

Aspen Hill Library Advisory Committee Minutes

Meeting of September 20, 2021

Zoom Meeting Platform

Call to Order: LAC Chair Josephine Rios-Davis called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.

Present: LAC Members--- Betty Bell, Elliot Chabot, Althea Grey-McKenzie, Babs Margolies, Josephine Rios-Davis, Chris Swan, and Judy Tankersley. Also attending: Fred Akuffo, AH Library circulation supervisor, Tim Lighter, MCLBoard Liaison, Shadia Slade, Community Member, and Sarah Rivera, Community Member.

Chair Rios-Davis welcomed the attendees, who each introduced themselves. The two community members did not (or were not able) respond to the invitation to introduce themselves and both left the meeting over the next 15 minutes.

Minutes of the June 14, 2021 LAC Meeting were approved, upon the motion of Judy Tankersley, with second by Chris Swan.

Branch Information:

Since Branch Manager Freeman was away this week, Fred Akuffo provided information about the Library to the group.

The Library System considered expanded hours, but decided to continue to operate on the **current operating hours**.

Mr. Akuffo reported that the outdoor water spigot had been repaired. He indicated that there had also been some **maintenance/physical plant repairs** ongoing or in process involving the garbage disposal, the staff door lock, and a wall patch needed where prior work was done. There is a significant roof leak in the area near the elevator, and need for phone company repair to the elevator phone. Chris Swan asked about a new sump pump in the Mechanical Room, which appears to be operating successfully. Ms. Swan asked about any alarm connection to it to alert staff of a developing problem. Mr. Akuffo reported that the most recent flooding downstairs was traced to pipes, not sump pump issues.

Judy Tankersley reported on questions from a community member and her own observation of the deterioration/crumbling of the **concrete bumpers** in the parking area and the deterioration of the **sidewalks**, so that the aggregate is surfacing. The **front steps** also show cracks and separation. Given that these items were part of the "Refresh," it appears the County needs to look at its contract fulfillment. Fred Akuffo suggested this kind of issue needs to be referred to the Building Manager and Facilities Manager and he would pass on the questions.

(Josephine Rios-Davis left the meeting, saying she would return)

Statistics on circulation, foot traffic, service requests were deferred until the October meeting when Ms. Freeman could attend. Fred was able to report that foot traffic since July totalled 36,000 for an average of 400 per day. (Is this System wide?) Tim Lighter reported that circulation information should be available next month through reports to the Library Board. Traffic due to Holds continues to be high, but pick-up rates continue to be quick, so shelving/display of the items is manageable.

(Josephine Rios-Davis returned to the meeting)

Josephine Rios-Davis expressed sympathy to the staff on the sudden loss of Judy Rowles. Fred thanked her and reported that AHLibrary expects a new Children's Librarian to start in a couple weeks. One part time **staff** will become full time and focus on Teens. There are currently three vacancies in Circulation and one in Information. The Library System is calling on Substitutes to bridge the gap between vacancies and hiring.

The new **Integrated Library System** is scheduled to be active to the public on October 4. Chris Swan asked about having a presentation about the new system; since that had been discussed at previous meetings in May and June.

Program Participation indicates 816 took part from January to August: 599 at Story Time, 159 at Family Events, 40 at Nature Program, and 18 for the End of Summer Reading Event.

Mr. Akuffo reported that he is a member of the MCPL's **Equity Group** that meets tomorrow and will be focused on how Libraries are used, user concerns, and privileged vs. unprivileged users.

(Althea Grey-McKenzie left the meeting, saying she would return)

Library Board Liaison Report

Tim Lighter reported that the Library Board is in the midst of re-organizing itself due to the loss of five members. The Board is interviewing new applicants for its vacancies. The Library Board did act on some new LAC members, but our applicant, Daniel George, was not in that group. Mr. Lighter will forward a copy of Anita Vassio's report to the Library Board to the LAC. He asked that the LAC's Annual Report be submitted by the end of September. Some additional fees and fines were dropped, such as one to replace a lost card. He will be working on Policies and Procedures this year and will be looking at LAC Handbook updates and Accessibility issues at an upcounty Library. Chris Swan pointed out the curb cut issue at Aspen Hill and urged Mr. Lighter to keep that in mind in dealing with Clarksburg.

Aspen Hill LAC Reports**Chair's Report**

Ms. Rios-Davis reported no change in membership, but invited guest attendees to consider joining. The one new member application's status is not definite, but had been forwarded to the Library Board in May.

The Chair announced the call for nominations for Chair and Secretary for this year. Judy Tankersley stated that this year, due to Covid shut downs the Library Board indicated that , LAC's could elect in September for a term to last until May, when the normal election cycle would resume. The group discussed the situation and that persons not in attendance could not be elected. Chair Rios-Davis indicated that delays in approval of new members at the Library Board level can have a detrimental effect on new recruitment. She cited the time lag can result in an interested person going on to something else in the interval, and that the requirement to provide a written statement of interest has also proven a stumbling block for some, even though the requirement can be fulfilled by a sentence or two.

The meeting schedule through the end of 2021 is posted, with the change to the third Monday of the month. A meeting in December is on the list a a place holder, but subject to cancellation by the group, if appropriate.

Secretary's Report

Judy Tankersley reported that the LAC Roster information appears to be current, with the change of address for Eileen Smith. Everyone continuing on the LAC is current for this year's term. The insurance forms from all continuing members will be sent to MCPL for completion of the records..

Landscape Committee Report

Garden Club Co-President Babs Margolies reported that the weekly upkeep of the Library gardens has been maintained. The repaired outdoor spigot is being used with the key supplied to the Landscape Committee . The group discussed the idea of encouraging selfies at the gardens, using a Library hashtag and collecting them. An extension of that suggestion was a connection to the new rock features in the gardens by encouraging pet rocks or decorated rocks as individual projects to take home or create at home. Ms. Margolies asked that the Library check on the status of the new sign installation for the front gardens. The Garden Club will be planning to continue virtual meetings.

(Althea Gray-McKenzie returned to meeting during AH Friends of Library Liaison Report)

AH Friends of the Library Liaison Report

Liaison and President Chris Swan announced that the group continues to meet via Zoom. The

County FOL removed AH FOL books from the Library over the summer, removing sorted inventory and boxes that had been purchased with local FOL funds. No large scale Book Sales are allowed in Libraries. The AH FOL are displaying some books for sale on the Library shelves in the first alcove. FOL VP Marna Cary made the arrangements. Fred indicated that patrons had asked staff about the sale rack of books, called the Book Depot by the AH FOL.

Ms. Swan indicated that the FOL advocates for the Library and the community. It supports local community programs. It puts books into people's hands through inexpensive sale prices and free give-aways at events like the Community Festival.

Upcoming Meetings and Events

Eliot Chabot announced a schedule for Primary Election Forums. These events are sponsored by the AH FOL, AH LAC, the Aspen Hill Civic Association, and other local groups. These may be on site, hybrid or virtual, depending upon the situation next Spring. The Primary election will be June 28, 2022. Forum Schedule:

March 2, 2022 - County Council Candidates

April 7, 2022 - County Executive

April 28, 2022 District 19 State Delegates

May 12, 2022 - If needed

Election of Chair

When asked, Ms. Grey-McKenzie indicated a willingness to accept nomination for LAC Chair. She noted that she may be limited to 5 or 6 months, but could serve. Chris Swan made the nomination. All present voted to elect Ms. Grey-McKenzie as Chair of the LAC for the 2021-2022 year. The group had previously discussed having the Secretary position rotate among the members, should that be necessary..

Other Business & Open Floor

Althea Grey-McKenzie asked for suggestions for meeting space for small groups of 3 or 4, that might lack budget resources. The small Library spaces are limited to only two persons. School rooms, Rec Centers, and churches were suggested as possible resources.

Next AH LAC meeting, on Zoom, will be Monday, October 18, 7:30 pm

Aspen Hill Civic Association General Membership Meeting will be Wednesday, October 13 via GoToMeeting.

Adjournment - Seeing no further business, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:40 pm.

Judy Tankersley
Recording Secretary