

SILVER SPRING: BRIGADIER GENERAL CHARLES E. MCGEE LIBRARY
LAC MINUTES
November 18, 2024, 2024 VIA ZOOM @ 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM

Present: *Dana Anderson, Chauna Higgins (Chair), Regina Germain, Hira Gigliani, Martha Kyrillidou (Secretary), Jendayi Nyabingi, Scott Shoreman.*

Present (non-voting):

- Katrin Sweeney, Regional Manager, MCPL ([Brigadier General Charles E. McGee Library](#), [Kensington Park Library](#), and [Noyes Library for Young Children](#))
- Wilma Brier, MCPL Board Liaison.

The meeting started with a roll call to ensure we have enough people attending to approve the minutes. The motion to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2024, meeting was done by Regina Germain and seconded by Dana Anderson. The minutes were approved unanimously. We welcomed new member Jendayi Nyabingi and introduced the rest of the group to her.

Kate Sweeney, Regional Manager, provided a report on staffing, collections, facility conditions, programming and services. The branch continues to struggle with vacancies especially for part-time employees and is shifting responsibilities to cover other transitions. There were 21,029 circulations, 81 programs, and 912 attendees. The construction of the purple line continues to be challenging with disruptions and accessibility issues due to traffic, parking, and failing elevators. The building itself is having very visible signs of decline (pipes bursting and raining into the building in many spots, dirty and worn out furniture – all these issues are planned to be addressed with the much anticipated renovation that is to take place sometime later this year or next year as planning is underway.

A [dedication of the memorial to the late Charles E. McGhee took place on December 5](#). For those who are not familiar with his life additional details of the life of this honorable Tuskegee Airmen are available in this [YouTube video dedication](#) from Columbia College as well.

Wilma Brier provided a report from the MCPL Board highlighting the approval of a new member, the hybrid meeting the board is holding, and the presence of the new director on the MCPL board, Darcell Graham. Ms Graham's goal is to visit all the branches and understand the needs of the system. Wilma highlighted that all agencies at Montgomery County were asked to provide savings as there are budget shortfalls that need to be covered. She also reported on the Joint meeting that took place that was attended by 33 people. The issues with the library staff stressors as social services needs for homeless and other individuals are emerging was highlighted by her at the Board as this set of issues are especially urgent in our branch. There are a number of useful agencies and organizations in the downtown Silver Spring area that the library is collaborating with to address some of these issues but there is not full time social worker in the library.

The group discussed the presence we had at the Thanksgiving Day Parade on November 16, 2024; many LAC Members attended and others joined us from the Friends of the Library group - a total of 13 people paraded on behalf of the libraries. We had enough giveaways but we were not able to locate the banner that is designed for the parade (something we will make sure we try to locate in future years). One of the Friends of the Library representatives brought a dog and that was a big hit. People

responded to the large print children's books we were carrying; the LAC board bookmarks may not be as useful – we need a different bookmark that promotes the library and is more general than joining the LAC. The LAC believes the presence in the Thanksgiving Parade is a good way to promote the presence of the library in the downtown Silver Spring area as well as in MC in general. We hope to have the outreach vehicle with us in next year's parade. Our goal for next year is to think about the parade a bit earlier and be even more intentional as this is a great outreach event that brings LACs and Friends together!

On promotional materials it was mentioned that MCPL does not generally create promotional materials for specific branches; it may be useful though to have a general brochure that highlights all the branch locations.

Also, the group brainstormed if they can turn some of this event into awareness and promotion for getting a library card. For example, can we have library staff at the end of the parade or direct people to the branch for them to get library cards? Can we hand out applications for getting a library card? Or a postcard with a QR code? We also noticed that in the group presentation/description we provided the announcers made some changes and did not read the full description. The group decided that we should discuss these and other ideas before the end of the summer next year.

The group dedicated the rest of the discussion to the LAC goals for next year – 2025, [highlighted the LAC roles and responsibilities](#), the need for recruitment, and prioritized what we want to work on next year.

2024-2025 BGCEM LAC Goals:

1. Continue to advocate for the refresh of the McGee Library.
2. Foster communication among the MCLB, LAC members, and the local library community by obtaining advice and views on public library needs in their areas and reporting those views.
3. Recruit new LAC members.

The following are excerpts from the LAC roles and responsibilities:

Responsibilities of each LAC and its membership:

- *Advise the Regional Manager and MCLB on specific issues, concerns, and opportunities related to the local library, including collections, services, programming, staffing, and facilities. This can include recommending programs offered at other libraries.*
- *Advise MCLB of specific findings, issues, problems, and concerns related to the local library and make recommendations to the Board on public library-related matters, following the appropriate channels of communication.*
- *Foster communication among the MCLB, LAC members, and the local library community by obtaining advice and views on public library needs in their areas and reporting those views. - KEY GOAL*
- *Participate in providing government officials with advice and counsel about libraries via the Library Board, and in support of positions taken by the MCLB, may testify before County Council and/or appear at Council hearings.*
- *Recruit new LAC members.*
- *Represent the users of the local library at community functions such as meetings, fairs, celebrations, etc.*
- *Advocate for the library in the community.*
- *LACs must follow the Maryland Open Meetings Act policy and procedures.*

The following actions are not permitted by LACs, due to their structure of the LAC within MCLB:

- *Participate in local library department personnel matters. (An LAC may comment on staffing levels or the need for certain positions, distinct from commentary on any particular incumbent or candidate for a position.)*
- *Raise money or funding streams. To assist their branch library in securing supplemental funds, LAC members, as individuals, may participate in its Friends of the Library (FOLMC) book sales.*
- *Conduct surveys that MCPL or MCLB have not approved. (To obtain approval for a survey, the LAC should share a draft of the proposed survey questions with the MCLB Liaison and Regional Manager. The request will be brought to the next MCLB meeting for review and the decision will be communicated to the LAC by the Liaison).*
- *Reach out directly to any county employee requesting that they attend LAC meetings in an official capacity. Instead, the Regional Manager or the Liaison can pass the request on to MCPL administration who will manage the request. The MCLB can disband an LAC if it is acting, speaking, or operating outside the roles of an LAC and/or neglecting its usual responsibilities. The MCLB decides on a case-by-case basis if a member of a disbanded LAC who applies to serve on a different LAC can be appointed.*

The last discussion item was around the refresh of the facilities. We decided to reach out to invite Angelisa Hawes for an update on the status of the refresh.

The group also decided to discuss in January the Farmers Market Community Outreach and succession planning. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Next Meeting: Monday, January 27, 2024 at 7:30pm

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