

## **Connie Morella Library Advisory Committee Meeting Notes**

### **Date: August 13, 2024**

Attendees: Claudie Deane (Chair); Barbara Levine; Alison O'Brien; Ardie Bausenbach; Chris Sinsheimer (virtual). Absent: Tannaz Rahman; Valerie Alstadt (Secretary); Colin Repetti

### **Chair's Report**

The first meeting with Claudia Deane as Chair who reiterated the LAC's commitment to aiding Connie Morella in its mission to serve the Bethesda community. She made a few requests on behalf of the LAC.

### **Requests to the Regional Director**

Organization chart of the Connie Morella staff, including open positions, noting hiring process phase and length of vacancy.

Clarification of the status of Friends of the Library and money raised at Connie Morella.

Educate the LAC on the digital content purchasing decisions made for Connie Morella/MoCo library system.

Apply more robust and expeditious efforts to improve the physical user experience at Connie Morella by making better use of the space, both inside and outside, and enhancing the overall aesthetics to bring it up to par with other comparable MoCo libraries.

Provide a roadmap for increased volunteer involvement at CM. The capability and resources of the Bethesda community are not being sufficiently tapped to help the library achieve its full potential for patrons.

### **Board Liaison Report**

Jim Montgomery noted that the Board did not meet in August. No update on the Director search.

**LAC request:** The LAC would like an in-person meeting with the Director when s/he is hired.

### **Regional Manager's Report**

Library Director Kirstra Otto represented Connie Morella in Patrick Fromm's absence. She updated the LAC and answered questions regarding several standing issues of concern:

Staffing at the library: good news regarding some recent new hires.

Library programming: challenges persist in meeting the need for more programming but with the new additional staff it looks promising. Aiming for “sustainable growth.”

**LAC suggestions:**

Weekend programming: the weekends are when the library is most utilized thus a prime time for programming, which is a challenge with fewer staff on weekends. Perhaps staffing could be adjusted throughout the week, moving staff from less busy weekday periods to the weekend.

Publicizing events: community and school listservs are the most effective way to reach the local community. MoCo central chooses whether to post an event on social media.

**LAC request**: what is the criteria for choosing which events to post?

Event collaboration: seek opportunities for collaboration with other libraries, to both amplify and co-produce programming.

Partner with local schools: develop programming to address the language needs of non-native English-speaking students and parents; and schedule activities in alignment with the school year calendar.

Facilities: the LAC shared thoughts about facilities improvements that do not or should not require waiting for a formal “refresh.”

The bathrooms are too small for the number of people who pass through thus requiring more frequent maintenance.

The teen “area” is essentially a few chairs and a table and should be expanded when empty shelves are eliminated.

The Circulation and Reference desks layout/footprint could be streamlined.

What is the plan for the now vacant shelving where print publications used to be?

It would be helpful to have an action plan for maximizing potential use of the outdoor space so we can work toward changes no matter which season we are in.

**LAC request**: Meet with the library’s facilities manager to better understand issues and to establish a timeline for proposed improvements.

