

## LIBRARY ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### Meeting Notes

December 15, 2022

## Introductions

Members present: Richard Bell Irving, Learning Disabilities Association of Montgomery County, has daughter with a learning disability who works for the library; Francie Gilman, retired MCPL librarian who used to work for the Special Needs Library; Betty Thompson, community representative whose sister who was blind and deceased was a volunteer and library user; Jonina Duker, lifelong library lover, advocate, reader, former tutor for the Special Needs Library, formerly on Special Needs committee and DRC, was injured on the job; Jane Carona, treasurer of National Capital Area Council of the Blind, treasurer of Braille Revival League; Cindy Buddington, serves on the Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities, former member of Independence Now Board; Debbie Brown, president of Sligo Creek Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind, works for National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled; Janice Levine, member of the Library Board invited by Tim Lighter, who is willing to help with the handbook; TIM Lighter, liaison from the Library Board, whose daughter who is legally blind is teaching her one-year-old son to love libraries; Elizabeth Lang, Assistant Facilities and Accessibility Program Manager; Nadia Aboueya, a new member who works for the Montgomery County government Aging and Disabilities Service in the Department of Health and Human Services; Monica Martinez, former executive director of Partnership for Extraordinary Minds; Barbara King, former volunteer for Special Needs Library at Davis in Rockville; Yasmin REYAZUDDIN, who is on but attending another meeting; Matt Barkley, who is county ADA officer but has not been to meetings lately.

Larry Cohen, who has been on this committee, is not able to participate because of family duties. He is president of Leisure World Lions.

## AAC OVERVIEW: Cindy and Betty

Betty thanked everyone for giving input to the overview. She noticed a typo with the wrong date. We would like to prepare it for the AAC website. The LAAC is mentioned with LACs. Betty said that names and affiliations go to the AAC website.

There were some corrections. We believe that the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled is the name for the library. This is in Attachment B. Also, the description of the library staff liaison should not be referred to as "she." Instead of listing organizations as if it is a requirement that the AAC REPRESENT CERTAIN ORGANIZATIONS, ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD BE LISTED AS EXAMPLES.

The committee voted unanimously in favor for the AAC overview.

## ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Francie Gilman was nominated for chair. Debbie Brown was nominated for secretary. We discussed the duties of the vice chair. In addition to serving in the absence of the chair, the vice chair's duties deal with membership. Jane Carona volunteered and was nominated for vice chair. All officers were elected unanimously. The committee thanked Cindy for standing in as interim chair. Francie thanked the committee for their confidence. These officers will engage all members in accomplishing the work.

## ORGANIZATION PARTNERSHIPS

Richard talked about the Learning Disabilities Association of Montgomery County. They are in a transition. LDA Maryland is an affiliate of LDA America. Their new president is a go-getter. They represent all types of learning disabilities. They started out with schoolchildren. Now they are thinking about people with learning disabilities after they grow up.

They are a very small organization. They have 109 members who represent adults. They have a group, the Fun Bunch, that goes on activities. It is a safe space where they can learn from each other.

The LDA board is working with the adult group. There are no deaf or blind members, but other groups are represented. They now have the Hangout Hive; you must be 21 and have a documented disability. Are any of these adults library users? Nadia says they seem to go out to eat a lot and do not do activities she can participate in because of finances and distance. Francie would like to engage them.

Cindy mentioned that Independence Now is working with people in nursing homes. They help people participate in classes like cooking and educational classes. They can help people find activities if they are not teaching them.

Jane talked about the American Council of the Blind. The Library is on their agenda. It is difficult because blind people do not believe they need the public library. She emphasizes the no-pressure book group. There are small numbers of people at some presentations. Most libraries are difficult to get to. We need to think about what the library has that is accessible.

Monica has worked with the Partnership for Extraordinary Minds. They have worked with MCPL. She has been vice president and president of Partnership for Extraordinary Minds (XMinds). She was formerly executive director. Their focus was at first on diploma-bound students; now they are trying to represent everyone with autism. They are trying to get more representation of adults with autism. They are working on children's sensory story hours. The current leadership of XMinds is trying to expand social meetups. There could be more collaboration to encourage volunteering in libraries by students with autism.

## ACCESSIBLE DOCUMENTS: Jane

Francie introduced Vincent Mui, who works for MCPL. A few weeks ago we got an invitation to a meeting that was a JPEG embedded in an email message.

A text PDF is readable, not an image of any kind. We can perform OCR on a PDF image, but that is not a good idea because it doesn't always work. Text PDF is safer. We are trying to make accessible documents from the beginning because "separate but equal" is generally not a good idea. An example of this kind of problem is a website that Amazon used to have that was supposed to be accessible and the same as their regular website, but you couldn't do everything on it. It is best to avoid graphics formats. Can we create a tip sheet on how to create accessible documents? This issue is countywide.

How does a document get inaccessible? Vincent was asked to create a graphic. Vincent will re-code the graphic.

There is a PDF updated strategic plan. Francie, Betty and Tim have it. Vincent tested it in NVDA.

Vincent is creating a specific set of documents. Elizabeth would like to work with all groups. Every time something is not accessible, it should go through Elizabeth. This should be part of the workflow.

There are accessible workstations at all libraries. We need to show people accessible workstations.

Should we have more people at an AAC meeting or do a separate training? Tim has sent out documents. NVDA CAN BE USED. We are making people aware of the problem. We cannot necessarily fix the problem. We want people to educate themselves if producing documents is their duty. We want the same document for everyone, not cutting it to an email. Documents can be made accessible without disturbing graphics.

## FACILITIES UPDATES: Elizabeth

Potomac is currently under construction.

Noyes is projected to start renovation in the spring. Noyes is a house, and making it accessible will take a lot of work. There will to make it accessible; it is a house.

There will be a facility assessment of Silver Spring library this winter. We would like to see changes. We should send our comments. They are trying to get storytimes started.

Liz Bowen is the new staff training person.

We have new vendors for sign language interpretation and captioning. There is a primary and a backup.

Thanks to Jane for testing room sign-up. The program they use is Communico. This is for study rooms or collaboration rooms. This is a long process.

They are getting ready to update assistive technology workstations. They are upgrading to Windows 10. These go out of date quickly. Elizabeth is working with the technology group to get enlarged screens.

There is a posting for the Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library program specialist. This is supervised by MCPL. They are looking for someone who is deaf and fluent in ASL and knowledgeable about social media.

## BOARD REPORT: Tim

The director's report shows that there is a lot of hiring. There is a lot of concern about staffing. About 50 people have been hired.

There is a little blurb about library legislative day in in Annapolis. There was a joint meeting with Dr. Weedon. At the joint meeting, support was asked for in advocating.

Jaime Flores is the new outreach director.

Tim went to the meeting this morning with Councilmembers Jawando and Mink. A librarian from Gaithersburg talked about accessibility; the councilmembers were listening. Another joint meeting will be held January 11. It would be good to have people at the February legislative day.

## ADA COMPLIANCE: Matt

Matt is the ADA compliance manager for Montgomery County. He is working with the technology department on the accessibility of documents in social media. The volume of things posted online and on social media is difficult to keep up with. They are working on a countywide plan. Chris Daniel is taking the lead. We believe it would be helpful for people to have input when it is rolled out. There are a number of people involved. The Department of General Services collaborates with other agencies. Anita and Angelisa have been involved. ADA compliance has not been a part of this work but is now.

ADA COMPLIANCE IS REVIEWING LIBRARY PROJECTS BETWEEN NOW AND 2030. Silver Spring will be 2023-2025. They will push to make it as accessible as possible.

Accessibility of documents is a problem countywide. They are working with groups besides the library. If we have input about the library, we will go through Elizabeth.

## NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be March 16.

## Action Items

1. Send strategic plan to Debbie, Jane and Yasmin: Francie (done)
2. Any MCPL accessibility issues go to Elizabeth: All
3. Recruit for deaf ASL-fluently librarian for Deaf Culture Digital Library.
4. Put group partnerships on the agenda.: Francie
5. Send Overview to Elizabeth to send to Anita: Francie and Betty.

6. Send comments on facilities to Elizabeth and Francie: All
7. Put wrap-up of ADA compliance report on document accessibility on next meeting's agenda:  
Francie.