

SILVER SPRING: BRIGADIER GENERAL CHARLES E. MCGEE LIBRARY  
LAC Meeting Minutes  
February 20, 2024 VIA ZOOM @ 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM

We conducted the roll call: [Membership Report](#) and the Minutes from the January 16, 2024 meeting were approved (Dana Anderson moved first and Paulette Dickerson second; Rodney, Paulette, and Saa abstained because they did not attend the January meeting). The minutes were approved.

The meeting included special guests to discuss the general condition of the library and library maintenance issues in general. Guests included: Anita Vassallo, MCPL Director; Angelisa Hawes, Assistant Director for Facilities and ADA; and Greg Boykin, Deputy Director of DGS, who oversees the Facilities department. There was interest in the upcoming refresh which is badly needed as people were observing that some areas suffer in terms of cleanliness (especially the lobby area where the cafe is located, even though not officially part of the library proper, it makes and gives the wrong impression when it is not well taken care of).

Anita Vassallo introduced Angelisa and Gregory Boykin. We reviewed procedures for reporting cleanliness issues to a 24 hour operations center that notifies the property manager who comes back and takes a look at the issues reported. LAC members highlighted issues with the fabric in the furniture (now the most durable furniture covers are made of vinyl and the branch is working to get the furniture reupholstered with vinyl; using Friends funds we had the green chairs reupholstered).

In general the Brigadier General Charles E. McGee Branch was a very heavily used branch (when it first opened there were 2000-3000 people coming per day) and that shows in the quicker aging of the furniture as well as issues with blinds that are damaged, and water linages, and carpet that is torn. The situation is bad enough that it invites people to not respect the library environment - freshly done environments are inviting greater respect of the surroundings.

Other signs of neglect are the very dirty windows, especially from the outside. Of course the construction of the new purple line may not be helping but that basically means that some things like cleaning windows externally may need to happen more often while construction is going on.

It was noted that different branches are in very different states and the fact that there are other tenants in the building also creates an additional consideration. DGS manages the leases with the other tenants. Library renovations are costly because libraries are places where people gather and congregate frequently.

The branch has a porter that pays attention and balances the physical needs. Some historical issues with the elevators, escalators and HVAC are being taken care of. Some of the issues we faced with these repairs was the lack of parts during the pandemic. In general we only had six tickets back in January 2023.

In March the branch is scheduled to have the windows tinted and that will help a lot with fluctuating temperatures.

It was noted that elevators were also reskinned and since that happened we did not have problems with reskinning. It was noted that there are issues with signage in the elevators.

Regarding the lease to the coffee establishments, it was noted that we should mention to Cynthia Brenament, Director of the lease management operations, our concerns regarding the cleanliness and tidiness of the area. The previous cafe owner was protruding less into the customer area and it was kept more tidy and clean. There are sales of vinyl records in the cafe area which is a bit strange.

For the upcoming renovation that will take place most likely from March 2025 to October 2025, we have some of the following items in the list:

1. Walls, repaint, corner guards
2. Reupholstering 50% of furniture
3. Reduce heat to put tinted windows on the south facade
4. Replace six sets of gliding doors with swing
5. Modify carpet
6. Install 3 new service desks
7. Replace window blinds
8. Repainting pavilion area
9. Incoming water service
10. Adding better improved signage
11. Heavy duty cleaning of different floors and restrooms
12. Adjust glass panels over the entrance canopy.

How can we maintain this facility in a better condition as it is in an area that people use a lot and how can we support renovations on heavily used and needy areas more frequently than a simple A to Z approach that lines up a branch renovation after all the branches are done. Using an equity lens we need to find a way to renovate more heavily used facilities more frequently. And, also, we need to consider if needed, more porter time for this branch.

It was noted that the county has a systematic approach to preventive maintenance - it was close to a million dollars to upgrade the HVAC system and the expenses to cool the place will be over a million dollars. DGS relies on systematic evaluation of the facilities through a monthly maintenance program where things get reported for repair and quality assurance checks and with an increased emphasis on equity.

The branch sometimes experiences vandalism and the library is working on arranging a social worker to come on board in 2026 as funding allows such new service.

There will also be an installation of a Memorial stone for Brigadier General Charles E. McGhee.

Regarding the emergency exist that goes through the side where the cafe is, it was noted that it is good as an education /marketing awareness issues to ensure that whoever leases the space understands that this is the egress for the entire buildings and it should never be blocked (ideally we need to demand it not be blocked as it is an instant violation of the fire code).

The discussion resulted in some follow up steps for the library to talk with the leasing management office to ensure that tenants such as the coffee shop make every effort to present an environment that is appealing to the library clientele and enhances the community.

The rest of the meeting concluded with a report from the branch manager, an update on the purple line, an update from the board that is launching the search for a new director (Anita Vassalo announced her retirement). A search firm will be secured most likely for the director search.

The group decided to skip the meeting in March and proceed with a meeting in April next. The meeting was adjourned.

- [Upcoming meetings listed on the community calendar](#)