

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARIES
ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

December 12, 2023

ATTENDEES

Francie Gilman, chair, individual member

Jane Carona, vice chair, representing American Council of the Blind local chapter

Debbie Brown, secretary, representing National Federation of the Blind local chapter

Elizabeth Lang, Assistant Facilities and Accessibility Program Manager and ADA Coordinator

Tim Lighter, liaison to the Montgomery County Library Board

Matt Barkley, ADA Compliance Manager for Montgomery County

Dennis Pillsbury, architect for Montgomery County ADA Compliance Office

Nadia Abouraya, individual member

Richard Bell-Irving, representing Learning Disabilities Association of Maryland

Cindy Buddington, representing Independence Now

Jonina Duker, individual member

Wendalyn Hovendick, individual member

Barbara King, individual member

Jill Lewis, consultant

Joyce Plaxen, individual member

Yasmin Reyazuddin, individual member

Betty Thompson, consultant

GREETINGS/MICROSOFT TEAMS TIPS:--Francie

AAC chair Francie Gilman introduced Teams meeting tips.

INTRODUCTIONS

Those present introduced themselves.

APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 2023 MEETING MINUTES

The September minutes were approved as circulated.

UPDATES SINCE THE SEPTEMBER MEETING--Francie

There was a joint meeting of Board and LACs and Friends of Libraries on October 12. They had a speaker on book banning (most bans are pushed by a few people). The other speaker was from Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy, about connecting people who need to learn English with local instruction.

Goals and priorities: quick recap of the goals and priorities selected by members by email (Disability Day, outreach programs, digital accessibility, staff development, and budget testimony). We can revisit these in the future.

A college living experience expo featured dozens of local organizations; Nadia put the word out. Francie went. She met someone who has a business teaching social skills. Also there were Disability Rights of Maryland; Down Syndrome Network and Montgomery County Department of Recreation.

The first meeting of Project Enable was on Nov. 8, a statewide initiative to train public library staff on serving people with disabilities. Comments included a reaction to the disability etiquette modules, that many people no longer like person-first language. The next meeting is tomorrow; it will be focusing on legal aspects, such as the ADA. Elizabeth will be the featured speaker on January 24. If you are interested, and want to see how

librarians think about serving people with disabilities, come to these sessions. The committee requested that the information be emailed. Francie thanked Elizabeth for going.

We received a new member application. We need to follow the guidance of the Overview to respond.

There will be a Louis Braille birthday celebration on Sunday, January 7 at the Rockville Library.

Jonina mentioned that the library director is retiring in July 2024. Elizabeth will be talking about the director's position.

BOARD REPORT—Tim Lighter

Two Board members are leaving, so they are looking for candidates. Some LACs have not been as active as in the past, but 9 people are joining.

The official name of the board's meeting is State of the Library.

The next meeting will be at White Oak on January 10.

The Board has 3 different workgroups. There is one working on updating the LAC manual, which includes a page on the LAAC. They had an introductory training for LACs. There is a legislative affairs workgroup dealing with advocacy for libraries across budget cycles. Another group is updating the Board manual. Tim will give an annual report and will update us on that.

ELECTION OF AAC OFFICERS FOR 2024: Jane, assisted by Betty and Jill

The nominating committee met; Jane thanked Betty and Jill. They came up with a good slate of officers. Richard Bell-Irving was nominated as vice chair. Francie Gilman was nominated as chair. Debbie Brown was nominated as secretary. Those nominated were elected.

We should change what is in the overview. It now says the chair conducts elections. It would probably more effective to say that the nominating committee will conduct elections. There is also a question about whether

people can vote absentee. There is no process for it and no process in any documents. Francie will draft changes to the Overview.

OVERVIEW OF LIBRARY STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION – Elizabeth Lang

Elizabeth was asked to present about the inner structure of the library and how it fits in the county government. She does not have a graphical organization chart but can get one. Montgomery County Public Libraries is part of the Montgomery County government. It is a department and not an independent agency. It works with other departments. TEBS, which deals with technology, is a department it works with. It deals with the library's computers and the website. If there is a problem with technology, the library has to contact TEBS. They make purchases of technology. Anita works with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on issues of funding. The Department of General Services (DGS) works on building maintenance issues, such as doors, light fixtures, and bathrooms. Within that department is the Department of Building Design and Construction, which schedules work on buildings and hiring architects. The Office of ADA Compliance also works with them. Elizabeth works with ADA Compliance on these and other ADA-related issues.

Human Resources (HR) deals with the county job website and has a liaison to the library about how job descriptions are written. There are HR staff within the library. They also interact with the county attorney on issues such as questions about whether pictures can be taken in the library or does any activity violate a law. They work with the Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF), which deals with renting out meeting rooms. Every library except Noyes has one or two meeting rooms. CUPF has a website with all of the regulations. Some other departments are Finance, which Elizabeth does not deal with. They must deal with Procurement to buy almost anything. The library has a procurement specialist.

Within the library: There are 21 locations, including the Correctional Facility. The administrative offices are located in Rockville on the third floor, and a Collection Management facility is located in Gaithersburg.

Anita Vassallo has announced her retirement on June 30. The county is using a headhunting firm to conduct a nationwide search for the next candidate. Elizabeth does not know the procedure for selecting her replacement. It is in process right now. The process will be conducted by county level HR. We do not know if we will have any input.

The County Chief Administrative Officer is the person to whom Anita reports.

There are about 450 staff. Anita supervises an administrative specialist (Regina).

Regina keeps the calendar; does mailings; press releases; supervises graphic designers; Manages social media.

Anita supervises 3 assistant directors, assistant director of facilities and ADA, the assistant director in charge of collections and technology; and assistant director of outreach and programs (Jaime Flores). The assistant director of ADA is Angelisa Hawes. Director Vasallo also supervises the business manager within the library, as well as the human resources manager. Assistant directors are responsible for everything that goes on in the branches. The business office and human resources office are back-office. The Human resources manager is in charge of substitute librarians; working with county HR; labor relations; timekeeping and payroll; staff development and training; liaison to the union; Liaison to office of medical services and staff disability accommodations. The business office manager is in charge of managing the library budget; procurement; Grants; revenue. The assistant director of Collection and technology deals with digital technology, website and mobile apps. Our technology management group deals with technology as much as they can. (James Donaldson is the assistant director.) They also manage the data that we get from electronic checkout; people coming in and out of the library; Self-checkout. He is responsible for the data. He supervises some of the regional managers. Angelisa Hawes is responsible for customer experience; facilities management liaison to general services; liaison to homeland security; construction and refresh projects. She supervises some regional managers. Jaime is responsible for outreach and programs--Marketing; branding; outreach; programming like summer reading challenge and Montgomery County Comic Con. He is responsible for programming

related to teens such as the teen advisory board and programming for adults. He also Supervises one regional manager. Angelisa Hawes is liaison for the Commission on People with Disabilities. James Donaldson is responsible for the digital collection.

Felicity Bowen is collections manager. That takes place at the collection management facility in Gaithersburg. All collections, hard copy and digital, happen there. If you want something to be purchased, we can fill out a form to ask for that. We can pass requests through Elizabeth.

Library structure: Each assistant director supervises a regional manager. Each regional manager supervises a group of libraries. Each branch manager supervises one library.

The branch supervisors have a Master's in library science. The assistant branch supervisor does not need to have that degree. They supervise circulation desk staff.

What MCPL needs from us is advice. We have various kinds of expertise. There are things we will be asked to do such as checking out a facility.

[LIBRARY REPORT--Elizabeth](#)

Project Enable: Elizabeth will present in January. The library person who was attending from Montgomery County has left the library and someone else will replace them. Elizabeth's presentation will deal with everything about libraries and accessibility. She got a lot from the tip sheets. She may use some of the scenarios. Francie will send out information about that.

Elizabeth will talk about having an AAC. She will talk about having people with disabilities involved.

In September there was a required inclusive storytime training for staff.

We would like a list of trainings and how many participated.

XMinds worked with collections to put together a list of books for people with autism.

Damascus is getting renovations. The Department of Building Design and Construction is working on this with the senior center in the building.

McGee (Silver Spring) is also on the list. They will have people look at the

building structure and things like plumbing, walls, and windows. When will be the appropriate time for us to give input? Elizabeth will talk to Angelisa. We can visit at any time. Possibly we should set it up as a group and go through the whole building. A group would be helpful. People have no idea where to go; it is difficult for pedestrians. Ask Angelisa when that will happen. How can we get information to people when the Purple Line has closed things? These things change all the time.

COUNTY ADA COMPLIANCE OFFICE REPORT—Matt Barkley

They have initiated training for all Montgomery County employees on Teams. ADA training is 2 hours. It is fairly general, things like what to do if you need a sign language interpreter. The online training had been phased out because of software changes.

Matt said that Twinbrook refreshed some stairs and sidewalk, as well as the ramp that connects to the outdoor area. There is more work that needs to be done. Facilities is trying to figure out how to block off a portico that has had people camp out and start fires. If it is closed off, they will have to redo ramps on lower level parking. They want to gate it when it is not in use. A gate would change accessibility.

The order of refreshes has changed.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Possibility of the AAC having input about library director (Elizabeth)
2. Send out project Enable information (Francie).
3. Visit and give input on Silver Spring (Elizabeth will check schedule)
4. New member application review (everyone)
5. Rewrite the overview to say that the nominating committee will conduct elections. (Chair will direct process)