

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARIES
Olney Library Advisory Committee Meeting
Virtual via Zoom – March 19, 2024

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

Absent: Harry Needleman

Call to Order, Approval of Minutes: The meeting began at 7:05 p.m.

1. Regional Manager's Report: Eric reported several highlights from a written update compiled by Branch Supervisor Myra Remigio-Leonard, which he provided to the LAC in advance of the meeting.

a. Programming: The high level of programming has continued, including programs celebrating Black History Month and Women's History Month.

b. Staffing: Myra Remigio-Leonard will be transferring to the Maggie Nightingale Branch Library by the end of the month. She sent a letter thanking the Olney LAC for its support of the Olney Library during her tenure. Interviews will be held to fill the Branch Supervisor positions at the Olney and Aspen Hill branches.

c. Facilities: The rafter survey was completed, which revealed visual signs of disrepair. The carpets were cleaned. Myra pointed out problems areas, including poor lighting, to the Dept. of General Services. They intend to do LED light replacement, which will brighten some areas such as the Circulation Desk.

3. MCPL Board Liaison Report: Tim Lighter reported that the Library Board met last week. At that meeting, Jaime Flores made a presentation about Programming and Outreach. An outside firm has been hired to do a national recruitment for the new MCPL Director. The position will officially open in April at which time applications will be available. The plan is to fill the position by July, when the current MCPL Director, Anita Vasallo, retires. Tim sent a letter to each County Council members with the list of traits the LAC would like to see in the new director. The deadline for applications for appointment to the Library Board was March 13.

Tim announced that MCPL officially supports the proposed budget. Public budget hearings will be held on April 8 and 9. He will testify, along with Grace Manubay, vice chair of the Library Board. The three major expenditures proposed for the county's libraries will be world language materials (\$360,000), eBooks (\$315,000), and staff training (\$315,000). Nina pointed out that Montgomery County has dropped to 19th in the state for per capital expenditures on libraries, and that should be brought to the attention of the County Council.

4. Unfinished Business: Ursula noted two areas of unfinished business: distribution of materials produced by library users at tables staffed by the Olney LAC during Library Lovers Month, and facilities issues.

In her report, Myra noted that, “We received many beautifully written and beautifully decorated valentines and notes of support from the community about their love of the library.” In the past, these were sent to members of the County Council. Tim will check with Myra to locate the items in envelopes. He will consult with Jaime Flores, MCPL Assistant Director for Programming and Outreach, about the possibility of sending them to elected officials.

While the Olney LAC was encouraged by Eric’s report on actions being taken to address facilities issues, it was decided that a letter should still be drafted to outline the problem areas in the Olney Library. Nina has photographed and documented the issues, which Myra had also pointed out to DGS. Audrey will work with Nina to draft the letter when she returns from vacation mid-April.

5. New Business: Eric suggested that the Olney LAC recruit members at library events, which are well-attended, such as story times. Special celebrations such as Library Card Month (Sept) is also a good opportunity for the Olney LAC to staff a recruitment table at the library.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m. The next virtual LAC meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 16, 2024.