

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARIES
Olney Library Advisory Committee Meeting
Virtual via Zoom – Oct. 17, 2023

Attending: Ursula Gorham (Chair), Audrey Partington (Secretary), Jean Gallaher, Max Handelsman, Walter Lee, Madeline Lyon, Nina Uzick, Eric Carzon (Regional Manager), Tim Lighter (MCPL Board Liaison)

Public attendees: Carla Pastorelli

Absent: Maria Caswell, Harry Needleman

Call to Order, Introductions, Approval of Minutes: The meeting began at 7:00 p.m. Eric Carzon, the new Regional Manager for Olney, Gaithersburg, Quince Orchard, and Potomac branches, introduced himself to the committee, who in turn introduced themselves. The September minutes were approved.

1. Regional Manager’s Report: Eric reported the following highlights from a written update that he provided to the LAC in advance of the meeting.

a. Facilities: The Dept. of General Services has been able to fix the interior sliding doors this week. They are reviewing the long-term fix for the outer sliding doors. We are tracking issues with the wooden beams along the side of the branch that are rotting at the edges, and will be working with General Services on solutions.

b. Collections: Circulation of physical and virtual materials has been up about 5 percent during the past four quarters, mostly for Children’s materials and digital materials. To improve accessibility, the newspaper racks have been moved from the far back corner of the branch to the armchairs by the windows between the circulation and information desk.

c. Programming: Starting 10/15, monthly Sunday family storytimes are being held in support of MCPL’s strategic plan goal for early childhood education and kindergarten readiness. Nina asked if the Sunday English Language class can be resumed. Eric said he would check on that.

d. Services: Launchpads, which were successfully piloted at other branches, are now coming to each of the branches in the system. Olney Library will receive 80 tablets that are pre-loaded with themed materials for a variety of age groups. Volunteers will clean educational tools used by the children.

e. Staffing: There is one FT vacancy, which may be filled by two PT employees.

f. Statistics: Eric referred the LAC to the statistics provided in his written report for the period covering Jan 1-Oct 2023

- About 15 – 16,000 items checked out per month.
- About 19,000 visits per month are recorded.
- About 9,000 “active users” (have used a library service, like checkout, within the past 12 months) have Olney as their home branch.
- Ran 566 programs in 2023 (Jan. – Oct.), with 9,942 attendees.

3. MCPL Board Liaison Report: Tim Lighter reported that the Joint Meeting of the FOL (Friends of the Library and the LAC had been held on Oct. 12. Eric will send the LAC a copy of the slide show presentation from that meeting (MCPL Year in Review). Tim noted that the meeting included a presentation by the Maryland Book Council about book burning, and a discussion about the importance of libraries for non-English speakers. Another Joint Meeting of the FOL and LAC will be held on Jan 10 at 7 pm at the Rockville Branch to advocate for the county's libraries. The Olney LAC can arrange to car pool. The updated LAC Handbook is now available on the MCPL website. Training for new LAC officers will be held virtually on Nov. 15.

4. New Business: Ursula asked what the Olney LAC's goals are for the coming year. Several committee members expressed an interest in being more involved in helping with programs and initiatives at the library, for example, staffing a table for Library Lovers month in February. There was a discussion of inviting local Council Member Dawn Luedtke to one of the Olney LAC Meetings during the first quarter of 2024. The purpose would be to encourage her support for funding the county's libraries given the many constituencies it serves. It was decided that Eric would take the suggestion to MCPL Director Anita Vassallo. If she approves, Ursula will draft the invitation and share the draft with the LAC before sending.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m. The next virtual LAC meeting will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 16, 2024. The LAC will not meet in November or December.