

SILVER SPRING: BRIGADIER GENERAL CHARLES E. MCGEE LIBRARY

LAC MINUTES

March 17, 2025 VIA ZOOM @ 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM

Present: *Dana Anderson, Jill Brantley, Jennifer Diamond, Paulette Dickerson, Chauna Wiggins (Chair), Jendayi Nyabingi, Martha Kyrillidou (Secretary).*

Present (non-voting):

1. Katrin Sweeney, Regional Manager, MCPL ([Brigadier General Charles E. McGee Library, Kensington Park Library, Noyes Library for Young Children, Long Branch](#))
2. Wilma Brier, MCPL Board Liaison

The meeting started with a roll call and approval of minutes was suggested after the Director's report as attendance was not adequate early in the meeting (see below).

#### BG Library Program & Operations Update

Kate Sweeney, the Agency Manager, reported on several operational updates at the BG Library. A major development in staffing includes an offer made for the Adult II position. Additionally, a Librarian from the branch is transitioning to the Teen Services Librarian II role, a change that, while physically minimal in terms of office relocation, comes with a significant shift in responsibilities. Furthermore, a full-time Teen Library Associate who was recently promoted to a librarian role at another branch has vacated their position, which has since been posted. There is optimism that the vacancy will be filled quickly due to high interest in full-time roles within the system.

In terms of facilities, the Branch is undergoing the recertification of its elevators, ensuring safety and compliance. Programming at the Library has seen considerable success and growth. On March 1, the Black History 365 Knowledge Ball was held in collaboration with an outside group. This trivia-based event drew substantial interest, so much so that organizers are considering a larger venue for next year. The following day, the Read Across America celebration, in partnership with the Jewish Council for Aging, proved to be another popular and well-attended community event.

Several educational and enrichment initiatives continue to thrive at the library. Digital literacy offerings include introductory and intermediate Microsoft Word classes, as well as workshops on Gmail, Google Drive, file management, and Microsoft Excel, each delivered over two-week sessions. The Spanish Conversation Circle has also grown in popularity, providing language learners and native Spanish-speaking high school students an opportunity to maintain their language skills and earn SSL hours. A second clinic-style event—while the specific nature remains unclear—was noted for high attendance.

Children's programming has been reinvigorated with a new Thursday rotation that includes game day activities, which have been met with enthusiastic participation. The Library is also launching a new book club on April 6 titled "Read Anything Good," designed to ease the pressure of assigned reading by encouraging participants to share and discuss any book of their choosing. Family-oriented events like the upcoming Sunday Family Story Time and the ongoing digital literacy programs continue to attract a diverse audience.

Service metrics from February reflect robust community engagement, with a total of 22,003 checkouts and 60 programs delivered to 989 attendees. Looking ahead, the library is preparing for the two-day MoCoCom event. Saturday's programming will cater to adults and older teens, while Sunday will focus on younger teens. Staff recall that the 2019 event, also held at BG Library, was highly engaging though notably crowded.

On the subject of library renovation and community engagement, the Branch has been proactive in collecting feedback from multiple sources, including branch staff, supervisors, the Library Advisory Committee (LAC), and former Friends of the Library (FOL). A formal assessment was conducted, and a wish list compiled by the LAC was submitted through administrative channels, ensuring a thorough review of community needs.

As the Purple Line construction progresses, Angelisa is representing the Library in ongoing meetings to monitor and address its impact on the branch. Staff have expressed the importance of establishing a plan to assess this impact continually and coordinate appropriate resources in response. There is also an advocacy push to encourage the County Executive to prioritize BG Library for renovation every two to three years, citing its high use. Ensuring community engagement in this planning process is emphasized as a critical component.

Community outreach efforts have extended beyond the library walls, with programs such as adult reading events being hosted at local breweries. Staff have voiced concerns about how federal instability might jeopardize long-standing programs like the Name Change initiative. These worries are compounded by the emotional toll of potentially losing initiatives that have taken years to develop. Nonetheless, leadership reassures that the core values of Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL) and the broader county remain unchanged, affirming their commitment to continued service despite external uncertainties.

In terms of funding, the county and state provide a philosophical buffer against some of the financial volatility seen at the federal level. The library system remains in relatively stable condition compared to other regions. Program priorities remain focused on workforce development and wellness, with offerings such as free yoga classes still in the mix. There is interest in utilizing the Silver Spring Civic Building (SSCV) for library programming during periods when the branch may be closed.

Lastly, updates from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) include information on grant-based and project-based funding, which may have implications at the state level. While the full impact of these changes remains uncertain, resources have been shared for further reference, including the Maryland Libraries Grant Guide and project-based funding tools available online.

#### Approval of Minutes

Next we approved the minutes from the February 2025 meeting (Paulette was the first to approve the motion for voting on the minutes and Dana seconded).

#### Board Update

Wilma Brier, the Board Liaison, shared several important updates with the team. She confirmed that BG Library is slated to close during its refresh period, which is anticipated to take place sometime next year. In addition, Wilma addressed the increasing costs associated with the Hoopla digital media service. Once offering ten checkouts per user, Hoopla has now been reduced to five checkouts, with usage reportedly

reaching \$150,000 per month. Unlike Libby, which requires materials to be purchased upfront, Hoopla operates on a pay-per-use model with no user limit, making it both popular and expensive. Other major library systems such as those in New York City and Boston have already discontinued Hoopla due to budget constraints.

Wilma also mentioned a potential networking event for Library Advisory Committees (LACs), tentatively scheduled for May, which would offer an opportunity for members to exchange ideas and best practices. She noted that the County Executive recently released the new budget, which has been accompanied by comments from the Library Director. This budget includes increased funding for digital materials and the world language collection, as well as adjustments to services like Brainfuse and Gale Business Insight based on cost-per-use evaluations.

In recognition of National Library Week, which begins the week of April 7, Wilma raised a question about accessing data on electronic resource usage. The collection manager has reportedly engaged in discussions with other LACs on this topic, and it was suggested that Kate might follow up directly for more detailed insights, particularly regarding Hoopla and Libby. Wilma also inquired about Kanopy, another digital platform similar to Hoopla that offers downloadable content on smart TVs, including travel guides and Great Courses. The utility and value of these services continue to be of interest as the library evaluates its digital strategy moving forward.

#### New Business

During the New Business segment, Paulette Dickerson shared updates related to the Purple Line construction and its potential impact on the BG Library. She circulated a postcard distributed by the outreach team, which now consists of different individuals from last year and brings with it new perspectives on engagement. This postcard, shared with members of the Community Action Team, includes details on meetings scheduled along the Purple Line station areas, with the Silver Spring session set for May 6 and the Long Branch meeting occurring even sooner. These virtual meetings, hosted via Microsoft Teams, often allow time for community questions, making them worthwhile opportunities for public input.

Paulette also recapped a recent listening session focused on safety. Following that session, she was contacted by a member of the outreach team who expressed interest in addressing pedestrian safety around the library. Given their experience with similar concerns at the University of Maryland campus, the outreach team is becoming more proactive. Paulette plans to coordinate with Kate to facilitate a walk-around of the library building so the team can directly observe the existing safety challenges. She also recommended involving Angelisa in this process, especially in light of past issues related to pedestrian access on the café side of the building. Paulette will send an update to the outreach contact to ensure they are fully informed of both current conditions and anticipated changes when the Purple Line opens.

In addition, Jendayi offered that her daughter, a student at the University of Maryland, could attend the campus meeting and relay any relevant information back to the group. There was also discussion of the ongoing tinting project, which has resulted in significant scaffolding and the temporary closure of the café door. This area is commonly used for private phone calls and informal meetings, highlighting its significance to staff and visitors alike.

#### Unfinished business

Under unfinished business, we discussed that nominations and actions need to take place in the coming meetings for next year's chair and secretary. Chauna reminded us of the [LAC Handbook \(PDF\)](#) and sought feedback on the [2024- 2025 BGCEM LAC Goals & Activity Schedule](#) aiming to:

- Continue to advocate for the refresh of the McGee Library.
- Foster communication among the MCLB, LAC members, and the local library community by obtaining advice and views on public library needs in their areas and reporting those views.
- Recruit new LAC members.

We will plan to hold elections in May and receive nominations in April. Chauna posted a sign listing all of our meetings on the library board.

Dana volunteered to manage the application for the Thanksgiving parade and Chauna will forwarded information to her. Chauna thanked all the volunteers who participated in the Library Lovers Outreach - Jendayi, Jennifer, Hira, Chauna, Martha. Jendayi offered to be the Farmer's Market outreach coordinator as she has time to help.

Paulette offered a letter we can use to recruit new people. Wilma asked if this letter can be used by other groups/LACs. Jennifer recommended the Silver Spring Jazz Festival as another outreach opportunity this summer (Jendayi and Jennifer offered to act on next steps with this activity).

Event calendar - <https://silverspringdowntown.com/events/calendar>

The meeting was adjourned with good wishes to take care of yourself and come back in April!

- [Upcoming meetings listed on the community calendar](#)