

## **ASPEN HILL LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMITTEE - MINUTES**

**September 23, 2024**

**Attendees:** Althea Grey-McKenzie, Chair, Delores McKoy, Secretary, Babs Margolies, Ariana McKenzie, Hayat Pacquette, Eileen Smith, Moye Stephenson-Fairweather, Chris Swan; MCPL: Adrienne Miles Holderbaum, Regional Manager; Nanyamkah (Nan) Mars, Branch Supervisor; MCLB: Melanye Johnson, Liaison; Sent regrets: Moye Stephenson-Fairweather, Elliot Chabot; Guest: Betsy Starks.

**Call to order:** Chair Althea Grey-McKenzie called the meeting to order at 7:30pm and welcomed everyone with Zoom protocols in place. The meeting commenced with introductions of new member, Hayat Paquette, new Liaison, Melanye Johnson and new Branch Supervisor, Nanyamkah Mars. Guest Betsy Starks was interested in making comments regarding a recent article on the library collection. Chair Grey-McKenzie invited Ms. Starks to share her concerns during the General Comments Agenda Item.

**Secretary Report:** Secretary Delores McKoy reported that March and previous minutes were submitted to the Library Department. June minutes were tabled until today's meeting for review.

The June 2024 meeting minutes were approved unanimously by all participants present. Motion to approve was made by Althea Grey-McKenzie and seconded by Chris Swan.

**AHLAC Chair Report:** Chair, Althea Grey-McKenzie reported that 2 new members joined recently and our membership has increased to 18. Chair Grey-McKenzie requested that all members reach out and invite others to join the AHLAC. She reminded members to inform her if they wish to renew their volunteer terms and continue as members. She also emphasized the importance of members filling out their volunteer forms and registering for upcoming library and community events to support community engagement. Members can register to attend the MCLB's Joint Meeting in October and support the Silver Spring Branch (long name here) by registering to walk in MCPL section of the Montgomery County Thanksgiving Day Parade on Saturday, November 16, 2024.

Chair Grey-McKenzie also raised a concern about the need for Director Reports to be shared, indicating that while they are posted online, having them accessible through email is appreciated.

**AHLIB Branch Report:** Adrienne Miles Holderbaum, Regional Manager, reported that she shared the September Branch Report which was compiled by Branch Supervisor, Nan Mars. Chair Grey-McKenzie will share the September report with the members.

The library restarted its book sale and began accepting donations on September 3, 2024 after a summer hiatus due to workflow issues.

Staffing: Aspen Hill Library is now fully staffed as of June 2024, which has been maintained since then.

Programs: The Paint Your Pride event had 19 attendees, while the family story time on June 8th had 94 attendees. The August 31st story time had 91 attendees.

Branch Supervisor Mars clarified that the only program taking place in the children's room is the 'read to a dog' program, while all other children's story times are held downstairs in the community room. She also explained that the Teen Advisory Board (TAB) meets monthly and supports various programming in the library, as well as contributing to the setup and execution of events.

The library offers various programs for adults, including an English Conversation Club on Thursdays and a crafting program on Sundays.

Library Budget and Advocacy: Regional Manager Miles Holderbaum expressed concern that libraries are a very small part of the county budget, accounting for only 2% of the total budget, which limits their resources and visibility. Adrienne Miles Holderbaum encouraged attendees to participate in county events and advocate for libraries, emphasizing the need for community voices to be heard in budget discussions. Chair Grey-McKenzie will share the links for the County Executive Community Conversation meetings with everyone. Chair Grey-McKenzie indicated that talking point from the Board would help to facilitate better involvement in Advocacy activities and public budget meetings/hearings.

**MCLB Liaison Report:** Melanye Johnson reported that the next joint meeting between the Library Board and the LACs is scheduled for October 9, 2024 at 7pm. There was concern expressed about the meeting format, with participants hoping for a hybrid option to accommodate those who may not be able to attend the Joint Meeting in person.

**AHLAC Landscape Committee Report:** Eileen Smith and Babs Margolies shared Aspen Hill Garden Club (AHGC) history. The AHGC has been in existence for over 50 years and was created to take care of the gardens at the Aspen Hill Library as a form of community service.

A cleanup event is scheduled for early October to ensure the gardens are well-maintained, including planting, pruning, and weeding. There was concern raised about a bench in front

of the library being tilted and unstable. It was suggested that a better location could be found for the bench to secure it for safety reasons and to prevent theft. The issue was reported to the AHLIB. The AHGC is awaiting status on this bench issue.

**Old Business:** Updating the Punch List (Facilities): Community Room facet issues – Branch Manager Miles Holderbaum asked Branch Supervisor Mars to investigate and follow-up on the reported issues regarding the facet and bench and to submit a repair ticket for each.

**New Business:** There was no new business.

**General Comments:** Betsy Starks expressed her concern about the MCPL decision to eliminate entire language collections from the library, namely Farsi, Russian and Bengali language books, questioning the rationale behind removing books that serve specific communities. Ms. Starks elaborated that many residents in her community speak other languages and may rely on those books, that eliminating books in different languages diminishes the library's diversity and that the removal of those books does not reflect the community's linguistic variety nor reflects residents' needs.

Regional Manager Miles Holderbaum mentioned that the library's collection policy was last updated in June 2023 and is available on the website, indicating a commitment to maintaining current policies. She further explained that the Collections head, Felicity Brown, is now responsible for addressing questions regarding this matter and asked Branch Supervisor, Nan Mars to investigate.

In-Library Patron Engagement: A member expressed a concern about the library not feeling like a personal, connected space, emphasizing the need for a community-centric atmosphere in the Aspen Hill Library.

**Adjournment and Next Meeting update:** Babs Margolies moved to end meeting. Meeting ended at 8:30 pm. Next meeting is planned for September 23, 2024.

# Aspen Hill Branch Report for LAC Meeting

## Monday, September 23, 2024, 7:30 PM

### Branch Statistics

#### ASPEN HILL LIBRARY STATS

	June 2024	July 2024	August 2024	September 1 – September 23
Check Out	12,245	12,515	11,899	7,202
Self Service	71.80%	71.36%	70.09%	69.99%
Foot Traffic	23,546	25,121	24,215	6,529
Programs/Events	46	41	40	36
Attendance	1,014	868	910	450

#### Branch Updates

- On September 3, the Aspen Hill book sale (in collaboration with the FOLMC) restarted and also began accepting donations.
- The location of the book sale to a new space—specifically, the nook between Audiobooks and Spanish language books. This change is designed to optimize setup and provide the volunteers with more space to efficiently organize and manage the book sale.

#### Staffing Update

- New Branch Supervisor began in June

#### Past Popular Programs (June – August)

- Teens:** Paint your Pride on 6/1 – 19 total attendees
- Kids & Family:** Parachute Party Family Storytime on Saturday, 6/8 – 94 total attendees
- All Ages:** A Juneteenth Celebration featuring the Charles Rahmat Woods Quartet on Saturday, 6/15 – 39 total attendees
- Kids & Family** and **Teens:** 2024 Summer Reading Challenge Kick-Off on Saturday, 6/29 – 88 total attendees
- Kids & Family:** A Very Bubby Family Storytime on Saturday, 8/31 – 91 total attendees

#### Upcoming Programming

##### Kids & Family

- Preschool Storytime – Mondays at 10:30am
- Baby Storytime – Fridays at 10:30am
- Read to a Dog – Saturdays at 11am
- Movie: Encanto Sing-a-Long! – Saturday, 10/5 at 10:30am
- Parachute Party Family Storytime – Saturday, 10/12 at 10:30am

### Teens

- Teen Art Club: Banned Books Week Crafts – Tuesday, 9/24 at 4:00pm
- Teen Advisory Board (TAB) Meeting – Saturday, 10/5 at 2:30pm (Free pizza!)
- TeenTober Pumpkin Painting (presented by the AH TAB) – Saturday, 10/5 at 3:00pm
- Anime Club – Friday, 10/11 at 4:00pm
- Chess Club (presented by the AH TAB) – Saturday, 10/19 at 3:00pm

### Adults

- English Conversation Club – Thursdays at 10:00am
- Adult Community Craft: Paper Bead Crafting – Sunday, 9/29 at 3:00pm
- Job Searching in the Digital Age (presented by Senior Planet) – Monday, 10/7 at 2:00pm
- Understanding your Medicare Options (presented by the Montgomery County State Health Insurance Assistance Program) – Wednesday, 10/9 at 6:00pm