

# Connie Morella LAC Meeting Minutes - 3/12/2024

Barbara Levine (LAC Chair), Patrick Fromm (Regional Manager), Colin Repetti (LAC Secretary), Claudia Deane (LAC member), Alison O'Brien (LAC member), Jim Montgomery (Library Board Member), Gerry Ostrove (Little Falls LAC member), Tannaz Rahman (LAC member), Chris Sinsheimer (LAC member), Pavani Reddy (LAC member) present

Welcome to our new member, Tannaz Rahman, and a visiting member from the Little Falls LAC, Gerry Ostrove!

The [LAC Handbook](#) was updated in February 2024

## Minutes

- Approved minutes from January and February

## Regional Manager's Report

- Programming
  - Discovery Heroes of Black History event had only three attendees, will be evaluating this to figure out how to improve this for the future
  - Nothing super groundbreaking for this month programming-wise
  - Had a Leap Year event on February 29, 2024 that had 77 attendees
  - Event numbers are still low because Connie Morella is planning for having fewer staff
    - Most programming is extremely well-attended
    - Had 33 programs but 1223 attendees from February 1, 2024 thru February 29, 2024
      - This is around double the number of attendees of branches with a similar number of programs
    - Still missing one part-time information staff member (but maybe that will not be the case next month)
  - Kid Academy programming is ongoing
    - This is a good example of what volunteers can do
- Staffing
  - Connie Morella has a new Children's Librarian at Connie Morella - Joe Farnarco
    - Patrick will see if he can attend at the next meeting
    - Was previously in Rockville, Patrick has worked with him before in the past
  - Current vacancies
    - Still have an open Library Associate position (part-time circulation staff member)

- Patrick has gotten favorable updates from HR and these updates have been hearing them for long enough that he's optimistic it will be filled next month
        - Librarian II Adult position is also vacant at Connie Morella
    - Upcoming vacancies
      - Later this year another Library Associate position will likely be opening
    - County Executive will be publishing his proposed Operating Budget on Thursday, March 14, 2024
      - That should tell us how many proposed FTEs the library is losing or gaining and will be public then
  - Outdoor space
    - Patrick learned that the Germantown branch had a similar proposal for coordinating with a nearby park like what Patrick wants to do with the Connie Morella outdoor space and the park next door to Connie Morella
      - This probably makes things easier for Patrick when he makes his pitch

#### LAC Chair's Report

- Director's Search
  - Arranged a meeting with Pete Fosselman as a member of the public
    - After some persistence, he agreed to have a meeting with her and Patrick
    - During the meeting she raised numerous concerns we've discussed previously
    - Following the meeting, he advised that he'd spoken with Anita about various issues like the outdoor space, but that we would not be able to meet with Fariba Kassiri as personnel matters are private
      - Councilmembers Sidney Katz and Andrew Friedson released a public letter indicating they wanted transparency in the search for Director positions for the police, schools and fire
      - Should there not be transparency in this search too?
  - The Library Board Chair, Tim Lighter, sent a letter to the County Executive, County Council, Fariba Kassiri and Anita Vassallo conveying the LAC qualifications for the new Director
    - One thing we had not mentioned but was in the letter was that the new Director should oppose book banning
- We want to know how much money from the FOLMC is set aside for Connie Morella and what has been funded with that money
  - We would like to advertise what was funded to the community

#### Jim Montgomery's Report from the Board

- Tomorrow's Library Board meeting will be the first in person meeting
- Anita has promised there will be an update on the hiring process
  - If there are any questions, Jim can ensure they get asked
  - Generally we want transparency on the hiring process and the breadth of the search

- What is the timeline for the search? If there is an acting Director, how long would that last?
- Will be asking Jaime Flores (Programming and Outreach Assistant Director) about the library's role in the Strategic Plan
  - Kindergarten readiness? What are we doing?
  - This should weigh into the Director's search
- On Thursday, March 14, 2024, the County Executive will release his proposed Operating Budget for the next fiscal year
  - Once that happens, we will know if he has been receptive to the Library Board's feedback
    - Marketing was one ask
  - Then the County Council gets to weigh in and maintain/cut/add funding to the budget
  - Who will get to administer the budget? Also will be keeping an eye on the new Director search.

#### Trends in other libraries and/or areas of interest

- Per Pavani: Other branch(es) seem to have a focus on media literacy during this election year, how to navigate disinformation/misinformation
- Per Claudia: Emailed Patrick about 3d printing
  - There was a maker space in Rockville but it didn't get used much
  - Three 3d printers in different branches previously but it was a one-time infusion of funds for them during the height of interest in 3d printing that dried up as they broke down, death knell was the pandemic
  - There appears to be more interest in 3d printing again and Patrick is waiting to hear back about this