

# LIBRARY ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## MEETING NOTES

April 6, 2022

Present: Jane Carona, American Council of the Blind, treasurer of ACB of Maryland and Braille Revival League, on the boards of Guide Dog Users Inc. and Library Users of America, formerly worked for Library of Congress, NLS; Francie Gilman, member of board of Independence Now, former MCPL librarian; Cindy Buddington, chair, member of board of Independence Now, uses motorized wheelchair; Betty Thompson, consultant to LAAC; Jill Lewis, former LBPD librarian and former chair of Library Board; Debbie Brown, National Federation of the Blind-Sligo Creek Chapter president, works for Library of Congress—NLS; Tim Lighter, Library Board liaison; Nadia Aboureyah, who works for the Montgomery County Department of Aging and Disabilities; Richard Bell-Irving, secretary/treasurer of Learning Disabilities Association of Montgomery County, manages websites; Larry Cohen, member of Leisure World Lions and Leisure World vision support group; Barbara King, longtime member of LAAC, who volunteered at the Special Needs Library and is a member of ACB; Jonina Duker, who began working with AAC when the Special Needs Library was at the Davis Library and has various adult onset disabilities; Amy Fier, who oversees representative payee and friendly visitor program with Everymind; Elizabeth Lang, assistant facilities manager for MCPL; Monica Martinez, who represents Partnership for Extraordinary Minds.

Cindy asked Francie to keep track of time. Francie read the Zoom etiquette rules.

Francie thanked Jill for her work with the LAAC, since she has moved to New York and will no longer be the AAC leader. Jill was the first AAC leader. Cindy said Jill was much appreciated and it was a pleasure to work with her. Betty said she was grateful that Jill made an effective, positive reality out of what had been only a concept back when Betty's sister Jeanie Dunnington died after proposing it.

STAFF TRAINING: Elizabeth

The training video is done and there is a link to it. Elizabeth has not yet viewed it. Elizabeth will ask for approval to send the link it to AAC members who can review it.

Kate Tavakolian, the training specialist, has retired. Because the human resources manager is also retiring, Elizabeth doesn't know when they will get a new staff person. Kate reports to the human resources manager, who is also retiring. The library HR person is a liaison with the county HR department. It will probably be several months before the positions are filled. Kate had wanted to do ongoing trainings. Nadia should be able to see the video because she participated in it.

Elizabeth said Anita is aware and supportive about using the video and doing more training but lacks a training specialist and HR manager, who are key to this. We can ask Anita more about this. There was a lawsuit about people with disabilities, and training is part of the county's settlement agreement.

There are a lot of trainings in the county, and this is one of many that Library employees must take.

Elizabeth said she would find out whether the Tip Sheets have been distributed to all staff.

**OUTREACH:** Francie and Larry

Francie thanked Larry for helping her think about Outreach. Francie will be stepping back from the AAC.

The email she sent was to help people get started on marketing. We should check Francie's April 2 email. We all need to use the suggested ways to tell people how library services matter to them. We can come up with more ideas.

**PROGRAMMING:**

Cindy encourages AAC members to contact her with programming ideas.

Debbie spoke about the Louis Braille birthday celebration in January. It had good participation and feedback. Francie helped with the PowerPoint. Elizabeth arranged to have it hosted through the Davis Library, and it was listed in the Libraries 'Events Calendar.

Elizabeth said that virtual programs can be hosted by any branch. We and our organizations can propose programs any time. If we have a program idea, we

should go through Elizabeth who will help us find a branch to work with. We would set a date and decide if it should be virtual or in person (in-person is limited). We should decide the time of day or if it should be on a weekend. We should think of technical needs such as PowerPoint presentations.

## AAC FUTURE: Jill

Jill started by saying this is the beginning of a huge discussion we will have about new leadership, gaining more members and letting people know what we do for the Library system. We need to decide how to be organized. Should we continue leadership the way we have done it? Jill noted how effective the group has been in doing important work by using a collaborative approach to leadership and operations.

Jill valued the people on the committee who have been around for a long time. We need additional members who represent more disabilities. Monica would like to have someone with autism on the committee. We have tried to involve the deaf and hard of hearing community.

Betty said that it is valuable to have members who represent organizations because that can increase the reach of the committee and also benefit the organization's clients.

We need someone to make sure everything we are doing is known to the community. Our mission is to advise the library managers.

Jill thinks they want us to work and do not want to worry about the minutiae of structure. Elizabeth agreed.

We should clarify the overview document from 2015. Many of us have not seen the document.

We have a hard time establishing a relationship with the Board because the Board is always changing membership. Tim has been great. We should come to present to the Board. We need someone to start the process.

Jill will send the 2015 overview to everyone. Richard, Cindy, and Betty will work on it and bring it back to the AAC.

Tim will volunteer to help with the Board.

We should invite Anita and Angelisa to a meeting. Angelisa is supposed to be our liaison but has never been at a meeting.

Monica said she couldn't find disability resources on the website. Elizabeth said the Digital Strategies team is open to changes in the website, and to let her know if we identify accessibility concerns about the Library website. The LAAC should be mentioned at the top, easy to find.

We should have a list of suggestions. Cindy may collect suggestions.

#### LIBRARY UPDATE: Elizabeth

The libraries now have expanded hours. All libraries are open on Sundays. All branches are open Monday-Thursday 10-8; Friday and Saturday 10-6. The name of the Silver Spring Library is now Brig. Gen. Charles McGee Library.

Libraries have been distributing millions of COVID test kits and masks. People can walk in and go to a table and get test kits. Each person can get up to 2 kits and 4 masks.

The training and HR positions are being posted.

The administrative structure for the Library branches is changing so that there is a regional manager that oversees a group of libraries.

There is a change in the structure of the Friends. If we invite Anita or Angelisa to a meeting, they could provide more details about the reorganization that is underway.

Renovations: Elizabeth asked people to visit Damascus. Cindy has visited. They are ready to start the renovation for Damascus. Elizabeth needs input before the next meeting. Maggie Nightingale will be opening in late spring. Potomac's new design has been completed and will be closed this summer for 6 to 9 months.

We should put our suggestions and concerns together in a document.

#### LIBRARY BOARD UPDATE: Tim

There are 5 new board members. Tim has a few more years on the Board.

Richard and Tim met with Ari Brooks, the director of the Friends of the Library. Friends documents are not accessible. In the end, they say they cannot fix things because there are graphics. They are using Constant Contact.

Richard says they should use a different distribution platform. Other committee members say Constant Contact should not pose an accessibility problem. Richard says we need to talk to the computer person.

The Friends think they do not need to make their information accessible because they are private, but that is not correct, they must still make their materials accessible. The Friends are not exempt from ADA requirements.

The Library's digital strategies group has expertise. Regina has been making their documents accessible, but she should not have to do that.

We could write the Friends an email to say what we expect of them. Debbie will do that with Richard and Tim. Before writing something, Richard, Tim, and Debbie will contact Ari to give more context about making documents accessible. Richard has not been able to get on the Friends mail list.

## NEXT MEETING

We discussed meeting dates and times but no decision was made. Our next meeting will be Thursday, June 16.

## FINAL COMMENTS

Jill has liked working with all of us, she said it was one of the most exciting experiences of her life.

## ACTION ITEMS

1. Completed: Work on mission statement and overview document: Cindy, Richard, and Betty.
2. Arrange for presentation to the Library Board: Tim
3. Ongoing: Think of ways to increase LAAC's visibility, and publicize LAAC in our communities. Use the ideas in Francie's April 2 email about marketing: Everyone.

4. Arrange to have Anita and Angelisa at a meeting to discuss our concerns about visibility and other matters: Elizabeth and LAAC chair.

5. Completed? Contact Ari to give more context about making documents accessible. Richard, Tim, Debbie. If needed, write an email to Friends (presumably Ari?) expressing our concerns about accessibility: Debbie, Richard, Tim

6. Completed: Send the link to the training video to the AAC, if that is approved: Elizabeth. Review the video: everyone. Update: She sent it by email on April 12 to AAC members and to the panelist Nadia Abouraya. The recording title shows as Adult Teen Forum. The full title is Inclusive Customer Service training that was held at the Adult and Teen Services Forum. Copy the password below, then click the link, then paste the passcode.

Link:

[https://marylandlibraries.zoom.us/rec/share/jn9zhsOfD3yuQtXJv4JEL9JOCERI\\_xyAUlsnpDMR37wLbFMtSxDApV3QZOb-HC1O.6gaiOBnMv4\\_CCPPu](https://marylandlibraries.zoom.us/rec/share/jn9zhsOfD3yuQtXJv4JEL9JOCERI_xyAUlsnpDMR37wLbFMtSxDApV3QZOb-HC1O.6gaiOBnMv4_CCPPu)

Passcode: k63mi^A\*

7. Partially completed: Find out if the Tip Sheets have been distributed to all staff: Elizabeth. Update: Elizabeth's April 12 email to AAC members also said: "I also wanted to confirm for you that the tip sheets were given to the staff who attended the session. I have let library administration know that the committee is unhappy about how long it is taking to get the tip sheets to the rest of the staff. Barbara asked me to explain that in addition to the retirements, there were two people in her unit using FMLA leave in 2021, which delayed some work. She asked that I convey her apologies to you."