

## **Silver Spring Library Advisory Committee (SSLAC) Minutes, January 18, 2022**

Meeting online via Zoom began at approximately 7:35pm

### **SSLAC Members:**

*Present:* Scott Shoreman (Chair), Regina Germain (Secretary), Dana Anderson, Paulette Dickerson, Rodney Elin, Martha Kyrillidou, Chauna Wiggins

*Absent:* Rebecca Calcagno, Saa Fillie, Wendy Gales, Ella Hu

### **Others Present:**

Uzoma Onyemaechi, Silver Spring Library Manager

Laura Briskin-Limehouse, Library Board Liaison

Melvyn Greberman and Jill Brantley

### **Approval of Minutes for September and October 2021**

Regina Germain moved for approval of the September and October 2021 meeting minutes. Paulette Dickerson seconded her motion. There were no objections. The September and October 2021 minutes were approved with one person, Rodney Elin, abstaining because he was not present at these meetings.

### **Chair Report and Announcements**

- Jill Brantley's LAC term has expired, and her application for another term is on the agenda for the Library Board meeting in February. Mel Greberman's and Mary Ann Nyamweya's LAC terms expired last month, and they will need to re-apply to stay on the LAC.
- Maryland Transit Solutions has been selected to complete the Purple Line. The state is supposed to approve the contract within the next few weeks. After that happens, construction will ramp up. Then we will invite them to speak to us at one of our meetings. The Chair noted that 2026 is now the anticipated completion date of the Purple Line.
- There were two Joint Meetings since our last LAC Meeting.
  - The first was in November 2021, and the focus was on operations. Montgomery County Public Libraries Director Anita Vassallo presented on library usage during the pandemic and noted that 33,780 digital library cards were issued, but in-person foot traffic was down from pre-pandemic levels. In 2021, 2.2 million items were checked out, down from 2.4 million in 2020. Also, a list of libraries scheduled for a refresh was presented at this meeting, and the Silver Spring Library was not on the list.
  - The Second Joint Meeting was in January 2022. At that meeting Anita Vassallo talked about the Library's Strategic Plan and a Montgomery County Innovation official also spoke. The Chair noted LAC Chairs were told they would be asked

about the role of the library in their community, what makes a library successful, what needs improvement, and how the library can be more effective in its role.

The Chair will send these questions to the SSLAC members for their input.

- The Chair raised the budget process and noted that the County Executive will release his budget proposal in March. There will be meetings held in the first and second weeks of April regarding the budget. As soon as the budget comes out, individuals can sign up to testify. Martha asked about the Facilities Master Plan and suggested that it was good to have it when looking at the Strategic Plan.

### **Silver Spring Library Manager Report from Uzoma Onyemaechi**

1. **Collection:** The Manager reported the children collection is still leading the way with parents and their children browsing, touching the books, and self-checking them out. Our Children's Book Bundles are very popular and flying off the display shelves. There is a mixture of new books and a few older ones on the display shelves.
2. **Facility:** The Manager reported ongoing problems with the escalators and elevators. The Facilities folks came out and fixed them. Foot traffic for November 2021 was 9,545 people, and foot traffic for December 2021 was 9,225 people. The holidays affected this.
3. **Programming:** There were plans to start in-house programming by the second week of January 2022, but the surge in COVID-19 cases has put a temporary stop to that. Therefore, Montgomery County Public Libraries went back to offering programs virtually via Zoom. Next month is Library Lovers Month and Black History Month.
4. **Services:** Montgomery County Public Libraries are distributing COVID-19 home test kits and N95 facemasks. So far, it has been a success with help from volunteers and staff. There have been telephone calls by customers wanting to know if there are still some kits left and how long is the line. The Chair noted that there is a *Washington Post* article on the strain libraries are facing in giving out these test kits.  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2022/01/18/librarians-coronavirus-tests-workers/>

### **Library Board Liaison Report from Laura Briskin-Limehouse**

1. The Liaison noted that many of the items she intended to raise had already been discussed, such as the Joint Meetings.
2. The Liaison was asked how to apply to the Library Board. She noted that the application process was open for six weeks and that people who applied in that timeframe are currently being interviewed. Those who are interested should keep an eye out for announcements from the County regarding how to apply.

## **Friends of Library Report**

There was no report from the Friends of the Library. The Chair noted that there is a new Friends of the Library Silver Spring President, Kathlin Smith. It was noted by LAC members that she was also the president previously.

## **New Business**

Social Worker for Library - During the Manager's Report, Jill Brantley raised the idea of having a social worker present to assist with issues that arise with homelessness and mental illness. The Manager agreed that this would be a benefit but that there is currently no funding to pay for that. He stated that this might be a good issue to bring up in the budget meetings.

Refresh for Silver Spring Library – The Chair brought up the issue of a refresh for the Silver Spring Library. He noted that a refresh could include furniture (to replace old and dirty chairs), carpeting, elevators and escalators, HVAC, and computers. If the library were approved now for a refresh, it would be around two years before it occurs. The Manager noted that refreshes are scheduled every 7 years, but there has been a backup. It was suggested that we advocate for a refresh for the Silver Spring Library and take pictures to make our point. Laura Briskin-Limehouse was asked if the Library Board could have an impact on when refreshes occur. She stated that it could have some impact and noted that the Board keeps track of refreshes but that it cannot tell the county what to do. Paulette Dickerson moved that the Chair draft a letter that will recommend the Silver Spring Library for a refresh. The motion passed unanimously. The Chair asked members to send him photos of items in the library that need repair.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.