

ASPEN HILL LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AHLAC)

MINUTES – Monday, September 18, 2023

Attendees: Althea Grey-McKenzie, Ariana McKenzie (Meeting Scribe and Youth Volunteer Coordinator), Babette Margolies, Chelsea (Youth Volunteer), Eileen Smith, Moya Stephenson-Fairweather, Chris Swan, Elliot Chabot; MCPL: Patrick Fromm, Regional Manager; MCLB: Tim Lighter, Chair; Guest: Laura Crago, Aspen Hill Garden Club; Sent Regrets: Delores McKoy, AHLAC Secretary.

Meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm with Zoom meeting protocols in place.

Welcome – Chair, Althea Grey-McKenzie, welcomed everyone to the meeting; Chair acknowledged Tim Lighter, MCLB Chair, reporting on behalf of our Liaison; Meeting protocols observed with reminder about the mid-meeting health check / break and additional questions from guests during General Comments.

Secretary Report: Chair Grey-McKenzie reported that Delores McKoy, our Secretary, would not be able to attend today's meeting and asked for Ariana McKenzie to act as Scribe. The June meeting minutes were drafted and distributed for review. Minutes were reviewed with the following results:

- Babs made a motion to approve June 20, 2023 Minutes. Elliot seconded the Motion. Motion to Accept June 2023 Minutes was approved unanimously.

Elections: Chair Grey-McKenzie reported that our June elections were tabled at our June meeting with Board approval, due to challenges holding a timely June Election. The Elections were tabled until our September meeting with anticipation of a nominating committee. Chair Grey-McKenzie, Ms. McKoy, Secretary, Mr. Lighter, MCLB Chair and Jess Bravin, our Liaison met over the Summer. Among the Election issues discussed was the possibility of moving forward with Elections without creating a nomination committee. Without having enough responses to the nominating committee, and with research from Mr. Bravin and advice from Mr. Lighter, Ms. Grey-McKenzie and Ms. McKoy agreed to move forward with nominations from the floor at our September meeting. Information was shared in the Chair's September report.

The need for nominations and elections for various positions were discussed and nominations were open for Chair and Secretary positions. Chair further explained that both Officer roles, Chair and Secretary are open for re-election each year. The Chair served most of a partial term 2021-2022 and a full-term in 2022-2023 and the Secretary served a partial term in 2022 and served a full-term in 2022-2023. The Youth Volunteer Coordinator is not an elected position, however we will accept any interest. We would take nominations from the floor and proceed with voting during the 2nd half of the meeting. No nominations were presented.

Health Check / Break was taken to allow a few minutes for water break, preparation of reports, etc.

Chair Report: Althea Grey-McKenzie reported that her September report was intended as an annual report and she shared highlights. Membership changed slightly to 16 due to member schedules and address changes. A youth volunteer is unable to continue, Barbara Reading sent regrets and Betty Bell has moved from the area. Every member was asked to attend today's meeting and to participate in the Elections. Ariana McKenzie, Youth Volunteer Coordinator, reached out to all Youth Volunteer members who will attend the meeting, off-camera. Chair explained that Tim Lighter, our MCLB Chair is attending this meeting instead of our Liaison, Jess Bravin. She invited Mr. Lighter to share more during the Liaison Report section of our Agenda.

Chair Grey-McKenzie shared that AHLAC members participated in a tabling event at the Aspen Hill Giant Foods in July 2023. The tabling went very well with members of the community interested in learning more about the LAC and upcoming AHLIB events. Thank you to Delores McKoy, Moye Stephenson-Fairweather and Carl Jeanty for contributing time and effort in planning, engaging and supporting the entire outreach activity. During the meeting, there was a discussion about tabling at library events and increasing outreach efforts. It was mentioned that more support is needed, and increasing membership could help.

Chair reminded everyone about the Joint Meeting in October. She reminded us that although our meeting minutes are usually no more than 3 or 4 pages, our AHLAC agreed to include each chair, manager, director, liaison or lead report we receive, making the document, at first glance, seem longer. The full written reports are shared as a reference.

Chair said that she received an email from Laura Crago, an Aspen Hill Garden Club member, who is documenting the facilities issues (as they relate to the AHLIB gardens) and researching the plaque, memorial provisions and floral display dedicated to Gerry Dubrow.

Branch Manager Report: Patrick Fromm, Regional Manager reported that Aspen Hill library saw foot traffic of 24,202 during August, which is slightly higher than 23,005 that came through in July 2023. The busiest days are Thursdays and Sundays are the slowest. Increased circulation of 12,158 items through August, which is more than other similar-sized libraries in the system.

Programming: They have continued success with their early literacy programs. Regular story-time programs bring in 50-70 attendees. National Night Out was a collaboration with Aspen Hill Civic Association with 600 attendees on August 1, 2023 at the library. They had craft activities. County Executive and other elected officials visited. Food trucks at the program were organized by the Aspen Hill Civic Association. Hispanic Heritage Month will be a Central program at the Rockville library with Luiz Garay; another Central program in October will be Halloween in Rockville Town Square and is supported by the Regional Libraries with trick or treat activities. Kankouran West African Company had 77 attendees. "Energy Mysteries" program had 55 attendees. Adult programs showed lower numbers such as: "How to Spot Fake News" a hybrid event with only 3 attendees; the in-person "Understanding Medicare Options" had 24 attendees. Knitting and Crocheting continues.

Facilities: Mr. Fromm explained that the elevators were still out-of-service and parts are on back-order. Window replacement is underway with expected completion by fall. They are expecting better energy usage with the new window seals. Mr. Fromm is checking on the exposed wiring in the gardens and shared that the sump pump should be fixed. There was also a report of two lights being out near the

community room entrance. There was discussion on the crumbling walls in the library gardens near the stairs and an area near a sidewalk being painted but needing some refresh. Mr. Fromm will check with the property manager for a solution. Chris Swan asked about changing or updating to newer tables and chairs in the community room (current ones are dirty or over-exposed to paint/crafts); Mr. Fromm will check the status of the older issues and submit work orders for the newest issues.

Collections: Ms. Swan talked about the disappearance and welcomed return of travel guidebooks in the library. Mr. Fromm will share the valuable feedback with collections management. He asked if anyone has any feedback on the collection, to send a notice to the Department with the titles that they are looking for.

Chair inquired about the AHLAC meetings on the MCPL Events Calendar. Mr. Fromm will double-check the digital events calendar for our updated meetings.

Liaison Report: Tim Lighter, MCPL Chair, reported that Jess Bravin, our current Liaison on the Library Board was serving a partial term which ends in September. Mr. Lighter will introduce a new liaison at the next meeting.

Joint Meeting: He reminded everyone to attend the Joint Meeting on Thursday, October 12, 2023 at the Rockville Library. The Joint meeting is usually in November and was previously held on the same day as the MCLB November meeting. There was discussion on the less-effective hybrid meeting format of the previous year's event, participants being muted and shaved time for audience to ask questions.

Handbook: The board is working on updating the LAC handbook and Mr. Lighter asked for input by November 1, 2023. Elliot Chabot, a former AHLAC Chair, pointed out the usefulness of LACs making comments on the LAC Handbook. In the past, the LACs advised on the document before it was made public. Mr. Chabot and Chair Grey-McKenzie were both concerned about the process including sufficient time for LAC review of any revisions and inclusion of edits or changes before the LAC Handbook is finalized. Chair Grey-McKenzie asked that any input, suggestions and concerns or comments on the Handbook, be sent to: Mr. Lighter, the new liaison and to her, so that she may compile responses.

Mr. Lighter shared that they are planning an introductory meeting for new chairs and secretaries, as well as current officers, to help new chairs and secretaries understand their roles and responsibilities. Attending community conversations to advocate for the library budget was discussed and Mr. Lighter will share the schedule. There was a clarification on the video showing the MCPL Vinyl Day program. Chair Grey-McKenzie mentioned that it would be helpful to have the link to the news report on Vinyl Day as well. Information sharing with LAC officers was requested regarding the example of the Germantown LAC bookmark, which Mr. Lighter also showed on-screen. This bookmark could be used to promote the LACs. Anita Vassallo, MCPL Director, will fund these types of bookmarks for each LAC. Mr. Lighter will also send us the Director's report and a link to the Vinyl Day news report.

Budget: Mr. Lighter explained that the Board has focused on the operational budget for two years, attending community conversations, town halls, and operational budget meetings in the County. Board members are showing up to support the libraries. They also have a script that may be shared with interested LAC members and library users who want to join these activities. Mr. Lighter kindly agreed to send the schedule for the community conversations.

Landscape Committee Report: Babs Margolies reported on the beautiful gardens and on their fall cleanup scheduled for Mid-October. The Aspen Hill Garden Club held a successful Open Meeting on Sept. 12. They may host speakers to enrich topics for their members. There was a discussion about turning one of the gardens into an experimental native plant garden. Eileen was assigned task to contact the 4-H Lucky Clovers and continue with the watering and weeding schedule.

Elections Continued: Two officer positions and one non-elected position were discussed, and nominations were asked for Chair and Secretary. Chair reported that Delores McKoy will be stepping down as Secretary, however, will continue for now to assist Chair with completing the annual materials for MCPL. Ariana McKenzie, Youth Volunteer Coordinator is also stepping down shortly. The Youth Volunteer Coordinator role will be vacant and Chair asked for anyone who is interested to contact her. Officer positions were voted on with the following results:

- For Secretary – There were no nominations for Secretary. For Chair – There were no nominations for Chair and Althea Grey-McKenzie and Delores McKoy will continue in their roles until a Chair is nominated or until they are no longer able to continue.

Old Business: Members discussed facilities issues, including exposed wiring and sump pump problems that would be updated or added to the Punch List. Patrick will double-check with Mark Santoro about the digital events calendar to ensure that the upcoming AHLAC meetings are updated.

New business: Chair Grey-McKenzie shared that there is a 5-week Training for new Aspen Hill LAC Youth Volunteers which started September 2 and runs each Saturday until September 30. Parents and youth are welcome to attend any of the dates. Ariana McKenzie and Chelsea, a youth volunteer, are developing and coordinating the training (from 12:30pm to 2:30pm) as part of our leadership activities for the current youth volunteers. The sessions started slowly, however, there are two more sessions and they are looking for more support and youth participants.

General Comments: Laura Crago gave some background on her observations in the AHLIB gardens and wanted feedback. Ms. Crago shared that conversion of the St. John's Warts Garden to a garden for native plants was discussed by the Aspen Hill Garden Club. There was mention of a second memorial of a cross-stitch piece dedicated to a library staffer, Gerry Dubrow. Improving photographs of the library on the websites was also discussed. Patrick Fromm was asked to share any information on the plaque in the garden. Mr. Fromm will follow up with Ms. Crago and will add any additional items mentioned to his list.

Adjournment & Next Meeting Date: Chair asked for Motion to end meeting. Motion by Chris Swan accepted to end meeting at 9:01pm. Next Meeting is on 10/16/2023.

Submitted by Ariana McKenzie (scribe) and prepared by Delores Mckoy