

## Damascus Library Advisory Committee FEBRUARY 2019

Because of inclement weather, Pam has called an email meeting. The minutes of the November 2018 were electronically distributed and approved as written.

Most members commented about Mr. Elrich's vision statement and the progress in the search for a new MCPL director. Hector wrote that "the county has hired the services of a search firm to look for three departmental directors – the library one of them." We were encouraged to write letters of support for our current acting director, Anita Vassallo.

Are there any plans to have the new Council member, Mr. Will Jawando, lead for the libraries, meet with upcounty FOLs and LACs? A town-hall style meeting could include high school students with prepared questions.

Renée reported that the Damascus Friends of the Library receives donated items which it sells in the lobby of the library. The funds are used for the enhancement of Damascus Library programs and activities.

The committee thanked Hector Morey, our Board liaison, for sending notes from the Joint Meeting II in January and information from our new county executive, Marc Elrich. His "Greener County" section was noted and Pam and Ann commented that we have had Master Gardener and energy programs in the past. Susan and Renée added that Elrich did not make any reference to the libraries in his statements, and Susan would like to see a local (MCPL) librarian selected as our new permanent director.

Library Lovers Month was celebrated at Damascus with the program Roos2U, paid for by the FOL, Damascus Chapter. It was very well attended with positive feedback. Pam asked about events/activities for National Library Week in April. At the Germantown forum, which Ann attended, no one spoke out for libraries. Damascus was a topic, but about transportation and population growth. Diane added that the only time that she heard library advocates speak was on Mr. Elrich's listening tour that took place right after he was elected. Mr. Elrich did mention a revenue shortfall of \$150 million. Are we likely to lose hours? Marie asked if we have any statistics on how many patrons are using the extended hours and the status of the proposed Clarksburg Library. Pam adds a question about the inconsistency of Monday through Thursday hours at our branch.

Renée asked about moving the libraries to "Education and Culture" – "We were in a non-competitive position for funding by not being in that category. What is the impact of this change?" She also made a reference to the "Greener County" initiative: What has happened to the solar panels that were discussed for our building? Renée and Gail are continuing their messages on the boards at both ends of town. The current one encourages all passers-by to VISIT YOUR LIBRARY.

Marie commented that libraries are now in the Lifelong Learning sector. She and Diane are members of Montgomery College LLI Advisory Committees, whose goal is giving our communities

lifelong learning opportunities. Marie further explained,

"All of this lifelong learning discussion is partially a branding issue. The state of Maryland waives tuition at state supported colleges including MC but also UMD etc. for seniors, over 55 I think. Many people are not aware that this is true even for credit courses. The Lifelong Learning Institute at MC is a distinct branch of the college bureaucracy with its own funding, offices, staff, etc. The Montgomery County Recreation Department brochure has recently started using the phrase lifelong learning to describe some speakers and nature education programs. Now the libraries are looking at lifelong learning. We in Damascus might want to start thinking about programs for the seniors who will be living across the street in the senior apartments near the Methodist Church."

Pam wrote that her Girl Scouts and other troops have created valentines in support of the library. The valentines have been turned over to the library staff in the library for display in the branch during February. Then they will be brought to the County Council office to give to the County Executive and Council Members on February 25<sup>th</sup>. The flyer about the project has been sent to members of the committee.

### **Our proposed schedule for the 2018-19 year:**

*All meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month, in the large meeting room of the Damascus Library from 7:00-8:00 pm, unless otherwise announced: March 12; April 9; May 14 [no formal meeting – optional tour of another library]; June 11*