

Potomac LAC Meeting Minutes

December 6, 2019

Attending:

Gael Cheek, Co-chair

Sylvia Diss

Jyotsna Gupta

Adrienne Miles Holderbaum, Potomac Library Branch Manager

Rosemarie Lentini

Don Libes, Secretary

Wei Lu, Co-chair

Jane Williams, MC Library Board Liaison

Absent:

Carol Leahy

Meenu Mohan

Fred Olowin

Chair and Member Updates

Wei Lu called the meeting to order, followed by distributing an agenda and cookies.

Don announced George's resignation from the LAC.

Don reported that he has been unable to communicate with Carol who is still listed as the LAC Chair on the Board website. She has not attended LAC meetings in 2019, has not responded to emails, and her phone answers with an "out of service" recording. Jane said she would look into it. [Dec 9 2019 update: Board website now shows Gael and Wei as Chairs.]

Minutes from Previous Meeting

Sep 11, 2019 minutes were approved and can be found here:

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1RWR3pcftdJnRKF-tD1aw_f1GhFBg6oV8uxpHgkJSsjg

New Branch Manager

Adrienne Miles Holderbaum was welcomed as the new Potomac Library Branch Manager. She described her background at MCPL starting as an Outreach Library Associate in 2012 and has included employment as Librarian I, Librarian II and Senior Librarian at many MCPL branches, most recently Olney and Germantown. She has a masters degree in Library and Information Science from Queens College, City University of NY and a BA in English Language and Literature from University of Maryland.

Adrienne had already met several LAC members. The remaining members introduced themselves and described their backgrounds and what spurred them to serve on the LAC.

Branch Manager Report, Adrienne Miles Holderbaum

Besides herself, Adrienne identified four new staff members at Potomac:

- Danielle Deaver, Librarian II, Head of Adult Services
- Dorothy Harrell, Part-Time Library Associate, Adult Services
- Briana Brockett-Richmond, Part-Time Librarian I, Children's Services
- Vandana Singh, Part-Time Library Associate, Adult Services

Adrienne provided the following statistics:

Program attendance for November

- 27834 library visits
- 220 open hours
- 24 programs
- 630 program attendees
- 5063 questions at the information desk

Jyotsna asked about demographics for programs. Adrienne said she would provide demographics.

Adrienne said that discussion groups didn't do as well as expected.

Jyotsna said that she misses the Bone Builders program which is no longer offered at MCPL. Other members mentioned the program is offered elsewhere.

The Library flyer for publicizing upcoming programs had to be redesigned. Don said community members were unhappy with the new design finding it bland and uninteresting. Adrienne said that the flyer layout was restricted, e.g., required headers/footers, problems with copyright material. But individual event flyers could be more colorful and attention-grabbing.

Adrienne asked LAC members what other associations they participate in and might help spread the word. LAC members suggested miscellaneous special interest groups and neighborhood groups. Several LAC members expressed significant support for wmcca.org which is a very active group for any concerns of area residents.

Don asserted that notification of events would be easier if patrons could automatically see events on their own electronic calendars. MCPL event calendar already supports this ability but there is no explanation of how to use it. (After the meeting, Don demoed how it works to some LAC members.) Jane said that she could mention it to the MCPL Board and recommended Don send a request to MCPL's Digital Strategies team to augment the library website with an explanation. Gael suggested that such an explanation could be published in the Friends of the Library newsletter or its website.

Following up LAC interest in eliciting feedback from the community (see previous meeting minutes, re: Jane's suggestions), Adrienne described how the Rockville LAC provided a physical board on which patrons could post notes providing feedback to the library. Adrienne circulated a photo of the board. This low-tech solution appears to engage the patrons although it

is unclear whether the loop is closed, i.e., if there is feedback about the feedback. Gael agreed to work with Adrienne to set up a similar board in the Potomac Library.

One of the prominent themes in the notes involved food. Many people want to eat in the libraries. We discussed this at length. Some observations (from Adrienne if not otherwise identified):

- Food is not permitted in the area where books and other media are. Drinks with lids are permitted.
- People eat in the library despite the prohibition. Food restriction is hard to enforce. Library does not have "food police." Jane described her experience at the University of Maryland Research Library which dropped the restriction on food and staff felt relieved to be out of the "food police" role.
- Some bookstores allow food. How do they handle food spills and damage to products?
- There is no MCPL budget for staff to clean during the day given that food spills could happen at any time. Cleaning only occurs after hours and is a union job.
- Some MCPL branches have areas set apart specifically designated for food. Some even sell food.
- Rosemarie suggested that Potomac has a space on the Falls Rd side of the meeting room that could be considered for a "snack alley" if not now, in the refresh. Might other areas?
- Jyotsna described how her daughter, while volunteering in the children's area, would regularly spend half her time cleaning up after children - without the introduction of food. Food would make cleanup even more difficult.
- Jane: While implementation is specific to each branch, policy must be system-wide.

Adrienne asked about satisfaction with the new self-checkout machines and there was general agreement that the machines are a significant improvement. Adrienne mentioned a percentage goal for machine vs staff checkout. Don observed that this goal might be meaningless because staff friendliness encourages some people to bypass the machines and interact with the staff thereby letting the staff check out materials.

Jyotsna expressed confusion over which machines provided catalog access which spurred a broader conversation over how to better communicate new (or old) services to the public. As an example, Jyotsna did not know that the library has free wifi. Don and Adrienne confirmed that the wifi works well. Adrienne said that signs could be made.

Adrienne talked about past problems (theft) with the charging stations and how steps had been taken to address this.

Adrienne talked about the possibility of combining the Information and Circulation stations. MCPL distinguishes staff who do these different jobs but patrons don't know the difference and don't care. LAC members agreed combining the desks was a good idea.

Don invited Adrienne to submit a written report to ensure proper recording of all her statistics and names of new hires. Adrienne agreed but expressed concern of her report appearing in the minutes or otherwise being shared with the public. Jane explained that LAC meetings are open to the public so any report to the LAC essentially was public. Several members confirmed that previous MCPL representatives had presented similar reports and none of the information appeared to require secrecy. However, by specific request, this month's minutes omit the goal for self-checkout vs staff-checkout. (See discussion earlier.)

MC Library Board Liaison, Jane Williams

Jane provided written and oral notes about a variety of subjects:

Updates on personnel changes in MCPL Admin and at other branches. See handout for details.

Jane reminded us that Potomac is scheduled for a refresh (est: 2022, see Sept 2019 minutes for more background) and gave some refresh updates of other libraries, explaining that recent updates are getting more challenging as buildings age and requirements become more challenging. For example, a refresh might mean new paint, carpeting, furniture, etc., but in older buildings, a refresh could involve changing walls, rewiring, and so on. ADA compliance has also added additional requirements. Sylvia suggested that even if food was not addressed (see earlier discussion), at least coffee could be provided. Several LAC members supported the idea of coffee for library patrons.

Jane described the Wheaton refresh with its combined community center as an effort unlikely to be repeated due to the expense. However, Wheaton is still worth seeing for ideas. Jane encouraged LAC members to visit other recently refreshed branches as well.

MCLB is considering changes to Board Manual per Library Policy and Practices group.

Jane mentioned objections to Macmillan Publisher's plan to limit libraries to one copy of each new eBook for 8 weeks after release. Afterward, quadruple consumer price. More info: <https://ebooksforall.org>

Jane encouraged LAC members to attend upcoming budget forums and joint meetings. The next budget forum is Dec 9, at 1:30pm, Leisure World. Joint meetings include MCLB, LACs, FOLMC, and FOL chapters. The next joint meeting is Jan 8 at 6:30pm, Rockville Library. The November joint meeting had a presentation by new MCLB Director Vassallo followed by invited speaker Dr Katharine Stevens on the critical role libraries have in early care and education of 0-3 year olds.

From the Potomac LAC, Sylvia and Don attended the joint meeting. Don described the recent joint meeting as a mixed bag: A good mixer with opportunities to talk to people one-on-one but presentations of little value. [MCPL Director's video presentation is online: <https://youtu.be/6ZzJtiNmRVU> but a better report is available: <https://bit.ly/2EfgisK>] Jane said that upcoming budget meetings would be more valuable.

Jane encouraged LAC members to attend public meetings with Councilmember Will Jawando. He is continuing his “community conversations” (more on this in Sept 2019 minutes) being held in every branch library in the county. His next meeting is Jan 11 at 1pm, Aspen Hill Library. After meetings at all the branches, he will then turn to having them in houses of worship.

Other

Sylvia described her work with Potomac Librarian Danielle Deaver to create a display of environmental books in the library. She noted that the Montgomery Council has declared a climate emergency. <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DGS-OES/Policy.html>
The emergency climate is still with us but Potomac’s display has disappeared. Adrienne said there is no policy that permits permanent displays. Sylvia asked “What about Mysteries? Or Romance?” Adrienne: “That’s a genre.”

Someone [sorry, didn’t get who] asked if more people could serve on the LAC. Answer: Yes.

Don described problems with the meeting room and asked if they could be addressed:

- Microphone does not work well. Voices boom and we’ve witnessed several speakers put the microphone down and just rely on their voice instead.
- Folding podium is unusable - apparently, no one knows how it works.
- Blinds do not work in the two side-most windows resulting in the sun shining in people’s faces. The day before, a speaker stopped a talk in the middle to apologize for the blinds.

Adrienne said the library is aware of the problems. Gael said that the Friends of the Library (FoL) had funds to replace the microphone with a lavalier (lapel) microphone. However, the MCPL Director was not permitting the purchase of a replacement. The MCPL Director has to approve purchases from FoL over \$100 and has been stopping purchases. The podium was a donation from Hunter Monroe. We should ask him for operating instructions or get rid of it. Don asked if fixing the blinds wasn’t a trivial matter of hooking up rods and offered to take a look. [Note: Someone closed the blinds by the next day. The blinds still lack rods but at least the sun is no longer a problem from those windows.]

Don asked about MCPL’s recent announcements that library printers could support Word format. He described an experience failing to print a Word document. Adrienne explained that Word support was only available wirelessly and warned that any kind of printing support for Word could be problematic for a number of issues such as different versions of Word.

Don inquired about overflow parking given the popularity of some programs and Potomac’s small parking lot that regularly fills up. Perhaps the library could provide advice? Several members agreed it was not an actionable issue - that neighborhood parking was sufficient and that resident “no parking” signs were unenforceable and should be ignored.

Gael encouraged LAC attendance at the following day's program given by local author and photographer KK Ottesen talking about her book *Activist: Portraits of Courage*. Councilmember Will Jawando was also expected to attend and speak with the audience. [Note: He did.]

Gael encouraged us to invite other council members to events at the Potomac Library. Jane similarly encouraged us to invite MCPL officials to our LAC meetings.

Don agreed to create another doodle poll to decide on the date of the next LAC meeting scheduled for 1½ hours.

Meeting adjourned at 2:35pm.