



## Montgomery County Library Board

March 9, 2022

**ATTENDEES:** Ahmed Wilder, Briskin-Limehouse, Christman, Duval, Levine, Lighter, Manubay, Pant, Roberts, Spencer, Fiery, Miller, Montgomery, Schiff

**STAFF:** Anita Vassallo, Director, Montgomery County Public Libraries, Regina Holyfield-Jewett, Recording Secretary; Rachel Rappaport, Co-Lead, Racial Equity and Social Justice Team; Linda Curvey-Brown, Co-Lead, Racial Equity and Social Justice Team

The meeting was called to order by Chair Roberts at 7:02 PM

### INTRODUCTIONS:

- Roll call of Board members; guests were introduced.

### MINUTES AND LAC APPLICATION APPROVALS:

- The minutes from the February 9, 2021, meeting were approved with one correction to approved LAC applications.
- The following LAC application was approved:
  - Silver Spring - Elin

**PRESENTATION:** Racial Equity and Social Justice – Linda Curvey-Brown and Rachel Rappaport, Co-Leads

- The Montgomery County Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) was formed in December 2019 by the Racial Equity and Social Justice Act.
- All County government departments appointed RESJ leads, who began training in 2020.
- The RESJ Core Team at MCPL was formed in August 2021.
  - Ten diverse staff from throughout the organization
  - Two co-leads
- What is a Core Team?
  - A Racial Equity Core Team is a leadership team, including both formal and informal leaders, who are responsible for analyzing and assessing departmental policies, procedures, and practices with a racial equity lens, and instrumental in developing racial equity action plans. They are the drivers of equitable systems changes.
- Objectives:
  - Normalize conversations about racial and other inequities.
  - Review and assess policies, practices and procedures to discern whether services and outcomes are equitable.
  - Design and implement a RESJ action plan.
  - Communicate about racial equity across the department.
  - Collect and analyze data for assessing and measuring progress.

- Approach to the GARE (Government Alliance on Race and Equity) model:
  - Normalize – Racial equity framework, shared analysis’ vocabulary, and communicate and act with urgency
  - Organize – Build organizational capacity and partner with stakeholders
  - Operationalize – Implement racial equity tools and be data driven
- The groups in the DMV area come together as a cohort and meet nationally at least once a month, bringing different tools from their areas.
- What is race?
  - A biological myth and a social reality constructed in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries by Europeans as a part of the colonial project, entrenched with notions of white superiority; in the United States, a caste system that mediates privilege, power, resources, and status.
- What is racism?
  - Race prejudice and social and institutional power
  - A system of advantage based on race
  - A system of oppression based on race
  - A white supremacy system
- Four levels of racism:
  - Internalized racism – A set of privately held beliefs, prejudices and ideas about the superiority of whites and the inferiority of people of color. Among people of color, it manifests as internalized oppression. Among whites, it manifests as internalized racial superiority.
  - Interpersonal racism – The expression of racism between individuals. It occurs when individuals interact and their private beliefs affect their interactions.
  - Institutional racism - Discriminatory treatment, unfair policies and practices, and inequitable opportunities within organizations that routinely produce racially inequitable outcomes for people of color and advantages for white people. Individuals within institutions take on the power of the institution when they reinforce racial inequities.
  - Systemic racism – A system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequality. It involves the cumulative and compounding effects of social factors including the history, culture, ideology and interactions of institutions and policies that systematically privilege white people and disadvantage people of color.
- Our Work
  - What we are working on:
    - Training
    - Racial equity focused vision statement
    - Racial equity timeline for Montgomery County and MCPL
  - What’s coming:
    - RESJ SharePoint site for staff
    - Recruitment, hiring and retention improvements for People of Color
    - Racial Equity Action plan
- Vision statement:
  - MCPL seeks to become a welcoming and inclusive environment that provides equitable access to information and resources, while striving to serve and uplift historically underrepresented people and communities.

- Core Team training
  - Advancing Racial Equity: The Role of Government
  - The Groundwater Approach: A Practical Understanding of Structural Racism Course
  - Dismantling Institutional Racism
- Linda Curvey-Brown is participating in Hampton University – Harvey Library’s *Leading the Charge* grant project. The focus of this project, funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, is advancing the recruitment and retention of people of color within the library information science field.
- Questions/Comments
  - How are you factoring in critical race theory?
    - It is discussed as a terminology to learn what it is and how people are talking about it. Ensuring the collection offers equitable access to all.
  - How is training being delivered? By credentialed individuals?
    - Training is provided by the County’s Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice and the Racial Equity Institute. It is conducted by credentialed individuals
  - Measuring equitable outcomes – Determine where the disparate impacts are in Montgomery County. For example, there is a much larger percentage of black children living in poverty in the County. How can those impacted access resources to improve their lives? Working to figure out how to collect and measure the data to ensure all the goals are being met and positive impacts are being made. Selecting projects and goals that are achievable.
  - Are there definitions of some phrases like “historically underrepresented?”
    - Yes, there is an internal vocabulary list.
    - Hopefully, the list will be included in the plan
  - Enable MCPL to recruit more people of color in the library field, and retain more people of color in the department.

**DIRECTOR’S REPORT:**

- **Personnel** - The following staff changes took place during the month February 2022:
  - New Hire:
    - Marc Villa, Librarian I, Gaithersburg
  - Promotions:
    - Camille Robinson, Library Desk Assistant to Librarian I, Silver Spring
  - Transfers:
    - Sheldon Oliver, Library Assistant I, from Maggie Nightingale to Collection Management
    - Yolanda Mongan, Library Assistant I, from Connie Morella to Rockville Memorial
- **Hiring**
  - Senior Librarian/assistant branch manager- an additional candidate withdrew from consideration. Two new offers being developed. Panel reconvened last week and is checking references on three additional candidates. This will give us a list to fill vacancies that may occur.
  - Librarian I (part-time) - Ten offers sent to Office of Human Resources (OHR) - seven acceptances.  
New employees are being scheduled for County orientation as they clear contingencies. We expect the first group during the week of March 27. Panels

reconvened and will begin checking references for the second candidate list. Third candidate list is scheduled for interviews next week.

- Library Assistant I (part-time) - Unit received the list of 20 recommended candidates on March 7, and we are developing offers. We already know that a recommended candidate accepted a librarian position. In anticipation of additional vacancies and candidate withdrawals, the panel will reconvene during the week of March 20. There are more candidates on the eligible list.
- Librarian I (full-time) Children's
  - New Librarian I (full-time) children's at GB started on February 28.
  - Newly promoted Librarian I (full-time) children's starts March 13 at Twinbrook.
  - All full-time Librarian I positions are full as of March 13.
- Librarian II adult
  - Offers in progress. One promotion sent to OHR this week.
- Librarian II children's
  - Panel finishes interviews March 9. Will provide preliminary list and begin to check references on or about March 11.
- Teams are completing draft job postings for all remaining branch positions. According to the Director's timeline, Library Assistant II, Library Desk Assistant and Library Aide will be the next recruitments, scheduled for later this month.
- **Refresh/Construction Updates:**
  - Maggie Nightingale - Construction continues with an anticipated date of substantial (construction) completion of March 10. Assistant Director will do a walk through on and will know more. Preparing to be able to announce a re-opening date.
  - Damascus - Damascus Library and Senior Center Facility Assessment in progress. Design to begin in July/August 2022.
  - Chevy Chase - The results on the [library renovation survey](#) for Chevy Chase have been posted on the Department of General Services' (DGS) site. The County Executive is not considering a redevelopment of the library site. DGS has reinserted the Chevy Chase library into the list of libraries to be 'refreshed' in future years.
  - Potomac - Permit submission was approved pending submission of the construction bid (cost).
  - Noyes - A legislative bond initiative has been introduced for \$900,000 for Noyes by Councilmember Andrew Friedson.
  - Clarksburg – The DGS Division of Building Design and Construction submitted a Program of Requirements for the new Clarksburg library for MCPL to review. MCPL is reviewing and updating outdated items.
  - Silver Spring – Scheduled for a facility assessment in January 2023.
- **Rapid COVID-19 home test kit and N95 masks distributions**

As demand tapered for test kits and masks, MCPL transitioned to a model where kits and masks will be available during all library open hours via a "grab n go" model. This spreads out the demand for these items over the course of an 8- or 10-hour day, instead of compressing demand into a two-hour period. The new model went into effect Monday, February 28, with plans to reevaluated after the first weeks. Details of new model:

  - Kits still limited to 2 per person; masks still limited to 4 per person
  - Kits and masks are available on a table or cart within line of sight of library service desks.
  - Masks are pre-bagged to facilitate ease of distribution.
  - A limited number of kits and bagged masks are made available on the table/cart and restocked as needed during the course of the day.

- On Monday, February 28, County Executive Elrich signed an executive order that will enable the County to **rename the Silver Spring Library** to the “Brigadier General Charles E. McGee Library.” The ceremony also included Councilmember Will Jawando, the Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs, the Tuskegee Airmen, members of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, and family members of Brig. Gen. Charles E. McGee.
- Through the Maryland State Library, MCPL won a grant of \$100,000 from the American Rescue Plan Act funds to provide an electric Sprinter-type **van for the Outreach Team**. This vehicle will allow the team to easily store and transport everything needed for all of the events they currently attend and more. The cost of purchasing, outfitting and wrapping a van that will provide all that is needed was much more than the grant would cover. Most generously, the Friends of the Library, Montgomery County Inc. will be providing the additional funds needed to cover costs and make the Outreach Team mobile van a reality.
- The Contemporary Conversation event, Our Impact on Climate Change, held on March 5 with writer and journalist Elizabeth Kolbert went very well. There were over 200 attendees.
- **Upcoming Events:**
  - Women’s History Month [events](#).
  - [Meet Georgia Hunter](#), author of We Were the Lucky Ones, about her family's survival during WWII. March 30, 2 PM – Virtual.
- Comments/Questions
  - **eNewsletter** is now being distributed via OrangeBoy, giving MCPL the ability to contact all active users (285k active users). The former product could only relay the newsletter to 600 people. It will enable Libraries to do more target marketing. The Digital Strategies team is working to enable the sign up online feature. No fix on our end to the newsletter from going to spam.
  - It would be good for Director Vassallo to share with the LACs how the recruitment is being handled now. Director Vassallo will work on a paragraph to share.

#### **CHAIR’ S REPORT:**

- Orientation: First of two new board member orientations was held yesterday. The next orientation is on Monday, March 14. Congratulations to all of the new Board members.
- LAC liaisons: All LACs now have Board liaisons. This role is very critical in learning the needs of the community.
- Future meetings: Thank you for the feedback on future meetings in the summertime. If things remain the same, there will be a hybrid meeting in June or July.

#### **WORKGROUP REPORTS:**

- Library Policy and Practices (Lighter, Duval, Briskin-Limehouse, Manubay, Fiery)
  - Library Board Manual – Some items need to be cleaned up. Determination will be made if some items may be in the manual for legal reasons.
- Legislative and Public Affairs Workgroup (Montgomery, Schiff)
  - The group met in person.
  - The Fiscal Year 2023 budget season will start next week when County Executive Elrich presents his budget proposals to the County Council on March 15.
  - Jim Montgomery shared an overview of the FY22 budget for Libraries Council session and suggested that other Library Board members view the session.
    - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vxyql4e0hEI> - The discussion on the MCPL budget starts a bit after nine minutes.
- LAC and Board Activities (Roberts, Levine)
  - Each LAC has a Board liaison now.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

- None

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

- None

## **LIAISON REPORTS:**

- Gaithersburg – There was a somber report at the LAC meeting; Bruce Goldensohn passed away unexpectedly. He was a senior leader of Leadership Montgomery. Another member has a cancer diagnosis and will not be participating on the LAC in the future. There is a need to recruit new members. Worked with branch manager to connect LAC with Kate Frades. Traffic has been slow on Sundays, however, once more people know it's open staff anticipate increased foot traffic. Programming: Had a Korean cooking demo that have 50 attendees; it worked well. Korean lantern making is next. The Discovery Room is now open. Five and under programming is not yet available in person.
- Marilyn Praisner – Has not meet since the last Board meeting.
- Silver Spring – Getting set to write a letter to support the name change of the library, but has been preempted.
- Montgomery County Public Schools – Doing anti-racist work. A year-long audit to examine and address institutional racism in MCPS, which included student groups, parent groups, and key stake holders. As the supervisor of libraries (206), this is targeted work – ensuring there is a diverse collection of books that's reflective of the community and broader work. Ensure that all students have an opportunity to participate in programs. Ensure instruction practices are equitable in grading, policies and procedures on accounts, space is safe and welcoming for all students; it is a place they want to be, and it is inclusive. Outside partners include MoCo Pride and History UnErased. Has own equity unit. Ramping up to open newest elementary school, Kelley Park, in Gaithersburg, which is opening next school year in August. It will begin as K- 4. The Odessa Shannon Middle School (formerly Colonel E. Brooke Lee) is moving into a new building in July. Students have to make up three snow days; one will be April 1 - ½ day. Masks are now optional in school and offices. Working with MCPL on summer reading.
- Rockville Memorial – Met a week ago. Good update from the branch manager. They talked about the test kit/mask distribution and virtual programming. Branch Manager Patrick Fromm gave a presentation on getting the most from your catalog – new Aspen Catalog; it was really popular. They did ask if magazines will be coming back.
  - Director Vassallo mentioned that there has been difficult reestablishing the subscriptions.
  - There are many newspapers and magazines available electronically.
- Twinbrook – Still figuring out how to reconstitute.
- Maggie Nightingale – Not yet open. March 31 is the next meeting.
- Damascus – Met March 8. Still interested in the test kits and masks. Interested in ways to get more people back into the library. Hosting Manic Monday for teens and a daytime book club with the senior center. Any recommendations for best practices for book club can be sent to Holly. Will be meeting with Kate Frades – looking forward to this and giving input. Donated book sales – FOLMC manages this process.
- Quince Orchard – No change from last month. How to move on with the LAC without a branch manager.

- Olney – Missed last meeting. Received minutes. Reports from the branch manager. Proactive in promoting the strategic plan.
- Accessibility Advisory – Jill Lewis will no longer be chairing the committee. Want to find solutions to accessing the FOLMC newsletter. Will talk to Ari Brooks and Lysette House regarding their newsletter – find out from users how they are accessing the newsletter.
- Kensington Park – Still defunct. They do have a sign up to join LAC.
- Little Falls – Has not met since the last Board meeting. Next meeting is April 5.
- Wheaton – Met last week. Had questions about adult programming – how it will be balanced between in person and virtual. The virtual allowed more people to attend. The group prefers virtual meetings. One member was concerned about the mask mandate being lifted – has young children – doesn't feel comfortable bringing her young children to the branch.
- Long Branch – There is no LAC. There is a change in branch manager. In touch with acting branch manager and community members.
- Potomac – Met on March 1. Talked about the upcoming refresh (Director Vassallo will verify the construction start date). They have questions about recruitment. Want a full-time manager. Have been participating in some of the strategic plan community sessions. Recommended the OLO Future of Libraries. They were interested in the report – copies were sent.
- Connie Morella – First session on March 15
- White Oak – Met on March 1. Discussed Sunday hours and foot traffic. Two LAC members are stepping down Next meeting on June 7 – elections will be held.
- Aspen Hill –Met on February 28, send questions to Sonja via email. Questions about best practices for LAC volunteers. A lot of technical issues using Zoom. Wanted to know if they can use their personal Zoom accounts. Next meeting on March 21
- Germantown – Has not started up again.
- Noyes – Meet every other month. Meets on March 10. Excited to meet the volunteers for Noyes.
- Chevy Chase – They don't have an LAC right now. Will approach the manager soon.
- Davis – Has co-chairs. Had long phone conversation with them. They are very active and very knowledgeable about the library. Next meeting is sometime in March (TBD).
- Montgomery College – The new college president began on February 28. He is developing a transition team to guide him for the next six months. He is making rounds of campuses, meeting stakeholders to make informed decisions after which we should have a better idea of where the college is actually going. There are number of large projects in place – launching a virtual campus for next fall. President meeting with the county to discuss the FY23 budget. Excited to see where we go. Takoma Park/Silver Spring campus library will be packing up over the summer in preparation for renovations in late fall. Trying to avoid disruptions for students in terms of being able to access services. In the process of finalizing a resolution to the Board to do eliminate library fines. Other community college across the country have already eliminated fines or are in the process of doing so. There was resolution that went to the board that established library fines; so a resolution has to be written and submitted in order to reverse it.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- None

**ADJOURNMENT:**

- The meeting adjourned at 8:54 p.m.