

Aspen Hill Library Advisory Committee

Minutes of May 15, 2023

Attendees: Althea Grey-McKenzie, Chair, Delores McKoy, Secretary, Eileen Smith, Babs Margolies, Elliot Chabot, Chris Swan, Barbara Reading, and Moye Stephenson-Fairweather were present; MCPL staff present was Patrick Fromm, Regional Manager; Jesse Bravin, MCLB Liaison

Call to Order: Chair Grey-McKenzie called the meeting to order at 7:34 pm. The meeting was held in a hybrid format from the Aspen Hill Library location and online over Zoom.

Chair Grey-McKenzie welcomed everyone and Jesse Bravin, the new MCLB Liaison. She thanked Patrick Fromm for his assistance in the hybrid meeting format. She expressed interest in being able to see everyone in person and online and looks forward to when we can eventually hold all in-person meetings.

Secretary Report: Delores McKoy reported that the draft February 27, 2023 meeting minutes were distributed and asked if anyone had questions or comments.

Minutes for review: February 27, 2023 and matters arising from the minutes: included clarification to dates and links.

Chris Swan moved to accept the February 27, 2023 meeting minutes with minor changes and Elliot Chabot seconded. A voice vote was taken and voting was unanimous in favor of the motion. February meeting minutes approved. Chair Grey-McKenzie indicated that due to changes in her schedule, she is currently reviewing the draft March minutes.

Topic: Volunteer Coordinator Presentation: Ariana McKenzie shared the draft of the brochure created by the youth volunteers, including an online version which she shared details. The volunteers are helping to work through some of the questions that may arise from communications using digital media/social content. They are aware of the MCPL policies and sensitivity of these matters. They are currently reviewing ways of using social media that may be helpful in future outreach and reporting on what they find to the AHLAC. This activity was requested by the Chair to align with the requests through MCPL surveys announced by our former Liaison. Ms. McKenzie requested suggestions

for considering a future Facebook page and will follow-up with more suggestions soon. Ms. McKenzie also mentioned that she and youth volunteers are reaching out to recruit new volunteers. She said the various events in the community have allowed high school volunteers to participate and they have been enthusiastic about volunteering. Ms. Reading asked about the age range, to which Ms. McKenzie replied 9th to 11th graders make up the current 7 volunteers. Some volunteers completed activities with Ms. McKenzie and then returned for more assignments. She typically works with 3 to 4 volunteers consistently. The volunteer group was established in October of 2022. Mr. Fromm commended Ms. McKenzie for initiating the idea and suggested he would like to connect her with MCPL's Teen Academy. Mr. Bravin was also interested in learning more about youth volunteers work and will reach out. He emphasized that any information created by the group would need first to go through the board before it is published. Chair Grey-McKenzie said that the AHLAC is reporting on the group's process and keeping with the LAC Handbook and MCPL rules and regulations.

AHLAC Chair Report: Althea Grey-McKenzie asked if everyone received her report for the meeting. She noted growth in the membership, with 19 members now, including youth members. Communication within the group was highlighted as a positive aspect of what we are doing well. The Chair encouraged each member to get more involved and take on tasks such as beautifying the bulletin board. She mentioned Ariana's previous role in that area but suggested getting other members to help. She said recent tabling efforts have gone well and it is evident by the new members who joined the LAC. She contacted the Aspen Hill Giant grocery store and the manager is open to us choosing a date to have a tabling event promoting the library and AHLAC to the community. Ms. McKoy and Ms. Stephenson-Fairweather volunteered to host the tabling event. Other members are willing to participate and will discuss how best they can help.

The Chair emphasized the importance of ensuring everyone renew their membership through the MCPL membership/volunteer system. Chair acknowledged the renewed members and has outreached to inactive members. The Chair also mentioned upcoming goals for the AHLAC which would include ad hoc or subcommittees that can support activities, such as, managing the bulletin board and punch list. Chris Swan and Elliot Chabot will consider working on the punch list and make suggestions – they will discuss what is possible with the Chair.

AHLIB Branch Report: Mr. Fromm reported on a “snapshot” of library data collected including checkout, renewal, self-service, foot traffic, and active users. He also provided a program overview, mentioning the new team coordinator and ideas such as a teen advisory board not directly connected to the library. Mr. Fromm said that the branch had new staff members. Ms. Swan had a question about the team coordinator, and Mr. Fromm clarified that Colleen East serves as the coordinator for the county at large and is also a library assistant. He said regarding staff changes, a full-time position will be available due to an individual leaving, and a part-time library associate position will also be filled. The internal movement process involves interviews. The Chair reminded Mr. Fromm about charts for a previous report that she requested.

MCLB Liaison Report:

Jess Bravin reported that Vikram Pant was responsible for this month's handling of the report. He informed the group that the Library Dept. originally lost more than \$800K in funding from the Montgomery County Operational budget. However, the County Council voted to leave the budget intact, pending approval next month. The lost funds were originally allocated to the school board. The Chair provided Mr. Bravin with the guidelines for submitting his report.

AHLAC Landscape Committee Report:

Babs Margolies reported that the Beautiful Bloom club members have signed up for weekly weeding and watering sessions from April to October. They have been working with Lucky Clover and the Garden Club to prepare the soil. One member has been planting from seed, and the plants will be transferred to the library garden after May 20. The inventory of the garden is ongoing. Ms. Smith mentioned that Garden Club members would assist with labeling and inventory. Labels will be created to separate the plants for setting them out in the library. Planting will begin on May 19 instead of May 20 due to school schedules. A correction was made regarding the date of the Landscape Committee March meeting report (March 20). Ms. Smith explained that a member of the Garden Club raised concerns about the garden's proximity to the meeting rooms and exposed electrical wires. The sump pump and basement issues were discussed. Chair indicated that several concerns about safety around the gardens and wiring were shared with her from the public and a Garden Club member. These concerns were shared with Mr. Fromm and will continue to be illuminated in future reports and added to a punch list. Mr. Fromm thanked Laura Crago for reporting issues to him and the Chair. He indicated that a (work) ticket was submitted. Ms. Margolies suggested that community members could bring facility-related concerns to the attention of the

library at any time. Ms. Swan mentioned that any issues could be submitted by the library personnel for appropriate handling. Chair reminded everyone that these types of concerns will continue to be shared with the Regional Manager and our Liaison.

Volunteer Appreciation Day: The Celebration is scheduled for May 20, 2023, 11am – 12pm – members expressed their availability.

New business: No new business

Old business: Chair will continue to work on list to have members more involved with its activities (bulletin board, tabling, coordinating tabling efforts, etc.)

Adjournment:

Secretary asked for a motion; Chris Swan made the motion to adjourn the meeting. With no further business, the meeting ended at 9:15 p.m.

Next Meeting: June 26, 2023, 7:30pm



Aspen Hill Library Advisory Committee (AHLAC)

Chair Report

May 15, 2023

- A. Roster: We currently have 19 members. Some members have renewed and we are adding new members. Reminders to follow-up and renew memberships were shared in 2022 and through the new year. Roster will be updated soon with new member info. New members are joining through our tabling/outreach efforts and through recommendations by youth volunteers.
- B. Meetings: We voted on times and modes of our meetings and will consider all suggestions. We will have an update on our youth volunteer activities for our May meeting and continue to ask for topics and speakers for each meeting. We canceled April 2023 meeting to meet schedule changes and family commitments. We continue to be within meeting protocols.
- C. Membership/Renewals: 4 members renewed and one new youth member joined in April 2023. One member was unable to continue and ended their term in March 2023. One member renewed in May 2023. New member = 1; Continuing members = 12; Youth members (volunteers) = 6; Youth Volunteer Coordinator = 1 (adult); Inactive = 1. Totals here are based on member status.
- 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:
 - Trying to increase communication re: membership applications and the process which includes application announcements to Chair. Informed Vikram and MCPL about the missing applications.
 - Between Officers of each LAC (LAC to LAC communication). **Awaiting revision of the AHLAC Handbook; received status from MCPL.**
 - Regarding Achievements (Subcommittee on LAC Activities and Awards) – **Officers met with Liaison and Branch Managers regarding topic; Liaison reported that he is waiting on subcommittee response once the MCLB has filled its membership.**
 - 2) Responsible Data and Technology:
 - 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. Regional**

Manager also indicated that the online survey was announced. Awaiting response to survey.

- Use of new modalities / technology and training early on to support all of our communities so they have a sense of belonging. **Demonstration by Regional Manager was conducted. Received response to Hybrid format for May meeting.**
- Technology usage and safety regarding storage, authorization, devices and online communications. **Requesting clarity and best approach from Liaison/MCPL. Awaiting response from Liaison.**

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. **Awaiting plans for activities at AHLIB.**

- E. AHLIB Administration: Informed the Branch Managers of the previous Appreciation events / programs that were conducted by the AHLIB with support and funding from FOL AH chapter in the past, to recognize volunteers, etc. **Volunteer Appreciation is scheduled for Saturday, May 20, 2023; 11am – 12pm in-person at the library; AHLAC members were informed; please rsvp to AHLAC Chair by May 13, 2023. Four rsvps were received.**
- F. Hybrid Meeting: We are having a Hybrid meeting on Monday, May 15, 2023; you may attend meeting online or in person. If attending in-person, please meet in AHLIB lower-level meeting room. Reminder that library closes at 8pm.
- G. Requests for Tabling and Displays: We are forming a few ad hoc or subcommittees to organize tabling and displays. Tabling events have worked well for us and we will need to have advanced notice of AHLIB activities to support this activity.
- H. AHLAC Activities: Formation of ad hoc or subcommittees – everyone is welcome to join: Punch List, Tabling, Outreach materials, sharing documents during meetings, Bulletin board updates and follow-up on requests for displays.
- I. Community Voices: March topic: AHLIB Rain Garden: Well received event with speaker Doug Marshall. He share great information and understanding of our local ground water systems.
- J. Liaison Change: Our new Liaison is Jess Bravin. Please help us welcome Jess to the MCLB and our AHLAC.

MCPL Board Report – May 15, 2023

Providing a high-level recap of the recent board activities. Our last meeting was on Wednesday, May 10th. Our next board meeting will be Wednesday, June 14th. A reminder that all MCPL Board meetings are open to the general public.

Five New Board Members Began Their Terms – At our board meeting on 5/10, we met Jess Bravin, Wilma Brier, Adaobi Ezeadum, Carla Vale, Candice Will. These five new members have been aligned to at least one LAC and our going to be ramping up with board responsibilities over the next month.

***** URGENT *** – Call to Advocate / FY24 County Budget**

Where We Are: MCPL emerged from the pandemic with serious staffing shortages. Thanks to strong MCPL leadership and support from the County Executive and Council, we've made progress but still have work to do to reach staffing levels that meet the county-wide demand of MCPL services.

What Is The Latest: In a proposal dated 3/15, the County Executive asked for a reduction in the lapse rate. Reducing this rate allows the library to spend an extra \$825,000 to further increase staffing levels thereby providing more services and meet the county-wide demand.

Why Does This Matter: MCPL has 268,000 active card users that visit almost 3 million times a year checking out more than 10 million items. The MCPL Director stated that our libraries are a "human heavy operation."

What Can You Do: We need everyone to speak via face-to-face, email, hand-written letter, phone call to their County Council representative and highlight the importance of our libraries. In addition, we ask that you relay your support for the County Executive's March 15th proposal and give our libraries the staffing they need to provide needed services across the county. A district map ([link](#)) can help if you are unsure who your specific council member is.

I invite you, and encourage you, to confirm with the County Council that inadequate staffing will impact the delivery of services to a wide range of their constituents.

Additional Stats:

- MCPL's Collection budget is approximately \$7.6 million right now. In 2002, it was \$6 million. If we had kept up with inflation (from 2002 to today), **our collection's budget today should be \$10.4 million.**
- The MCPL system is underfunded for the number of people that it serves (per capita).
 - The 10 Central Maryland Public Library systems are Prince Georges, Frederick, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Howard, Enoch Pratt in Baltimore, Cecil, Harford and Montgomery County.

- According to a study on spending of these 10 Public Library systems, the materials expenditure for Montgomery County Public Libraries is the third lowest out of those ten library systems, above Prince George's County and the Enoch Pratt Library that serves the city of Baltimore.

The budget does not get finalized until June, but it can only help if we influence the Council early in the process. If you have time, please reach out to your Council member.

[submitted by Vikram Pant]

Montgomery County Library Board
Director's Report
May 10, 2023

- **Personnel:** The following staff changes took place during the month of April 2023:
 - MCPL HR Manager Dr. Lolita Weedon has accepted the position of Deputy Director, Montgomery County Office of Human Resources. Dr. Weedon will be second in command of OHR, working with OHR Director Traci Anderson. Dr. Weedon will be assisting the Department in hiring her successor, and will be available for helping that individual learn their role.
 - New Hires:
 - Christopher Alfaro, Library Assistant I, White Oak
 - Amy Guerrero, Library Assistant I, Little Falls
 - Elizabeth Bintrim, Librarian II, Potomac
 - Mardicia Nana, Library Assistant I, Chevy Chase
 - Rihana Stevenson, Library Assistant I, Gaithersburg
 - Keith Delk, Program Specialist, Deaf Culture Digital Library
 - Transfers:
 - Kylie Sparks, Senior Librarian (Branch Supervisor), Little Falls to Davis
 - Linda Curvey-Brown, Senior Librarian (Branch Supervisor), Connie Morella to Little Falls
 - Kirstra Otto, Senior Librarian (Branch Supervisor), Davis to Connie Morella
 - Leucadia Osorio, Library Assistant II, Chevy Chase to Kensington Park
 - Sevastita Turcu, Library Assistant I, Rockville Memorial to Damascus
 - Patricia Fowler, Library Associate (PT) to Library Associate (FT), Chevy Chase to Kensington Park
 - Promotions:
 - Colleen East, Library Desk Assistant (Brigadier General Charles E. McGee) to Library Assistant I (Aspen Hill)
 - Dyanne Tsai, Library Desk Assistant (Germantown) to Library Associate (Brigadier General Charles E. McGee)
 - Sarina Haryanto, Library Assistant I to Library Associate, Twinbrook to Rockville Memorial
 - Ed Edmond, Administrative Specialist II to Program Manager II, Central
 - Other Changes:
 - Dawn Fairbanks, Librarian I (PT) to Librarian I (FT), Wheaton
 - Separated from County Service:
 - Jan Baird-Adams, Manager III, Long Branch
 - Thomas Le, Library Assistant II, Olney
- **Renovation/Construction Updates**
 - Damascus – The design of the Damascus Library and Damascus Senior Center has started and bi-weekly meetings are being held.
 - Brigadier General Charles E. McGee – Sheladia is submitting their proposal on May 5. The facility assessment should begin mid-May.
 - Potomac – Reopened on April 15.
 - Long Branch - The Department of General Services (DGS), Division of Building Design and Construction, submitted a grant application for pavilion, fencing, and landscaping. The State is providing some money, but not enough for all the work. DGS is looking for additional money.
- Friday, May 19, 5:30 – 7:15 PM - **Contemporary Conversation** with Karen Washington, urban community gardener and food justice advocate and Jabari S. Walker, Sustainability and Energy Coordinator at Bowie State University around the topics of urban farming, sustainability and the environment.

- **2023 Summer Reading Challenge Kickoff**, June 17, 10:30 AM – noon at Rockville Memorial Library. This year’s slogan is “All Together Now” with a theme of Kindness, Friendship, and Unity. This indoor-outdoor family program attracted over 2500 attendees last summer, and this year will include:
 - Summer Reading Challenge! signups and book giveaways
 - Craft tables
 - Strolling magician [Abracadabra Alex](#)
 - A dynamic musical performance by drummer [Kofi Dennis](#)
 - Possible visit from [Washington Nationals](#) player(s) and/or mascot, Screech
 - Hands-on educational tables to learn more about partners [Montgomery County Animal Services and Adoption Center](#), [Friends of Montgomery County Animals](#), [Manna Food Center](#) and, [Montgomery Parks Foundation](#)

In 2023, [MCPL](#) and [Friends of the Library, Montgomery County MD](#) are teaming up with several local non-profit organizations to help children and teens spread kindness to local animals, people, and the planet. When participants read and earn their first e-badge, [Montgomery County Animal Services and Adoption Center](#) and [Friends of Montgomery County Animals](#) will help adoptable pets find their forever homes. For earning the second e-badge, [Manna Food Center](#) will feed families throughout the community. Finally, on behalf of those who earn their third e-badge, [Montgomery Parks Foundation](#) will install 450 solar panels, providing green energy to power local parks

Landscape Committee Report for May 15, 2023, LAC Meeting

The warmer weather of spring 2023 has arrived. The Aspen Hill Library Gardens have begun to bloom anew. Warm days mean Aspen Hill Garden Club has reawakened, and our members have begun our spring gardening chores.

Club members have signed up for the Weekly Weeding and Watering Schedule beginning April 2nd and continuing through October. Fall clean-up will occur in late October.

In other news, the Club continues to work with the 4-H Lucky Clovers. Also, the Aspen Hill Garden Club's Landscape Committee took numerous soil samples from the six gardens we take care of. Based upon the soil test results, the Landscape Committee has amended the existing soil. One of our members has been growing plants from seeds. Some of the plants will be planted in the Library Gardens on Saturday, May 20th at the AHGC Plant-a-thon. On Thursday, May 18th, prior to the planting, Garden Club members will inventory, label, and organize the plants, placing them into flats for the various gardens.

One of our AHGC members brought to the Club's attention several issues pertaining to the Library and its Gardens. Our member noticed exposed electrical wires in the "family/children's" garden which is located near the entrance to the Meeting Room. A separate issue that the same member mentioned had to do with the sump pump.

Eileen Smith
Babette Margolies