

Potomac LAC Meeting Minutes

March 5, 2024

LAC Member Attendees

Gael Cheek, Co-chair

Don Libes, Secretary

Karen Grimm

Rosemarie Lentini

Wei Lu, Co-chair

LAC Member Absentees

Sylvia Diss

Ella Hue (last meeting missed also)

Laju Satchi (last two meetings missed also)

Patty McGrath (last meeting missed also)

Other Regular Attendees

Eric Carzon, Regional Mgr, Gaithersburg Region: Potomac, Gaithersburg, Olney, Quince Orchard

Jim Montgomery, MC Library Board Liaison

Other Attendees

Mary Ammermann (physical)

Amy Demske (virtual)

Sheila Graves (virtual)

Carole Ottensen (physical)

Other Absences

Nancy Samson, Branch Supervisor

Names and abbreviations (unofficial, for convenience and clarity)

FOLMC: Friends of the Library, Montgomery County (old)

OneFOL: One FOLMC (new)

FOLP: Friends of the Library, Potomac Chapter (old)

FOPL: Friends of the Potomac Library (new)

PL: Potomac Library

MCLB: MC Library Board

Chair and Member Updates

Gael called meeting to order at 7:07pm. Agenda previously distributed by Wei via

<https://groups.io/g/plac>

📎 2024 03 05 Potomac Library LAC Agenda.pdf

Visitors introduced, all interested in LAC appointment

Sheila Graves, ex-Potomac FOL

Carole Ottensen, author of several murder mysteries

Amy Demske, children: HS Senior, college freshman, parents owned bookstore, ex-Chair of MC Social Services Board, Bristol Myers Squibb doing health policy

Mary Ammermann, children: 10, 12-yr old, expressed children's perspective

Other people expressed interested earlier but were not in attendance.

Roger Williams

Mallory Starr, Conversation Club volunteer

Leslie Kenna, Gael announced Leslie had withdrawn interest

Gael: Board is about to pass new LAC rules that will limit the terms of LAC Chairs to one year; Wei and I will have to step down as co-chairs. Please consider serving. See presentation:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/library/resources/files/board/lac-officer-orientation-2023115.pdf>

Don: I would like to step down as secretary, too.

Gael, Wei, Don have served these roles for over 5½ years.

Gael: Any volunteers for chair or co-chair? For secretary?

Mary and Sheila volunteered to be co-chairs but have not yet been appointed to LAC.

No volunteers for secretary.

Election will be at the next meeting.

Eric: Want to see LAC candidates attend meeting before submitting names. Will submit LAC candidates name this coming Thursday. Expect MCLB to act next Wednesday.

Minutes from Previous LAC Meeting

 2023 09 05 Potomac LAC Minutes

Gael moved to approve minutes from previous meeting with no changes. Wei seconded. Approved.

Eric Carzon, Regional Manager Report

We are about to go into budget season. Look for info from the Library Board about public hearings on the Operating Budget.

Facilities

New Kitchen II is complete; Better furnished than any other branch.

Programs

Programming is going well. In FY24 to-date (July 1, 2023 – March 3, 2024), the branch has held 321 programs, with 8,355 attendees (and this does not include the attendees for the dragon dance yet).

February saw some great Lunar New Year programming, including storytimes, crafts, and a dragon dance, which was seen by hundreds of customers.

Branch has doubled storytimes by repeating the very popular baby and toddler story times (so that there are two of them on each day to meet demand). To avoid crowding, we now try to schedule a baby storytime on Mondays at 10:30 and 11:30am with 40 children each instead of 11am with 80 children. Similarly, toddler storytimes Fridays at 11:30 and 11:30am.

English Conversation Club meets on Saturdays at 12pm.

Teen Writer's Group approx. bi-weekly and a Teen Advisory Board (TAB) monthly.

Rosemarie: How do TAB members learn about TAB?

Eric: Flyers

Don: What does TAB do?

Eric: Don't know but their function is not like the LAC. Will get more info. I should know more about what they do!

Don: Does any library staff attend?

E: Teen librarian attends.

We are doing several programs on topics like college financial planning, Montgomery College, Introduction to Journaling, and Blender 3D Modeling and Animation for teens, tweens, and/or parents. Blender software is free.

PT offers a Technology Time program on Thursdays at 11am

Several other programs including crafts, drop-in legos program, book club, and special events. We are having Dr. Raymond Sauvajot from the National Park Service talk about confronting Climate Change on Saturday, April 20th at 2pm.

We're also having a couple Illumination Stations -Shedding a Light on Energy Programs continuing (April 2, 10:30am).

Will have an Earth Day event.

Services (system and branch)

The branch is fully staffed, we are bringing on a new Library Page even.

Collection

Staff are participating in system-wide collection management processes.

Several people asked how collections are managed and new material selected.

Eric: Director and Collections Management Team (6 people) make decisions. If titles are being checked out, it shows interest and we'll keep it. If not, 4 years is a strict limit, then it's gone.

Karen/Don: What about classics?

Eric: Doesn't matter, we'll get rid of those, too. But it's a complex issue. Staff has a little latitude, as long as it can be found.

Don: Tried once to get a book ordered but staff wouldn't order it even though I felt it would have been of wide interest. But with no history, it is impossible to justify. Catch-22.

Rose: At U Kentucky, whiteboard is right out front - book suggestions are easily made that way.

Eric: Make suggestions on book purchases at the website.

Wei: When you google a book, google will suggest where you can find a book, buy, library, etc. Maybe make a connection to google?

Karen: How about a suggestion box?

Eric: No idea about google. Morella has a special connection on classics but that is thanks to donations.

Eric: If you're a books-on-CD fan, check them out to show demand because use is going down so expect them to be reduced.

DVDs used to be more popular than books but DVD demand is also trending down. However, we expect DVD collection to last longer than books-on-CD.

Don: Streaming has become so widely accepted that it is decreasing DVD use is not surprising; However, one loss of DVDs is Director's comments. It would be a shame to lose those.

Potomac has no programming with Senior Planet. Eric has another branch which does.

Jim: Strategic Plan that came out in 2022 does not have Seniors as a priority.

Karen: What is Senior Planet?

Eric: Non-profit that has programs for seniors.

Gael: Who gets the newsletter? Can newsletter be reorganized to keep recurring events together.

Eric: newsletter is automated so we have no ability to customize it. Newsletter should be emailed to all who have Potomac as their home library. When you sign up for a library card, you supply your email.

There is a way to get multiple library newsletters. [Eric did not explain how.]

Sheila: I gave my email address 25 years ago so not surprising that I don't get the newsletter.

Don: I made a flyer explaining both Potomac newsletter and LAC mail group. Can you put it out on the info desk.

Eric: Forward it to me.

Jim: One of the problems is that the MCPL has too many offerings and the website isn't well organized.

Don: Is the Board paying attention?

Jim: Yes but when we suggested making a video on how to get an ebook, Board members laughed and said by the time we make a video, it will be out of date.

Jim: Is there a Hatchlings program at PL?

Eric: Not to my knowledge

Amy: What is the mission of the LAC? Are you using it to get ideas? Are you looking for feedback for aspirational ideas?

Eric: I'm looking for feedback. I have occasional questions that I want answers to. Sometimes LAC take on various tasks and LAC can weigh in on budget proposals. Some LACs have made project proposals to their branch or to the director, can weigh in on other proposals, bequests, etc. One notable LAC effort was for Silver Spring. The LAC's advocacy made the SS refresh 2 years earlier.

Jim Montgomery, MC Library Board Liaison Report

Missed last board mtg. That's where Director Anita's retirement was announced.

With Friends of the Library, the MCPL Board made recommendations to Elrich on budget priorities. We believe children are a priority. 44% of children are ready for kindergarten. Some schools are less than 10% readiness. Some parents don't know about the children's literacy and readiness programs. So we have money in our request to reach out to people for this purpose. 42,000 childrens aren't getting what they need for children's literacy programming.

We are asking for money for foreign language collections because that brings in people too.

Don: When you say 42K children, do you mean they aren't aware of the programs?

Jim: We don't have the data about whether people are aware.

Jim: County Exec has a program to get children into quality daycare but the likelihood of this happening is low and the likelihood of getting parents to read to their children is low, too.

Don: So if 42000 showed up, could we handle them?

Jim: No! That's the problem.

Eric: And we don't have the staff; but we need demand to make more hires.

Jim: Board has many open seats. Consider applying. It's a great opportunity to have impact. It's hard to find people willing to serve on the Board. But with Anita's departure, it's a bit of a blank slate. Will the next director look at the board as an asset? Would be helpful to have people with digital experience. Board lacks people with digital experience.

Don: Please describe what Board service is like. How many hours a month?

Jim gave a description of all duties.

New business

Rosemarie: Member of garden club. All garden clubs are going native. April is Native Plant Month. Beautiful flyers. Will leave in library.

Gael: Whiteboard for suggestions from community? Suggestion box?

Eric: Prefer suggestion box.

Gael: Followup with Nancy?

Gael: Would like to send a letter from LAC to new director explaining what we expect/want from a new director.

Meeting ended 8:37pm