

Aspen Hill Library Advisory Committee

Minutes of Meeting of January 24, 2022

1. Call to order and welcome

Chair Grey-McKenzie called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. The meeting was held by teleconference, with the teleconference participation guidelines in place.

2. Roll Call

Althea Grey-McKenzie, Chair, and Committee members Elliot Chabot, Chris Swan, Eileen Smith, Babette Margolies, Betty Bell, were present. Library Board Liaison Tim Lighter was present. Visitors were Judy Tankersley, Pat Price, Chair, ACT-SO (The NAACP's Afro-Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics); Bertram Marc, Alice O'Donnell, and Yolanda Blackwell, Recreation Specialist, Gwendolyn E. Coffield Community Recreation Center. Library staff present were Christine Freeman (Agency Manager) and Mark Santoro (Head of Adult Services).

3. Zoom Protocols and Introductions

Chair Grey-McKenzie discussed the new protocols to access the meeting and offered her cell phone number to reach her in the event folks were not able to gain access or reenter the meeting. Because of the change in the County Library System's practices, each person must have a Zoom account in addition to having the meeting ID and password – previously you could access the Library Advisory Committee meetings just by using the meeting URL, or the meeting specific Id and password. Attendees introduced themselves.

4. Minutes

Babs Margolies took the November 15, 2021 minutes (The Library Advisory Committee did not meet in December 2021). After the Committee discussed the draft minutes, Elliot Chabot moved that the November 15, 2021 minutes be adopted as amended, with a few spelling corrections; Betty Bell seconded the motion.

5. Assign Temporary Scribe (for Jan)

Chair Grey-McKenzie assigned Chris Swan to take the minutes for the January 2022 meeting.

6. Demo & Q & A: Koha Aspen Discovery, new library catalog system

Mark Santoro presented the features of the new library catalog. The catalog now contains the records of more than just books, with all formats for a single title being listed together. Search features include keyword, author and title. Filters are available to narrow the search results, after the first search has run. Users can create and edit lists of books in which they are interested. The system is able to provide users with their reading history, and users are able to delete items in their history. The system has built-in tutorials and Librarians are available for help as well. Mark Santoro noted that he will do tutorials on request for small groups of users. AHLAC members and guests asked many questions about the catalog/collections/materials and events. They were interested in attending other demonstrations.

7. Aspen Hill Library Advisory Committee Chair Report

a. Election: Secretary position update

Chair Grey-McKenzie reported that she reached out to potential candidates for the position and has not found a candidate as yet.

b. Follow-up on recent meetings

Chair Grey-McKenzie reported that she met with Montgomery County Librarians Rachel Rappaport and Linda Curvey-Brown about equity and diversity within the Library system. The group is new and they will share more related to their goals at a later time.

c. Aspen Hill Library Advisory Committee Brochure and Library Advisory Committee application

A copy of the Aspen-Hill-specific Library Advisory Committee Brochure, which includes the Library Advisory Committee application, has been found. Chair Grey-McKenzie is hoping to update the brochure.

8. Aspen Hill Library Branch Manager's Report

a. Collections / Dec 2021 Circulation / Foot Traffic / Statistics

Christine Freeman had sent out a statistics report, in advance, via email. Please see Attachment 1, below. Circulation (Collections total checkouts + renewals) = 16,785; Foot traffic = 428 on daily average.

b. Programming

Christine Freeman had sent out a report of programming in December, in advance, via email. Please see Attachment 1, below. All programming currently is virtual, except for the Do-It-Yourself Storytime program, which is held once a week, and is a passive program. The Storytime program had the greatest attendance, 84 attendees. A virtual program, Steaming and Smart TVs, had 73 attendees.

Programming for February also will be virtual, and focused on Love Your Library, with a Teen virtual Trivia program, and more Do-It-Yourself Storytime programs. Aspen Hill will have supplies to support the Library Lover's Kickoff program, a virtual presentation by a hip-hop doctor. The Department is considering a library branch for the STEM event/program with the FOLMC, and pick-up locations for the supplies. The Aspen Hill and Little Falls Libraries together are piloting a Teen Art Contest. The art created should be inspired by something the artist has read. The art will go on display in March.

Knitting and Crocheting was unable to meet one afternoon, due to lack of available Library staff, as liberal leave was in effect, due to the weather (snow). The Olney branch will take over hosting the program every other week, which was the practice when the program was in-person, and not virtual.

The Committee discussed the new requirements by MCPL that each person attending a virtual program accessible only on Zoom must have their own Zoom account, with its own ID and password, in addition to the Meeting specific password and ID. The implementation of this requirement was done quickly, with little explanations and warnings. Users still have difficulties attending the meetings on Zoom, because of this change.

c. Facilities

No facilities issues were raised. Volunteers have not been permitted in the building for several weeks.

d. Services

Serving as a library that dispenses masks and test kits has been hard on the staff. The building has been swamped with users seeking the kits and the telephone lines have been very busy with inquiries about the kits. Christine Freeman noted that staff will deliver the masks and/or test kits to folks out in their cars (if they call the library and park at the ADA parking), when they are not capable of getting in the building.

e. Staffing

Christine Freeman now is the Interim Manager of Twinbrook as well as Agency Manager at Aspen Hill. She spends half of each day at each of the two libraries, Aspen Hill and Twinbrook. Staff at both branches are supporting the two libraries, since Twinbrook has more Circulation staff and Aspen Hill has more Information (Reference) staff. Aspen Hill is short 40 hours a week of Information staff, and 60 hours a week of Circulation staff. These vacant positions are part-time and are not in the process of being filled yet. Staff are out for leave and covid. Telework is entirely based on branch staffing levels.

9. Community Voices

Several visitors spoke about their concerns with access to Library services and how the community can help in sharing information on FaceBook, as well as helping the AHLIB in general. Christine explained that the library Dept. messaging comes from the Administration. Appreciation also was expressed for MCPL electronic access to magazines.

10. Library Board Liaison Report

Tim Lighter, MCLB Liaison to AHLAC, reported that the Library Advisory Committee Handbook is waiting to be finalized. The Library Board Manual is under review. Work on the County Library's next Strategic Plan has gotten underway, with the Community Research to be completed by January.

11. Friends of the Aspen Hill Library Report

Chris Swan, President of the FOL AH, had submitted a written report via email, prior to the meeting. Please see Attachment 2, below. Volunteers currently are not allowed in the library to work. The Book Depot is not able to be stocked, or any funds raised by sale of the items collected. For, Love Your Library Month in February, The Friends are planning their Annual Membership Drive, and will present the Aspen Hill Library staff with tokens of appreciation for all of their hard work and effort this past year.

The Friends also are planning the Spring Candidates Forums. Registered candidates of all political parties are invited to present at the forum for their electoral race. The forums may be virtual on Zoom, dependent upon the COVID rules and regulations. Otherwise, forums will be In-person, in the Library's Community Room.

The current Candidate Forums schedule, with all Forums starting at 7:30 pm.

March 2, March 10 – County Council at Large candidates (may be condensed into one forum on March 10)

April 7 – County Executive Candidates

May 5 – State Legislature candidates for District 19

May 12 – County Council District 6 candidates

May 25 – School Board candidates

12. Aspen Hill Library Advisory Committee Landscape Committee Report.

Babs Margolies, Co-President, Aspen Hill Garden Club, submitted a written report via email, prior to the meeting. Please see Attachment 3, below. The USA National Phenology Network and the Smithsonian have a project (the Redbud Phenology Project) to monitor changes over time in Redbud trees to assist with determinations of the impacts of climate change. Since the Library Gardens have a redbud tree, this could be an opportunity for the Garden Club and the Library staff or Community to participate in collecting data on climate change.

Another idea proposed by a Garden Club member was to install a "Bat Box" at the AHLIB, to study the impact of bats on the environment.

The Aspen Hill Garden Club met via Zoom earlier in January and plans to meet again via Zoom in February. Plans are being made to evaluate the library gardens later in the year, perhaps to move some plants, plan annuals, refresh the soil of a garden, and plan for spring and fall bulb plantings.

13. Adjournment

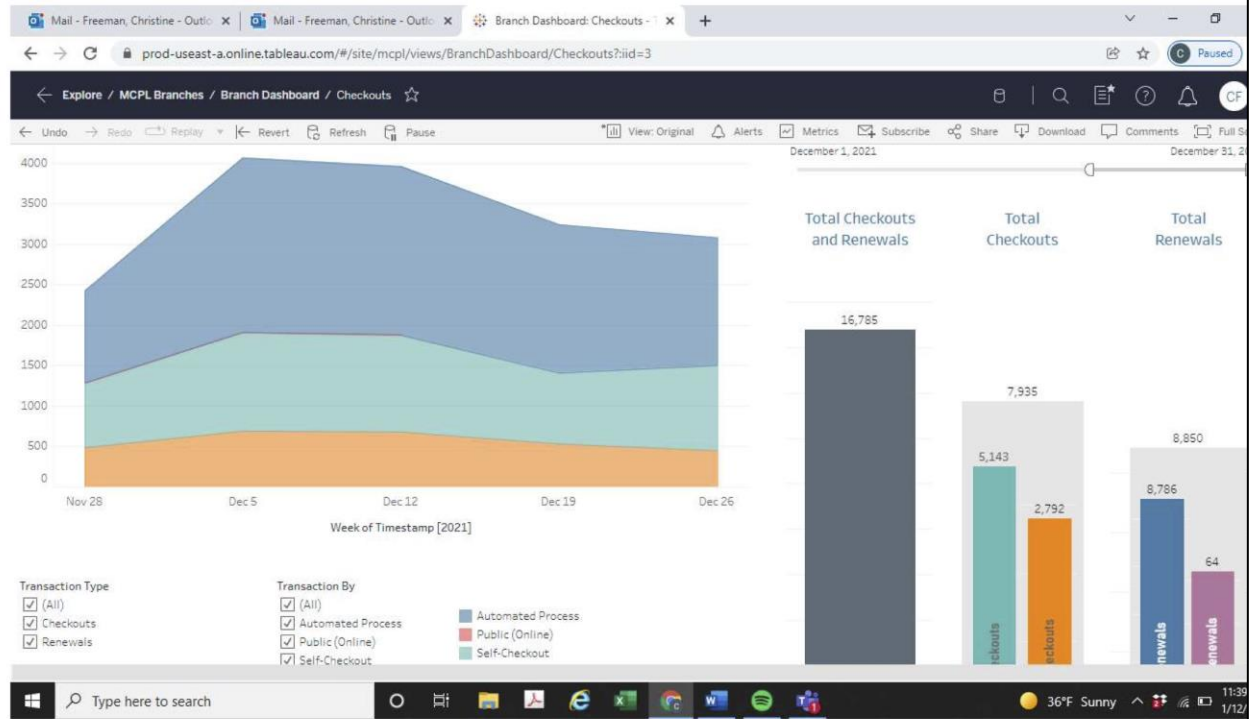
The meeting adjourned at 9:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Swan, January Scribe

Manager's Report

Circulation Stats for December



Door Count for December

428 on average daily

Programs all virtual unless noted otherwise

Knitting and Crocheting- 11,8,9 total 28

Teen Beading (in person) 16

DIY Storytime (passive in person) 30,20,19,15 total 84

What you need to know about medicare- 28

Streaming and Smart TV's-73

Adult Bookclub 17

February Love the Library Events

Attachment 1

Friends of the Library Report

Our Friends group is looking forward to the spring and the opportunity to be in the Library again.

Book Depot and Book Sale

Currently, we are not allowed to be in the Library as volunteers. Thus, we are not allowed to stock our tiny book depot, collect the funds from the small cash box, or sort and box new book donations. We are hopeful that we will be allowed resume running the book depot, and to hold our spring book sale, scheduled for April 30, with set-up for the book sale beginning April 22. Our book sales are the main source of our income to support the Library.

Library Lovers Month and Membership Drive

In conjunction with Library Lovers Month in February, we will hold our Annual Membership Drive. Our plans, with the valued support of the Garden Club, to staff tables at the Library encouraging folks to join the Friends, do not appear to be a viable option this year because of COVID. So, we are planning to use more signs and other means to let folks know it is time to renew their membership, or just to join. We also plan to thank for Aspen Hill Library staff with tokens of our appreciation for all of their hard work and effort this past year.

Candidates Forums

We are planning our 2022 Spring Candidate Forums, which will be held at the Library or on Zoom. Registered candidates of all political parties are invited to the forum for their electoral race.

Our current Candidate Forums schedule, with all Forums starting at 7:30 pm.

March 2 County Council at Large candidates (part 1)
March 10 County Council at Large candidates (part 2)
April 7 County Executive candidates
May 5 State Legislature candidates for our area
May 12 County Council District 6 candidates
May 25 School Board candidates

Attachment 2

Landscape Committee Report for January 24, 2022 LAC Meeting

The Aspen Hill Library Gardens are resting, mostly dormant for the winter. However, underground roots are being nourished and energy stored for the upcoming season. Aspen Hill Garden Club is in much the same state of survival mode.

In December, Garden Club members enjoyed spending time together at two “in-person gatherings”, a District IV Holiday event at Strathmore Mansion (*Strathmore Sparkles*) and our own Garden Club holiday get together at one of our members’ homes. An enjoyable time was had by all at both events.

In January, the Garden Club was back on ZOOM for our monthly meeting. For our Program segment, I did a presentation on a “Citizen Science” Project called *The Redbud Phenology Project*. This is a project co-sponsored by researchers from the USA National Phenology Network and Smithsonian to monitor and evaluate data on changes over time in Redbud trees to assist in determining impacts of climate change. Since our Library Garden has a Redbud tree, I felt this would be a perfect project in which to involve Garden Club members and possibly, working with Library Staff, extending this opportunity and educational experience to the Library Community.

Near the end of our meeting, one of our members introduced another idea that she is exploring in her own yard – the instillation of a “Bat Box” to study the impact of bats on the environment. She requested that we ask the Library Manager whether this type of project would be acceptable for the Library. She explained that her research showed that bats are good for the environment and that monitoring them would be a good educational experience for children and adults.

Our next Aspen Hill Garden Club monthly meeting will be February 8 on ZOOM. Presently, we do not have a theme for the program.

Babette Margolies, Co-President Aspen Hill Garden Club
Eileen Smith, Co-President Aspen Hill Garden Club

Attachment 3