

Silver Spring Library Advisory Committee (SSLAC) Minutes, February 15, 2022

Meeting online via Zoom began at approximately 7:35 p.m.

SSLAC Members:

Present: Scott Shoreman (Chair), Regina Germain (Secretary), Dana Anderson, Jill Brantley, Rebecca Calcagno, Paulette Dickerson, Wendy Gales, Martha Kyrillidou

Absent: Saa Fillie, Ella Hu, Chauna Wiggins

Others Present:

Uzoma Onyemaechi, Silver Spring Library Manager; Laura Briskin-Limehouse, Library Board Liaison; Melvyn Greberman

Approval of Minutes for January 2022

Paulette Dickerson moved for approval of the January 2022 meeting minutes. Melvyn Greberman seconded her motion. There were no objections. The January 2022 minutes were approved unanimously.

Chair Report and Announcements

- I. The Chair reported that he attended a Montgomery Public Libraries (MCPL) Strategic Plan meeting for library advisory committee chairs led by Kate Frades of Innovation @ MCG. There is only a four-month window to do the plan, with completion in April 2022. Paulette Dickerson also attended the meeting.
 - a. Concerns discussed by attendees at the meeting were that the education and training of librarians are not always properly utilized based on the tasks they are required to perform and that staff might be burned out. It was further noted that there needs to be more money in the budget to pay for some proposals and that it is problematic that a refresh is needed to replace things like furniture and blinds. There was also discussion about some branches being closed for long periods.
 - b. The strengths identified were that libraries serve all people in the community and the MCPL branches are everywhere in the county.
 - c. There will be several public focus group meetings, and LAC members were encouraged to attend. Upcoming ones are on February 16 at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, February 19 at 10 a.m.
2. Membership update: Rodney Elin's term has expired. Jill Brantley was approved by the Library Board in February 2022 for another term.

Silver Spring Library Manager Report from Uzoma Onyemaechi

- I. **Collection:** The children's collection is still leading the way with parents and their children browsing, touching the books, and self-checking them out. The Children's

Book Bundles are very popular and flying off the display shelves. The library staff tries to put a mixture of new books and a few older ones on the display shelves.

The library lost a Librarian to promotion – Tom Palmer was promoted to Librarian I (Adult) and sent to Rockville Memorial Library. He was our Technology Guru/Chair of the Tech Team.

The library gained a Librarian I (children's), Camille Robinson, who came from Portland, Oregon and just graduated from University of Maryland Library School last year while working at the Silver Spring Library as Library Desk Assistant.

There was an unfortunate incident at the library when an individual tried to take her own life and 911 was called to give medical assistance. Therapists were sent to the library to talk to the staff who were very upset about the incident.

The Manager reported that the library is looking forward to more hires based on vacancy transfer opportunities that were posted a couple of weeks ago. Five part-time librarian positions were posted for the Silver Spring Library – each of them would work 20 hours a week. The library is currently opening at times with below minimum staff. Jill Brantley asked if the LAC should raise the issue of understaffing, and the Manager stated that we should do so.

2. **Facility:**

The Manager reported that the escalators were serviced and run better for now.

Foot traffic for January 2022 was **10,209** people. There were holidays that brought the numbers down.

3. **Programming:** In person programs will now start again. They will likely include computer and career development classes. There will be no tax assistance at the library this year.

4. **Services:**

MCPL continues to distribute COVID-19 home test kits and N-95 facemasks. So far, it has been a success with help from volunteers and staff.

MCPL branches will be open again on Sundays beginning February 27, 2022. The operating hours will be 10:00 a.m. to 6 p.m. Wendy Gales expressed appreciation for the library reopening on Sunday.

Wendy Gales raised concerns about adults without children in the children's section and about a person smoking in a study room. The Manager noted that in such cases, library patrons should report the incidents to the person in charge.

Rodney Elin applied for renewal of LAC membership, and the application was forwarded the MCPL administration.

The Manager and library staff are participating in the MCPL's Strategic Planning and will be having a virtual meeting with Kate Frades on February 16.

Library Board Liaison Report from Laura Briskin-Limehouse

1. The Board was updated on the Strategic Plan, which is now moving along very quickly. She noted that there are several opportunities this week to participate in public meetings regarding the plan.
2. The seats on the Library Board are now all full, and that she is responsible, as the liaison, for both the Silver Spring Library and the Praisner Library.
3. The Board approved applications for LAC members and is looking forward to receiving Mel's application.
4. Council Member Will Jawando proposed to rename the Silver Spring Library as the Brig. Gen. Charles McGee Library. Brig. Gen. McGee was a Tuskegee Airman and pilot who flew in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam and lived in Montgomery County.
5. Regina Germain moved that we support the name change. Paulette Dickerson seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion. Jill Brantley moved to also still include Silver Spring in the new name. Dana Anderson seconded the motion. It was unanimously approved.

Friends of Library Report - no report

New Business

Refresh for Silver Spring Library – The Chair reported on a tour he, Rodney Elin, and Dana Anderson took of the library. The LAC reviewed the Chair's draft letter advocating for a refresh, and recommended that he send it to the County Council members, the County Executive, and the MCPL Director.

It was also discussed about whether a sponsor or sponsors might be found who could contribute to the refresh of the library.

The refresh cycle being increased from 7 to 20 years was discussed. There was discussion of trying to coordinate with other LACs regarding advocacy related to going back to the 7 year cycle. The Chair noted that with this change the operating budget should be increased to include some of the things done as part of refreshes that need to be done more than every 20 years, such as replacing some furniture.

Purple Line – Utility work started near the library and is not blocking access to the library. The Chair hopes to have the Purple Line team come to a future LAC meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 p.m.