

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARIES
Olney Library Advisory Committee Meeting
Virtual via Zoom – March 18, 2025

Attending: Ursula Gorham (Chair), Audrey Partington (Secretary), Max Handelsman, Walter Lee, Madeline Lyon, Harry Needleman, Nina Uzick, Dianne Whitaker (Regional Manager), Tim Lighter (Library Board liaison)

Absent: Maria Caswell

Call to Order, Approval of Minutes: The meeting came to order at 7:05. The February minutes were approved.

1. Regional Manager's Report:

a. Facilities: Walter Lee purchased replacement wheels for the library's podium and installed them. The Teen room was repainted. An unused large white board from the staff committee room will soon be moved to the Teen Room. A squirrel got in the building on February 24 and was chased out. It may have accessed the building from an opening in the roof or soffits by the Children's area. Pendant lights were replaced on February 26. The Men's bathroom flooded on March 10. Two new sorting carts were ordered for Circulation. The staff entrance/exit door unit still needs to be replaced. Workmen have come out 3 times, each time realizing that they needed to order other parts.

b. Programs:

African American stories and Poetry Feb 9 (48 people attended)

Birdwatching 101 (13 people)

Performance by the Culkin School of Irish Dance. Children were encouraged to dance at the end of the performance (75 participants).

Virtual Olney book discussion club with author Lisa See (117 people from around the world).

Children's librarian Katie Maleckar visited Cashell Elementary School for Read Across America Day and read to two groups of students, about 40 children.

c. Collections: Adult staff created a Women's History display and a March Mystery Madness Display. Juvenile section staff created a Picture book display titled "Things that Grow."

A pyramid display near the all-gender bathroom highlighted March Madness (any sports, not just basketball). Bookshelf in the Juvenile program room focused on MoComCon (superheroes, graphic novels). Librarian Caroline Tse posted a Library Lover's display with all of the notes written by children who attended the LAC's Library Lover's month craft table.

d. Staffing: With Damascus Library closing temporarily for renovations, Olney Library has gained two temporary employees. Daniel Dorsey, Librarian 1 will be hosting Senior Planet and a basic computer class. Library Aide Kate Kim will be at Olney Library for two years, which is convenient because Library Aide Yesh Rao got a promotion to Library Asst. 1 and will be moving to the Chevy Chase branch.

Branch supervisors lunched with the new Library Director, Darcell Graham. She discussed her efforts to find new funding for the library, in anticipation of possible budget cuts. She also talked about not wanting to cut staff or public services, preferring instead not to fill vacant administrative positions, or taking other measures.

3. MCPL Board Liaison Report: In preparation for tonight's meeting, Tim Lighter forwarded to the Olney LAC an email sent to the Library Board from the Library Director about the President's executive order restricting resources, staffing, and funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). He also forwarded to the LAC a YouTube link to the FY 26 Budget hearing on March 14, and to the County Executive's proposed FY 26 Operating Budget.

He also sent the Library Board meeting minutes from December; the Library Board meeting agenda for last week's meeting; the Director's report presented last week; a copy of the joint letter from the Board and FOLMC to County Executive Elrich regarding the budget; a pdf of Patrick Fromm's presentation about Early Literacy activities at MCPL; and a listing of key dates for National Library Week (April 6-12). These include Right to Read Day (April 7), National Library Workers' Day (April 8), National Library Outreach Day (April 9), and Take Action for Libraries Day (April 10). Tim will be speaking to the FOL's Ari Brooks about possible programming around National Library Week. The LAC expressed its willingness to assist with this programming.

4. New Business: Harry Needleman reported that the recent winds have damaged both flags outside Olney Library. Dianne will request replacement flags. Harry noted inefficiencies in how volunteer hours are recorded (by volunteers in a log book and then keyed into the system by library employees). Since volunteers cannot be given access to the library's system, Harry suggested the creation of an app for this purpose. Dianne will pass this suggestion on to the MCPL technology staff.

5. Old Business: Nina Uzick is working on drafting a letter from the Olney LAC to the County Executive about all of the issues with the facilities since the reopening of the Olney Library in March 2014. She is gathering information from all past minutes, which reference these issues.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:40. The next meeting will be held (virtually) on April 15. Audrey will chair in Ursula's absence.