council Statement on Black Lives and Archives](#)" (Appendix). (June 2, 2020)
- Approved the May 12-13 Council meeting [minutes](#). (June 24, 2020)
- Approved the [minutes](#) of the June 30 Council meeting at which the FY 2021 Budget was adopted. (July 17, 2020)

## **SAA Council Statement on Black Lives and Archives** **Approved June 2, 2020**

We, the Council of the Society of American Archivists, unanimously condemn harassment and violence against the Black community. As archivists, we learn from history that this country was founded on genocide and slavery. We continue to witness the legacy of this history with systemic and structural racism that lead to marginalization, disenfranchisement, and death. The murder of George Floyd, and countless others, at the hands of the police manifest the continuing atrocities faced by Black Americans today. As a profession, we stand by our community and acknowledge, unequivocally, that Black Lives Matter.

During this time of dramatic and traumatic historical significance, the Society of American Archivists remains committed to its core organizational value of social responsibility, including equity and safety for Black archives workers and archives of Black Lives. A truly open, inclusive, and collaborative environment for all members of the Society cannot exist without justice for those affected by anti-Black violence. We acknowledge the trauma Black archives workers face, in particular. The labor of dismantling white supremacy and structural racism in archives, and beyond, does not rest solely upon our Black membership and other people of color. White archivists, who comprise a vast majority of the field, have a responsibility to disavow racism daily in society and in our profession.

As the Council, we are committed to developing and advocating for solutions that contribute to the public good and affirm the importance of Black Lives.[1] Archives workers should follow current guidance on ethical recordkeeping and archiving of social movements during this time of crisis, with special care taken toward the protection and safety of Black Lives amidst anti-Black violence perpetrated by the police. We particularly center Black-led archival documentation efforts and memory-keeping organizations as we continue our collective effort to repair the legacy of structural racism and acts of state-sanctioned violence.

We take action in response to our shared outrage and sorrow from continued attacks on the Black community, including archives workers. We are committed to dismantling structural racism in the interest of a legitimately inclusive profession and to positioning SAA as an organization welcoming of, built by, and led by persons of color. As archivists, we are not neutral in matters of social justice and politics.

The vitality of American archives depends on the safety of archives workers and an explicit commitment to social responsibility, justice, and anti-racism in the work that we do and the organizations we work within. We intend to create and convene a space for constructive discussion toward progressive change in the archival profession and true inclusivity of the archival record, in a profound engagement with our values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Please be on the lookout for an invitation to join us for a community reflection event in June, followed by an action-oriented forum.

[The SAA Council](#), June 2, 2020

[1] <https://www2.archivists.org/statements/issue-brief-police-mobile-camera-footage-as-a-public-record>

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### Additional Resources

SAA Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

<https://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-statement-on-diversity-equity-and-inclusion>

Archives for Black Lives in Philly (A4BLiP), Statement of Principles

<https://github.com/rappel110/A4BLiP>

DocNow: Ethical Considerations for Archiving Social Media Content Generated by Contemporary Social Movements: Challenges, Opportunities, and Recommendations

<https://www.docnow.io/docs/docnow-whitepaper-2018.pdf>

WITNESS: Community-Based Approaches to Archives From the Black Lives Matter Movement

<https://blog.witness.org/2015/09/community-based-approaches-to-archives-from-the-black-lives-matter-movement/>

A People's Archive of Police Violence in Cleveland

<https://www.archivingpoliceviolence.org/>