

Chevy Chase Library LAC Meeting Minutes
May 10, 2019
10:00 am – 11:00

In Attendance:

Meir Wolf
Jules Lichtenstein
Patrice Yao (President)
Chris Borawski (Branch Manager)
Lindsey Hundt (Acting Secretary)
Mike Wallace
Barbara Levitt

Members greeted Barbara and introduced themselves, gave personal backgrounds.

New Business

Patrice and Mike attended the FOL potluck/meeting held by systemwide FOL and LAC. Mike commented that fewer people attended and that he noticed fewer “orange shirts.” Since the Board met after the joint meeting Mike was not able to attend the hearing so he doesn’t know what happened. The budget – MCPL’s budget wasn’t cut but it wasn’t expanded (0.4% increase) Damascus and Long Branch had hours cuts – the only branches that didn’t have evening hours. The budget process is almost over; the budget should be approved by Memorial Day. Council turned down MCG contract so budget may take longer time to ratify. Why do LB and Damascus not have expanded hours? Maybe because they are open on Sunday.

Board meeting – 4 vacancies out of 12. Some people were appointed by withdrew. (Someone couldn’t manage transportation, got to busy with work, etc.) This has an impact on who oversees LAC. Interviews have been held – four recommendations were made to the County Exec. Once approved, each branch will have an LAC representative. Director Vassallo interviewed for Library Director but the search process is continuing. Annual reports are required from every LAC – Patrice did it in the Fall of 2018.

What are ways to find out what fellow LACs think of the library programs and services. How are LACs getting feedback? Something different needs to be done. How are other LACs gathering information? Entire LACs have come to Board meeting. At last meeting there was a discussion about having a conference for all LACs – a meeting separate from the FOLMC. This would provide all LACs an opportunity to talk to each other about what they are doing and develop best practices outside the framework of an official LAC meeting. LAC Handbook is reviewed and possibly updated every year. What needs to be changed? If LACs have suggestions, they can submit those recommendations to the Board by email for possible inclusion in the handbook. The final version of the LAC handbook has to be approved the County attorney.

What are some of the ways to gather information from the community?

Meir suggested that a short, formal survey be made available as soon as customers walk in the door. Jules recommended a survey in the form of a bookmark.

Lindsey asked if the LAC could use social media for gathering feedback.

Mike promised that he would introduce this idea again to the Board. Creating local LAC websites and using social media has been introduced before but the ideas did not gain traction. Lindsey volunteered to find out what other LACs (around the country) offer to the public for gathering customer input. Chris mentioned that customers can give feedback to the branch managers on the branch website.

Discussion of bureaucracy. Patrice gave background of Meir's situation sitting on two boards. Meir mentioned that the Library Board asked him about sponsoring a poetry reading at Jail. After the reading, Meir arranged for an inmate (from the County jail) to read his poetry at the Writer's Center, in Bethesda outside the confines of the jail. Meir was scolded by the Library Board vice chairman, Jane Williams, for an ethics violation for offering an opportunity to let one inmate read outside the jail but not providing an opportunity for all inmates to read outside the jail. Mike commented that he knew nothing about this and that he believes the officers of the Board should speak to the Board members first if they are going to speak on behalf of the entire Board.

The Bob Levey event at CC on Saturday, May 11 was discussed at the Board meeting. This is an after hours event. Registration is full at 60.

Jules Lichtenstein shared updates from the CC FOL:

Jules distributed research that Lynn Lichtenstein had compiled regarding community gardening initiatives at several County library. She particularly focused on the process at Connie Morella Library.

Old Business

The Search for a new Library Director continues.

Renovation:

Any updates? Is there a new timeline?

Chris had a meeting on Wednesday, May 8 which was the kickoff for the facility assessment – representatives from DGS, Architecture, HVAC, etc. attended. They will be meeting with Chris to look at various parts of the buildings. This process will go on through the summer and a full report should be issued by the end of the summer. The decision about initiating a refresh or a rebuild or a combination of both should be made at that time. The group discussed the difference between refresh and renovation to inform the new LAC member, Barbara.

Current status of timeline: Construction project probably will not start until the end of 2020. Right now the assumption is that the project will be a "refresh plus."

The next meeting with DGS will take place after the engineering assessment is complete.

Barbara asked if Chris will receive the assessment and will he be able to share it with the LAC. Will Chris receive the assessment for the library? When will he know DGS' recommendations about the status of CC? Chris is not certain because this the first time DGS and MCPL have conducted an engineering assessment prior to initiating a refresh project.

The CC FOL is lobbying to get a full renovation for the CC Library. LAC should coordinate with FOL so that the two groups are not working at cross purposes. For example, Mr. Elrich told Meir that the CC FOL was meeting with Mr. Elrich about the renovation, but Meir is not sure if that meeting took place. Also, Andrew Freidson took a tour of the building after an invitation from the CCFOL, but no one told Chris. Chris suggested that there be a joint committee of FOL and LAC members who are interested in refresh/renovation rather than each group working independently. Another option is that anyone on the FOL interested in the refresh should join the LAC.

Dates for next meeting:

Friday, August 2

Lindsey will bring results of LAC social media investigation to that meeting. The next meeting of the Library Board will be the 12 of June. Mike will share feedback to the LAC at the August 2 meeting unless the LAC decides over email to postpone the meeting until after the engineering assessment is received.

Meeting adjourned 11:00 am.