

Potomac LAC Meeting Minutes

Dec 17, 2024

LAC Member Attendees

Mary Ammermann, Co-chair

Gael Cheek

Don Libes, Secretary

Sylvia Diss

Sheila Graves, Co-chair

Karen Grimm

Millie Kahn, new member

Rosemarie Lentini

Patty McGrath (virtual)

Michael Namath

Cara Seitchek (virtual), new member

LAC Member Absentees

Ella Hue

Caitlyn Jennings, new member

Wei Lu

Anne Ma, new member

Mallory Starr, previous 2 meetings missed

Carole Ottesen, previous 2 meetings missed

Roger Williams, previous meeting missed

Other Regular Attendees

Patrick Fromm, Regional Mgr for Potomac, Connie Morella, Chevy Chase, Little Falls, Davis

Jim Montgomery, MC Library Board Liaison

Other Attendees

None

Other Absences

Nancy Samson, Branch Supervisor

Names and abbreviations (unofficial, for convenience and clarity)

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

Friends or OneFOL: One FOLMC (new)

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

FOPL: Friends of the Potomac Library (new)


PL: Potomac Library

MCLB: Montgomery County Library Board

plac: Potomac LAC mail list

Chair and Member Updates

Mary called meeting to order at 7:10pm. Agenda previously distributed by Sheila via plac.

 2024 09 03 Potomac LAC Agenda.doc

Round of introductions

Eric Carzon has stepped down as Regional Manager and is now director of the Fairfax County Public Library.

Patrick has returned as Regional Director, replacing Eric but with more branches (5) than before (4).

New member Cara does fundraising for Smithsonian and described her work with a wide variety of museums.

Patty: Can we turn off Zoom's AI transcriptions? Evidently, when Patrick enabled closed captioning, it also enabled AI transcriptions.

Patrick: Done.

Discussion about the possibility of automated transcriptions. General agreement of the value.

Patrick: County policy prevents us from transcribing the meeting. Not a law, just policy.

Discussion about Don's style of minutes. General agreement of the value.

Don: I'd still like to get out of taking minutes. Volunteers? [Silence]

Patrick: Little Falls LAC is asking MCLB to allow transcriptions.

Minutes from Previous LAC Meeting

Minutes from previous meeting with no changes, moved to approve by Sheila, seconded by Patty. Approved unanimously.

 2024 09 03 Potomac LAC Minutes

Patrick Fromm, Regional Manager Report

Patrick showed graphs over the course of a year since July 2023 of PL self-checkout vs staff checkout of physical materials (only), not ebooks. Looks very consistent from July 2023 albeit with slight but noticeable differences for summer/winter.

In the future, will provide comparable graphs for ebooks. "Demand for ebooks is insane."

Showed graphs of foot traffic. Typical foot traffic ~1000/day.

Walk-ins peak at noon.

Sunday, a relatively new day for PL, just as strong as some other days.

Showed statistics of programming events. For past 3½ months, 150 events at PL with 3473 total attendees.

Patrick lauded PL staff for focusing on elementary schoolers, an oft-overlooked age.

Nancy and Amy are working on new printer rollout due by Dec 24.

Don: Will there be new printer functionality? For example, 10"x13" sheet music is 11% wider than 9"x14" legal (9"x14") and the price of quality printers that can handle this are difficult to justify for most people.

Patrick: I'm unaware of any new functionality.

Jim Montgomery, MC Library Board Liaison Report

Did not attend last Board mtg but it was taken up by Library budget discussion.

Budget activity typically takes us 3 months.

Board and Friends are working on a joint letter of request to Elrich.

Will share letter to County Council and community.

Elrich is supposed to send his request Mar 15 and then we'll see what came of our discussion.

MC library system used to have 400+ budgeted full-time equiv staff at end of 2023.

We are down to 381. We are going to ask that the library return to 400.

Jan 15 will be another Joint Meeting with Friends and LACs at Wheaton Library. Director will speak and take questions. Friends will provide the usual good food. LAC members are invited by zoom or in-person. Will share link via plac.

Jim had earlier shared via plac a video discussion between the new Director and Elrich.

Jim: "Impressed." Found the director to be serious. Liked her stress on how libraries benefit children and education.

In 2019, Elrich had said biggest problem we face is kindergarten readiness.

Sylvia: The interview had no mention of volunteers to read to kids. Why don't we encourage retired volunteers to read to kids?

Jim: Union restrictions. Staff have training to read to kids.

[This discussion was much of a repeat of the previous month's discussion.]

Gael: But we have teen volunteers to teach tech to seniors.

Patrick: Staff have graduate degrees for a reason and are highly trained. State law says volunteers cannot do what staff are trained to do.

Patrick: Rockville had a program called GrandReaders of elderly.

Someone: It's tough. Elderly really need training. When children are not listening, seniors don't know how to handle it. If seniors don't feel good in the morning, they don't show up. These are the types of things that cause management issues.

Sylvia: But Read to a Dog has good volunteers.

Patrick: Volunteers are not a panacea. But some volunteer organizations that are trained can work. Jewish Council on Aging (JCA) did this at Rockville Library coordinated by an Early Literacy person. That worked well.

Jim: Perhaps the LAC can send a letter to the Board asking that PL expand the opportunities for reading to children. Nothing will happen without a letter to the Board.

Michael: Did any of this happen at schools?

Patrick: It happened at libraries.

Michael: I found a press release on MoCo Show for 2022 describing it at several libraries.

Mary: Can you find out why it ended?

Patrick: Yes, I will try to find out why it ended.

Old Business

Mail list 1: For community to interact with the LAC.

Gael showed latest version of the LAC flyer and noted we had been waiting for years for the library to start distributing it.

Mary: This has been approved.

Patrick: Is everyone happy with it?

Michael : QR code needs update. QR code says it is expiring.

Patrick: I'll fix it.

Mail list 2: For LACs to communicate with other LACs aka "InterLAC" mail list.

Don described the purpose and its potential and there was wide support for it from LAC members.

Patrick: This would be so opportune because I'm having trouble with LACs from Davis and Chevy Chase. For example, Chevy Chase has never produced minutes. Potomac LAC is well organized compared to other LACs that require me to do a lot of handholding.

Jim: I was shot down when I presented the InterLAC mail list proposal to the MCLB. I made a mistake and went to Board meeting without having the proposal written down. I'll go back to the Board with the proposal in hand if you can give it to me.

Don: I'll repost it to plac.

Karen: Why is the Board afraid?

Jim: Board is afraid of what other LAC members might say.

Mary: Are any other LACs requesting this?

Don: We don't have their contact info so we cannot even ask them. This illustrates the problem. We can't communicate with them about anything.

Patrick; I could put chairs in contact with one another.

Mary/Sheila: We volunteer!

New Business

Discussion about meeting more frequently.

Jim: Connie Morella LAC meets every month. Board pays more attention to it.

Don: I don't understand why the Board pays more attention to an LAC that meets monthly.

Jim: Syncing with the Board's schedule makes it easier for me to present things immediately after each LAC meeting.

Gael: I would be happy with every other month.

General consensus to try every other month.

Sheila moved to meet every other month. Karen seconded. Unanimous.

Mary: Let's start after March since we have that scheduled.

Sheila: 3rd Tuesday every other month starting with March.

Patty: Too long after Joint Meeting. Let's start earlier.

Gael: Library Lover's Month is Feb. Let's start then.

General consensus to start Feb 18.

Patrick: I will handle scheduling and room reservation.

Sheila: Do we have to do an end-of year LAC report?

Patrick: Yes.

Don: Example in Handbook. See Gael's from last year.

Gael: Too abbreviated. Don't use it.

Sylvia: What are other branches doing to celebrate Library Lover's month?

Patrick: We'll get some guidance from Admin. Might get some suggestions at Joint Meeting.

Gael: FOLP used to have a table and activities.

Sylvia: Davis has some nice tables for patrons. We could learn from their creativity.

Sheila, moved to adjourn 8:15. Michael seconded.

Meeting adjourned: 8:15pm