

Library Advisory Committee: October Meeting Notes
Attendees: Dianne, Wilma, Nancy, Lisa, Jim, Kim, Catherine

The Manager's Report to the LAC

Diane W. is the Regional Manager for White Oak, Wheaton Library, et. al. She has worked in the Montgomery County Library System for close to 25 years now.

We had the refresh. Then the library was closed. Things took a little bit of a back seat. When Dianne was here as a Manager previously, we started working with the Parks Department. We had an event on the plaza and it was very hot. We needed shade.

The Long Branch Library has been awarded a \$5,000 grant. The grant award ceremony or presentation will take place on Friday, December 5th at 11 in the morning. We would like to have a community meeting in November or early December to come up and look at the design ideas. We want to come up with the color scheme for the shading and other amenities that come along with the grants. We should discuss or come up with a meeting date. A tentative meeting date is Thursday, November 30th. An email will go out to see if this date fits into everyone's schedule. There's a possibility that the Department of General Services representatives will be there. There's a possibility that Anita Vassallo, the Director of Montgomery County Libraries will also be at the November 30th meeting.

Will they talk about the other amenities- like outlets at the event? We are not sure but we can find out more information about that.

Other Facilities Issues

There have been a couple of plumping overflows. There was an issue with the automatic faucet. There has been an issue with the front door.

The unhoused community are still sleeping on library grounds. They bring carpets and mattresses. They have been given referrals to homeless shelters that they can go to. However, many are resistant to going to a shelter. Some are resistant because of their legal status. The library has engaged a couple of local churches and the pastor has spoken to them.

This is not just a local problem. It is happening throughout the country.

Illegal overflow parking has become an issue, too. Loss of access to the road and lack of parking has decreased program involvement at the library. Sixty-eight tickets have been written. They are giving tickets at 2am in the morning. Not during library hours.

Maybe we can allow people to park in the parking area between 8pm and 9am. Once it's 9am, they would have to leave or they get ticketed. Ticketing may not be the long term solution. People are going to ignore the tickets. If they get too many tickets, then it affects their license. If they lose their license and they need to drive their construction van or car to go to work then we have interfered with their ability to earn a living. If they can't work then we are going to add to the homeless population.

The only option is that we put up a gate. That is something that the officer had suggested to us. The problem with putting up a gate is that the parking area is also used by people visiting the park. Gates also interfere with the movement of wildlife.

Do we have staff parking spaces? We have not gotten to that point yet. We have flyers that we put on our cars that say, "We are staff. Don't ticket us." We only have 10 people who work here. Most of the staff don't live in this community.

Firefighter and fire safety books are on one of the triangles. Halloween books are on one of the triangles. The Adult and Children services libraries are working hard. Launch pads have been distributed. Launch pads are tablets that have learning apps for children. They are not connected to the internet. There is a weekly preschool Reading Time. There is a bilingual Story Time. Long Branch as a Read to a Dog program and a Lego Program. We have a pilot program called Hatchlings In The Nest. It promotes skills for newborns. They had a Spring program for expectant parents and a fall program for parents with newborns. They had 25 parents with babies. It's a skills building program. The attendance was strong.

There is now a weekly English Conversation Club. Long Branch is building its Teen Advisory Board.

Staff

We will have a new Circulation Manager, Assistant Branch Supervisor. She will come to the Branch on November 6th. We have 4 vacancies here. We are missing a Part Time Library Assistant. We are missing an Adult Librarian. We are missing a Library Associate.

For the Part Time Library Assistant and Library Associate you do not need a Master's of Library Science to work those positions. Can we waive the degree requirement for the positions that currently require a MLS? If people with degrees are turning down the position, can we waive the Master's of Library Science degree? Maybe that would open up the position to people who would stay. We could say a degree in Library Science or an equivalent subject matter. Or we could say a Library Science degree or the equivalent work experience. In the short term the answer to this question is no because Montgomery County requires a license to be a librarian. In the long term, this is something that we can consider.

We are still dealing with heavy vacancies here. We have made offers to people for the Branch Supervisor position. People have declined the position because of the salary.

Last year, we went through a reorganization. There are Branch Managers. MLS 3- Manager 3 Position. We need someone who is in charge here full-time. The Book Club feels the lack of a leader here. The Lead Adult Services Librarian is the person who reaches out to the community.

The County needs to look into raising those salaries.

It's hard for people to be able to afford a house or an apartment in this community. Apartments are \$2,000 a month. It's hard to attract people when the salaries are what they are. We do pay better for librarians than most of the other Counties in the Region, except for D.C.

There is going to be a LAC information session for the President and Secretaries. The info session will take place via Zoom on November 15th for 7:30pm to 8:30pm. We will send a link as soon as it's available.

The Drag Queen Story Times have been controversial. But we have to sign up ahead of time. Some adults want to come and be disruptive. However, if they come and they have not signed up then we ask them to leave. We have had police presence at Drag Queen StoryTimes to prevent disruption.

The Book Banning is happening in Carroll County Maryland. They almost defunded the Library System in Warren County, VA in Front Royal. The banning happens in other parts of VA.

Koiner Farm visit.

We are looking to create a small scale farm where people could volunteer their time or work. People would have access to hyper local food. It would be ecologically beneficial. Koiner is an amazing example of what can be done in an urban environment. We would like to create a micro farm behind the library. It may also spill over to park land. We would need at least an 8th of an acre for this to make sense. My neighbors loan their property for community based farming. This is not easily replicable. We meet three times a week. The core group meets three times a week. We do monthly cooking together. We are in our third year.

Koiner is working with two properties in Wheaton. They have a school project that is working too.

Community Food Network, Cheer

People are experiencing food insecurity and isolation.

The micro farm would create a flow between the two properties- the library and the park's lands. We want to do yoga, to have a kids garden, to have a demo garden. They have gardens at other libraries.

Meeting attendees presents photos of raised bed farming that is taking place within the community. People in housing complexes have taken away their own parking spaces to raise food right outside their door. This is something that can be done more in our community. It would not take away park lands.