

Potomac LAC Meeting Minutes

March 6, 2020

Attending:

Gael Cheek, Co-chair

Sylvia Diss

Adrienne Miles Holderbaum, Potomac Library Branch Manager

Rosemarie Lentini

Don Libes, Secretary

Wei Lu, Co-chair

Jane Williams, MC Library Board Liaison

Meenu Mohan

Fred Olwin

Absent:

Jyotsna Gupta

Carol Leahy

Molly Sverdlov

Chair and Member Updates

Wei Lu called the meeting to order and distributed an agenda.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1v7jBgovK5L_wk9J5tV3SEFjSv5k4qwLI/view?usp=sharing

Current committee membership:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1VUBqBNdhLbtZFC5ISQZOaIQ8sZE_OOYG1EeU-EcmnAM/edit?usp=sharing

Molly Sverdlov is a new member but did not attend. She is on the plac mail list as of Feb 19.

Minutes from Previous LAC Meeting

Minutes from previous meeting were approved with two amendments:

- Adrienne's comments on theft of devices referred to other branches, not Potomac.
- FoL purchases over \$100 require MCPL Director approval, not MCPL approval.

Amended minutes:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KHfQpwMlcZ0aP7rxEzIzWMV7uRYanUNqjGE0EB7jBDU/edit?usp=sharing>

Adrienne Miles Holderbaum, Branch Manager Report

The branch is short-handed due to the loss of two staff:

- Michelle Izuka, Librarian I, transferred to another branch.
- Ping Lin, Library Assistant II, detailed to Little Falls for 3 months.

The branch is currently being assessed in preparation for its refresh, expected in 2 years. The assessment will conclude in June. In addition, MCPL has started doing energy assessments (electrical, HVAC, etc.) for selected libraries including Potomac. Energy assessments will take a year of monitoring energy use.

Review of some upcoming events:

- Mar 7: Growing at Glenstone. Behind the scenes look (Physically at Potomac Library).
- Mar 7: Historical re-enactor to perform as Phillis Wheatley, 1st published US African-American female poet.
- Apr 1: Tree-planting (physically at Glenstone). See Potomac FoL for more info.
- May 9: Gardening Book Sale, Plant Swap, Ask a Master Gardener.
- May 16: Garden Dedication with master gardener and children's activities.

"Free Wifi" signs are up (see previous Minutes) and Adrienne has received positive comments from people who didn't know that MC libraries have free wifi.

Jane Williams, Report from MC Library Board

Jane reviewed the MCLB report that she previously posted to the plac mail list.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1epeTor2LICiqHoh2CH6Gnd1LMYE_broy/view?usp=sharing

Additional comments from Jane:

- Lots of promotions are good but leave lots of openings throughout MCPL.
- Long Branch closes in 1 week for refresh.
- Substantive changes to LAC handbook are complete with an emphasis on reducing paperwork.
- Jawando's discussions are wide-ranging. I.e., just because they were held in a library did not restrict them to library matters. Similarly with houses of worship.

Gael observed that hiring delays were not unique to MCPL but throughout the MC government. Is this a general strategy within MC to slow replacements in order to benefit by temporary but lengthy salary savings?

Discussion about the meeting room

Don noted that someone had finally figured out how to assemble the podium. Someone did it in the middle of the previous day's Great Decisions talk. Gael noted that it was disassembled for storage since there is no place to store it assembled so confusion may return the next time it is used. Several members suggested leaving it assembled in the meeting room. There are other large things left in the meeting room: piano, display, etc. Why does it have to be disassembled after each use?

The blinds are operable but not easily. Adrienne said that the meeting room blinds will be repaired before the refresh.

Gael said that there have been complaints about the thermostat in the meeting room. Adrienne said the thermostat has recently been replaced. Fred increased the temp and we were pleased to hear that the fans kicked on immediately. Adrienne noted that MC policy does not permit temps above 70F.

Gael reported that the Friends of the Library had purchased a new microphone for the meeting room to address problems previously reported (see link above for previous minutes).

Don mentioned the meeting room display constantly flashes an audio symbol while being used. Gael added that other programs had encountered problems with the display. Adrienne promised to look into it.

Don asked who is marking parking spaces "reserved"? The previous day's Great Decisions program had a cone that appeared to indicate two spaces were "Reserved for Speaker" (see photo on next page) and neither was used by the speaker. The spaces remained empty while the lot was otherwise full and people were hunting for spaces. Adrienne said that if this happens again, immediately talk to the person in charge of the program.

(Minutes continue on next page.)



Two spaces reserved go unused in library parking lot. (See previous paragraph.)

Discussion of Programs

Wei asked about obtaining demographics that Adrienne had promised previously. Adrienne promised to do so, meanwhile giving some general statements:

- Bimonthly fitness classes are well attended by seniors.
- Potomac has 1 weekly children's program and would like to expand to 2. Compare to Germantown which has 4/week.

Rose asked what programs are aimed at teens and pre-teens. Adrienne: Teen writing program. Adrienne is interested in more bearing in mind that the teen writing program is already led by a volunteer so others would require volunteer initiative. Meenu mentioned her background as an early child educator and asked how to volunteer. Adrienne: Contact me.

Brief discussion between Wei and Gael about the monthly flyer. This month's flyer is out.

Wei inquired as to the Scrabble mix-up. Don explained that the Potomac Almanac had mislabelled the event as Potomac Library instead of Davis. Several members expressed interest in Potomac having a Scrabble program. Don mentioned that the Potomac Community Center has monthly game nights at which people could bring in any game to be played, not just Scrabble. Potomac could do the same or have a dedicated Scrabble program or both.

Sylvia described Senior Planet and suggested the library investigate what SP can offer.

Don asked what the procedure is for proposing an event in the meeting room. A local historian had inquired if he could give a talk on C&O currency. He's not selling a book or services. Just wants to share knowledge. Adrienne said to talk to her about the event.

Discussion of Goals

Fred suggested the Library promote awareness of environmental issues. Adrienne said the library is working on recycling and already has a talk scheduled on MC's Rainscapes program, Thursday March 26.

This segued into a discussion by many members on the possibility of the Potomac refresh resulting in LEED certification, green roof, solar panels, etc. Adrienne said she had a bid for outside benches. Has to balance one-time costs against annual maintenance.

Sylvia asked who is in charge of the Potomac Library Book Club. She recommended books on the environment be added. Adrienne: Danielle is in charge this year. Will likely be someone else next year.

Fred said that Potomac should consider reducing staffing and service during parts of the week when demand is low and instead provide Sunday hours, the only day many working parents

have time for the library. Some libraries, e.g., Rockville, have Sunday hours. Can we get statistics from those libraries? Don said a similar case can be made for later hours. Again, Rockville has later hours. Can we get their statistics?

Fred asked if we could have an environmental movie night. Don suggested the Potomac LAC reach out to other LACs such as Davis that appear to be doing things we admire to better understand if we can help the library. Jane said that the Friends of the Library are a more natural ally for affecting programming.

Jane reported that Councilmember Jawando articulated the need for more support and was more vocal on early childhood development via the libraries. Adrienne said that research shows ages 0-3 are extremely significant.

Rose asked if we could do something about plastic straws as a goal. Sylvia pointed out that disposable straws are already effectively banned in MC.

Other Discussion

Wei asked about limits on ebooks. Don observed that publishers are making things difficult with restrictive policies for libraries. For example, some publishers (example: McMillan) limit ebook sales to libraries because ebooks lower profits.

Wei and Fred reported concerns from others as well as their own experience that children stayed on the computer in the children's area. Adrienne said there is no internet access and a 20-minute limit on the "early literacy station" and is enforced by software; However, it is unclear if this is per-application or per-user. In any case, there is no evidence that limit is enforced. Meena suggested such enforcement is better left to parents.

Sylvia expressed an interest in "new technology" programs. Adrienne said there had been some in the past and that new new tech programs might be tried again. Rosemarie described how Davis Library uses teenagers to run theirs. Sylvia suggested the programs would be better attended if they were scheduled when more working adults had time, i.e., evening and weekend hours. (See Fred's recommendation earlier for staffing changes.)

Sylvia asked whether Potomac has enough volunteers and is putting them to good use. Adrienne cautioned that there are limits to what volunteers are permitted to do but yes there are enough and they are put to good use. But more are always welcome.

Rosemarie asked if a jigsaw puzzle could be left out. Adrienne said there is one already next to the newspaper rack. [Upon investigation by several of us post-meeting, we found the puzzle sitting in its box. Do people know they're allowed to take it out and leave it out?]

Don described an employee at the circulation desk wearing a mask. Don wondered if it made sense for staff to wear masks when it seemed to send inappropriate messages:

- Suggests staff might be working while sick, or
- Suggests healthy people should wear masks in contravention of CDC guidelines
- CDC says that masks are in short supply and should be saved for med staff who need them
- Masks don't protect against coronavirus thereby leaving patrons thinking staff are ignorant

Don asked if Adrienne could ask the staff to stop wearing masks. Adrienne said that employees are free to wear masks. She cannot do anything about it. All employees have received advice from MCPL on the proper ways to protect themselves from COVID-19.

Meeting adjourned at 2:35pm.