

Connie Morella LAC Meeting Minutes - 6/13/2023

Barbara Levine (LAC Chair), Chris Sinsheimer (LAC member), Kate Sweeney (Regional Manager), Colin Repetti (LAC Secretary), Claudia Deane (LAC member), Alison O'Brien (LAC member), Jim Montgomery (Library Board Member), Roz Rettman (LAC member), Pavani Reddy (LAC member), Jackie Rivera-Owen (Special Assistant to At Large Councilmember Gabe Albornoz) present

Regional Manager's Report

- Staffing
 - Still have one Juvenile Library Associate position open
 - This position was offered to someone and the person turned it down
 - One circulation staff member left
 - One part-time Librarian Assistant I position open
 - Not yet sure when that position will be posted
- Programming
 - Summer reading starts June 17, 2023
 - Doing outreach to local public schools
 - Kids are excited
 - Kick-off event in Rockville on Saturday
 - Teen Summer Reading event on Tuesday
 - Bilingual Music Program
 - Dancing & singing in Spanish & English
 - Some more summer reading programs, stay tuned
 - Story time event starting to change
 - Going to be ticketed as the room it's held in has a capacity of 65
 - This is less than their normal attendance so they will be doing back-to-back story times
 - Tickets will be handed out 30 minutes beforehand
 - Second weekly storytime should begin once new Library Associate is hired
 - Will be updating their marketing to reflect these changes
 - Virtual non-binary book event with author of How to They Them on Friday, June 15, 2023
 - Run by Connie Morella but functionally it's county-wide
 - Previous events
- Stop providing updates on test kits and masks until something changes
- Facilities
 - HVAC system is leaking in staff area, being worked on
 - It was raining in there
 - No recent rodent problems
 - No recent bathroom problems

- Statistics
 - 21 programs in May
 - 939 attendees for children's programs
 - 460 attendees for storytimes

Jim Montgomery's Report from Library Board

- Budget Battle Update - it's passed
 - Proposed MCPL lapse increase was voted down, did not lose \$825k from vacancies
 - Did not get \$100k to expand Chinese and Spanish language collections

Discussion with Jackie Rivera-Owen (Special Assistant to At Large Councilmember Gabe Albornoz)

- Councilmember supported library budget
- Jim Montgomery's impression is that everyone on the council expects next year's budget to be a tough one
 - Yes, coming out of Covid some funds will dry up
- Multiple members represented concerns regarding pace of hiring to Jackie
 - This was accelerated by the former head of HR who was hired/promoted to a higher county position
 - The process is also slowed down when there are an excess of vacancies
- Jim articulated that it appears neither the County Executive nor the County Council believe libraries have a role in early childhood literacy or getting children ready for kindergarten
 - They seem to believe libraries serve children who are already ready for kindergarten
 - In various recent early childhood literacy efforts in the county, libraries are rarely mentioned
- MCPL opposes banning books
 - There is a lot of institutional support in Montgomery County as it relates to the recent backlash against libraries
 - When a library has a drag story hour, there is often representation from County administration and the County Council
- Hatchlings Program
 - Pilot program in four branches
 - Works with new mothers during and after pregnancy to prepare for childhood literacy