

**ASPEN HILL LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MARCH 20, 2023**

Call to Order:

Chair Althea Grey-McKenzie called the meeting to order at 7:30pm. The meeting was held by teleconference, with the teleconference participation guidelines in place. Chair Grey-McKenzie welcomed everyone.

Roll Call:

Althea Grey-McKenzie, Chair, Delores McKoy, Secretary; Babs Margolies, Elliot Chabot, Chris Swan, Eileen Smith, Barbara Reading, Moye Stephenson-Fairweather; Members sending regrets: Betty Bell, Aleen Chabot, Ariana McKenzie. MCPL Staff present: Patrick Fromm, Regional Manager; Vikram Pant, MCLB Liaison; Guests: Doug Marshall, Project Planner, Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Watershed Restoration Division, Kathy Ramienski, Sandy Spring Museum Garden Club; Vicky Duguet, President, Aspen Hill Garden Club and members: Susan Dunham, Marta Chaco, Laura Crago and Barbara Ekkuit.

Secretary Report: Delores McKoy reported that the minutes from the February 27, 2023 meeting are in draft and being reviewed. She is working on updating the roster with the Chair Grey-McKenzie. Chair shared that all new members will receive new/renewal membership information.

Minutes: February 27, 2023 minutes will be tabled until the next meeting.

Topic: "What is growing in the Aspen Hill Library Rain Garden?" Doug Marshall gave a presentation on the service provided by the division of watershed restoration, DEP. The County Facility projects typically include installing small stormwater practices on properties owned by the County (i.e. public schools, libraries, community centers, etc.). He discussed trees, shrubs, and perennials. Eileen Smith asked about the green roof concept. Doug Marshall explained that many construction projects include green roofs to help support the watershed.

Babette Margolies had a question about garden upkeep and Mr. Marshall explained that the DEP takes care of anything structural, such as pines. Plants are considered structural because they are involved in stormwater stability. The DEP takes care of sediments that build up on the property, as an example, however, they do not manage/remove trash. They mow around the perimeter and even tend to hedges and edge the facilities. They apply mulch and replacement and any of the plants that would die off.

Chair Grey-McKenzie thanked Mr. Marshall for his informative presentation and thanked Vicky Duguet for inviting Garden Club members. Chair Grey-McKenzie asked if the Garden Club had events or programs for young people, children, and families who attend the library. Mr. Marshall shared that he could provide some environmental coloring books for future activities at the library.

AHLAC Chair Report: (report attached) Althea Grey-McKenzie reported that due to changes in several members' schedules and a shorter than usual break between the March and April meetings, she would like to cancel the April meeting and resume with the May 15, 2023 meeting. All agreed that the next AHLAC meeting will be in May 2023. The roster now has 18 members. Chair Grey-McKenzie welcomed Barbara Reading, our newest member. Chair continues to inquire about hybrid meetings this year, hopefully in May since June is an election month. Chair Grey-McKenzie reported that Betty Bell informed her that she is unable to attend today's meeting and sent a note about the offsite Knitting and Crocheting Club.

Christine Freeman, Branch Manager, reached out to the Chair about having a Volunteer Appreciation Day held on a Saturday. Chair Grey-McKenzie raised the idea of continuing the Volunteer Appreciation Day at previous meetings and was happy that the Aspen Hill Library could have an event this year. She further explained that the Volunteer Appreciation Day was held each year, led by the AHLIB and supported by the former FOL AH Chapter. Patrick Fromm explained that AHLAC Members/Volunteers and Garden Club members will be appreciated. The Chair will wait to hear back from Mr. Fromm and Ms. Freeman and asked Mr. Fromm to let her know if there was anything that the AHLAC members could do to help.

The AHLAC goals will reflect any changes being made to the LAC handbook. She continues to follow-up on the goals and updates them as information is received. She received questions about the AHLIB 55 years in the community. It would be helpful to consider including displays in other county spaces and providing tabling at community and county programs. We will continue to suggest ideas and traditional/historic activities to be considered by the Liaison and Branch Managers.

Chair Grey-McKenzie said that she needs more help from the team with outreach activities. Our punch list is also in need of a thorough update. Secretary McKoy is supporting these efforts. Chair Grey-McKenzie will update our Liaison, Vikram Pant and continue to share plans for outreach.

Elliot Chabot asked about materials that were prepared for the 50th Anniversary, indicating that they are still valued. He would like to review the materials and referred to having these items made into a poster-type display to share history about the library. This poster or display could hang permanently in the library. Mr. Fromm is interested in seeing the materials as well. There was discussion on locations to hang or display – unfortunately, there is no display case at AHLIB. Forming a committee to initiate the review and suggestions regarding a permanent display would be helpful. Ms. McKoy suggested another way to promote the library could be through a proclamation from the County declaring an Aspen Hill Library Day, having ads for MCPL and AHLAC on buses, etc. in the Aspen Hill Library neighborhood (this could be a system-wide effort). Chair Grey-McKenzie will share pictures from Library activities.

Chair Grey-McKenzie acknowledged Mr. Fromm for the great job he is doing. Mr. Fromm says that he appreciates honest feedback when it comes from the LAC. He loves to hear from the team and that he will always have time to hear from the LAC members and Garden Club.

Regional Manager Report: Patrick Fromm reported that there will be a data analyst staff person this month. Circulation = 6,897; Programs: family story time continues; Family literacy night had 100 people in February. There is continued outreach into the community and they will continue literacy programs. Preparations are happening now for summertime programs. Potomac Library is re-opening.

MCPL Liaison Report: (reports attached) Vikram Pant distributed his report and the Director's Report earlier and attended both the AHLAC and Silver Spring LAC meetings this evening. Chair Grey-McKenzie asked if everyone received Vikram Pant's report and she read from it briefly.

Landscape Committee Report: (report attached) Babs Margolies and Eileen Smith reported that some of the new growth started to spread. The Garden Club clean-up is on March 25 with a rain date of March 26. Members have signed up for each week of the 2023 weeding and watering schedule. Several new members are excited to join the project. They are planning to clean up on April 2 and October/November 4. They are making decisions about new plants and adding seeds, especially with news about isolated ice storms in the area. The landscape committee has taken soil samples from all of the gardens and they are awaiting results. They believe the tests on the soil samples will be helpful for all the gardens. They have started growing plants from seed and will create markers in the garden where the seedling is growing.

Old Business: Chair Grey-McKenzie heard from Ms. Bell about the offsite Knitting and Crocheting Club (K & C Club). Ms. Bell shared with her that everything is going well and that they have a nice group. The meeting is no longer managed through the library. Chair Grey-McKenzie is interested in some sort of recognition for the K & C Club. There were questions about why the Knitting and Crocheting Club was stopped by the AHLIB. Mr. Fromm responded that the activity took more of the staff time and energy, during a time when they had limited staff. There was extensive discussion on the importance of these virtual programs to library stakeholders, especially seniors, as well as alternative ways to accommodate this group. One suggestion was to have a volunteer monitor the virtual meeting. The Chair is interested in following up further with the library managers regarding other suggestions.

New Business:

- Volunteer Appreciation: Date to be announced
- Tabling: Follow-up on dates/locations – to be announced

General Comments: There was discussion on Senior engagement and the loss of the online Knitting and Crocheting Club. Laura Crago asked how many senior citizens patronize the library. It seemed to her that, if there is a programming issue, the library may be able to confirm how many senior citizens makes up the number of borrowers. The most vulnerable in the community are the seniors and removing programs that support them seems disrespectful. There were other similar concerns from the members.

Adjournment:

Chair asked for a motion; Ms. McKoy made the motion to adjourn the meeting. With no further business, the meeting ended at 9:30pm.



Aspen Hill Library Advisory Committee (AHLAC)

Chair Report

March 20, 2023

- A. Roster: We currently have 18 members, however, some memberships have expired and are in the process of being renewed. Reminders to follow-up and renew memberships were shared in 2022 and continue. Roster will be updated soon.
- B. Meetings: We are considering changes to meetings to include a hybrid format as a response to concerns by our membership and community voices. On March 20, 2023 at 7:30pm we welcome our speaker from MC DEP, Douglas Marshall, who will present, "What is Growing in the Aspen Hill Library Rain Garden". Please see our virtual meeting link below:

Join us for the virtual Aspen Hill Library Advisory Committee meeting - open to all

Join our event here: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84263904110>

Or Dial In: 301 715 8592; Meeting ID: 842 6390 4110

- C. Membership/Renewals: New member, Barbara Reading joined in February 2023. Members may renew their membership using the general application by completing online form and checking the "renewal" box at the top. Once the form is complete it will be submitted to MCPL and reviewed by the MCLB. New member = 1; Continuing members = 12; Youth members (volunteers) = 5; Youth Volunteer Coordinator = 1 (adult); Inactive = 1. <https://mcgmd.wufoo.com/forms/q1hx790p0xihc8w/>
- D. AHLAC Goals: (This area will continue to be updated as goals are met or exceeded – please see updates in **bold print**)
- 1) Increasing Communication:
 - Between LACs and Library System, regarding AHLIB and Library-wide current and past operations, procedures, initiatives, early stages of handbook revision, etc.
 - Between Officers of each LAC (LAC to LAC communication). **Awaiting a response from the Dept. regarding Handbook revisions; Received**
 - Regarding Achievements (LAC Activities and Awards) – AHLAC Officers are working with the Liaison and Branch Managers to discuss, inform and capture ways of not only

reporting news, but a formal way of expressing LAC Achievement. **Awaiting response from Liaison regarding any subgroup activity. Liaison reported that our LAC was the only one to have Appreciation activities for the Library staff and volunteers for Library Lovers' Month. Great job everyone!**

2) Responsible Data:

- Having comprehensive data/charts and early inclusion in planning, feedback and transferring histories. **Feb Liaison report included request for suggestions on Circulation and Computers policies and practices by March 7, 2023.**
- Use of new modalities / technology and training early on to support all of our communities so they have a sense of belonging. **Requested a Demonstration or Workshop on using MCPL Zoom, especially for our members. Awaiting response from Regional Manager.**
- Technology usage and safety regarding storage, authorization, devices and online communications. **Requesting clarity and best approach from Liaison/MCPL.**

3) Positioning:

- LAC members desire to support efforts of the AHLIB staff to create a physical library with collections and focused programming.
- Keepers of the History: The AHLAC and other LACs are extremely familiar with their communities and can serve as history and culture bearers. As Keepers of the History, the LACs can pass on knowledge and support continuous community outreach, recommend services and initiatives surrounding demographic trends/needs.
- Outreach: We would like to be more involved in programs/event plans early on to schedule tabling and community outreach.
- Suggested events for MCPL to participate in to share info and offer library cards, etc. **Continue to make recommendations on AHLAC and system-wide programs such as: Hispanic Heritage Month, Library Anniversary events, Library Career speakers, Strategic plan insights and County Executive Budget Forums.**

E. AHLIB Administration: Informed the Branch Managers of the previous Appreciation events / programs that were conducted by the AHLIB and partners, to recognize volunteers, etc. **Christine Freeman, our Library Manager reached out to me about plans for an Appreciation event; Date may be planned for a Saturday in May.**

F. Hybrid Equipment: Special consideration for a hybrid meeting this year; to be announced.

G. Requests for Tabling and Displays: Delores, Vikram and I had a meeting to follow-up on AHLAC business regarding opportunities to increase membership and to place information about our LAC information on community bulletin boards, display cases, etc. We are creating a plan to start tabling at MCPL and local events/programs and will need volunteers.

H. AHLAC Activities: Thanking everyone for their time volunteering during AHLIB and AHLAC activities. I am interested in having more members involved in small groups to manager our AHLAC Activities such as: The Punch List, Tabling, Outreach materials, sharing documents during meetings, Bulletin board updates and requests for displays.

MCPL Board Report – March 20, 2023

Providing a high level recap of the recent board activities. It is lighter than usual as I was unable to attend the most recent meeting on March 8th. Our next board meeting will be April 12th.

An Ask from the Board – Your voice in updating MCPL Policies and Practices, Part 1 – Circulation and Computers. Please review and provide feedback to me by **3/28**. Future months will focus on additional policy reviews.

Periodically the board, through its working group on Policies and Procedures, is tasked with reviewing policies and procedures. These can be found online at <https://montgomerycountymd.gov/library/policies/index.html>.

Please review the Circulation and Computer Policies and let me know if you have any thoughts / concerns / revisions. I will send them to the Board's working group for potential incorporation into refreshed policies.

Some questions you can help us answer are:

How can these policies be improved? Are there any shortcomings?

- Do you think we need changes in Library Cards, Borrowing, Holds, Privacy?

How can Computer policies be improved? Any shortcomings?

- Areas such as Computer, Internet and WiFi usage policies? Privacy issues?

Finally, as always, if there are any topic / kudos / issues / challenges you would like relayed to the MCPL Director and/or the Library Board, please feel free to let me know or send me an email at [REDACTED] * anytime. (*One ask is please do not share my personal email address beyond the LAC, such as in community listservs or other online message boards.

[submitted by Vikram Pant]

Montgomery County Library Board
Director's Report
March 8, 2023

- **Personnel:** The following staff changes took place during the month of February 2023:
 - New Hires:
 - Wai Man “ Isaac” Chan, IT Technician III, Central
 - Rayeesi Mahmood, Assistant Branch Supervisor, Twinbrook
 - Transfers:
 - Hsing-Jung Lin, Library Assistant I, Little Falls to Quince Orchard
 - Mai-Trang Khuu, Library Assistant I, Damascus to Library Tech, Collection Management
 - Cindy Gil, Librarian II, Marilyn Praisner to White Oak
 - Erin Fishman, Librarian II, Long Branch to Potomac
 - Sumi Lee, Library Assistant I, Gaithersburg to Quince Orchard
 - Nasrin Ghaemi, Library Desk Assistant, Brigadier General Charles E. McGee to Potomac
 - Separated from County Service:
 - Sherley Lee, Library Assistant I, Gaithersburg
 - Robert Thompson, Librarian I, Wheaton
 - Thanh-Yen Dang, Library Assistant I, Rockville Memorial
 - Other Changes:
 - Carleton Salley, Librarian I P/T to Librarian I F/T, Quince Orchard

- **Renovation/Construction Updates**
 - Damascus – Waiting for purchase order to issue Notice to Proceed to Sheladia Associates to begin the design.
 - Brigadier General Charles E. McGee – NOA reviewing the facility assessment task order for signature.
 - Potomac – [Reopening ceremony](#) scheduled for April 15, 2023, 10 AM.
 - Noyes – Do not have a closure date yet.

- The **Contemporary Conversations with Sheree Renée Thomas** was a great success. This was MCPL’s first in-person Contemporary Conversation after three years. This is also the first program combining in person and livestreaming attendance. Total in in-person attendees was 60 not including 15 staff (MCPL, FOLMC and LCMC). The link for livestreaming was requested and sent to 249 people. Prior to the event, Ms. Thomas visited Northwood High School in Silver Spring and talked to a packed audience of students and teachers about the writing process.

- Regional Manager Dianne Whitaker was featured as a **local hero** in Congressman Jamie Raskin’s [weekly video series](#) which recognizes Marylanders in the 8th District who are acting creatively and bravely to make our community extraordinary.

- MCPL began participating in “[Hatchlings: Ready to Hatch](#),” a Maryland State Library-sponsored program developed by Betsy Diamant-Cohen, the creator of *Mother Goose on the Loose*. The Hatchlings program helps expectant and new parents build the skills to be their child’s first teachers.

- MCPL partnered with the Jewish Council for the Aging Heyman Interages Center (JCA) to celebrate “Read Across America Week” by providing a reading program at Gaithersburg and Wheaton libraries on March 4 and March 5. County Executive Elrich participated in the reading event at Wheaton.

Landscape Committee Report for March 27, 2023, LAC Meeting

With the Spring Equinox, the Aspen Hill Library Gardens have begun to sprout new growth. Warm days mean it's time for Aspen Hill Garden Club to reawaken and begin gardening.

The Library Garden Spring clean-up is scheduled for Saturday, March 25th at 1pm with a rain date of March 26th. The 4H Lucky Clovers will, again, assist Garden Club members with this effort. Furthermore, Club members have signed up for each week of the 2023 Weeding and Watering Schedule. Several new club members are enthusiastically looking forward to joining this project. The schedule begins the week of April 2 and ends on November 4. Fall clean-up will occur in late October or early November.

In other news, the Aspen Hill Garden Club's Landscape Committee took numerous soil samples from the six gardens we take care of. The soil test results will allow the committee to decide which new plantings are best for each area. To this end, one of our members is growing plants from seeds and will transplant the plants into the Library Gardens later in the spring.

Babette Margolies
Eileen Smith