

Connie Morella Library Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

Date: November 12, 2024

Attendees: Claudia Deane (Chair); Carol Ann Greenberg; Jim Montgomery; Tannaz Rahman;

Absent:: Ardie Bausenbach; Barbara Levine; Chris Sinsheimer; Rahul Subramanian.

Chair's Report

Chris Sinsheimer has volunteered to serve as a "Follow Up Chair" — real title to be determined. The initial focus could be to advance the LAC's volunteer engagement plan.

LAC Priority Requests to the Regional Director: updates in red text, below. Italics indicate outstanding "to do" items.

A. Library Operations

10/8: LAC was informed that the new MCPL director will start on November 5.

9/10: The LAC would like an in-person meeting with the new MCPL Director when s/he is hired

11/12 Jim said the new director will attend the next FOL-LAC joint meeting to be held in January. We could all plan to attend in Rockville together.

8/13: The LAC requested an organization chart of the Connie Morella staff, including open positions, noting hiring process phase and length of vacancy.

9/10: Patrick indicated he has created an organization chart which he will share with the Chair.

11/12: Patrick provided the organization chart.

Note: Patrick separately provided these names of individuals mentioned in the October notes. We should add them to the org chart as it appears to only have librarians listed.

- On Page 1, Felicity Brown is our Collection Manager.
- On Page 2, it talks about meeting our facilities manager and references "Patricia". I'm not sure who this is referring to. Our Assistant Director, Angelisa Hawes, would be the person who handles our facility issues. Our property manager is Leslie Clark.
- On Page 3, Digital Transformation is led by Maddie. Social Media is handled by Kristine Brennan.

B. Library Data

10/8: The LAC would like to have staffing data for the other MoCo libraries to gain insight into how CM can better meet the needs of its comparatively higher level of use for a library of our size.

11/12 Patrick said he is working on getting the data requested. The LAC asked if the following could be included: foot count; programming & types of programs; volunteer engagement; communication methods used.

9/10 The LAC requested data tracking the number of very young children (infant – age 5) visiting the library. Patrick indicated the data coordinator at MCPL may be tracking that; he'll look into that for us.

C. Collection Development

8/13: The LAC asked to be educated on the digital content purchasing decisions made for Connie Morella/MoCo library system.

9/10: The Council requested that CM's digital resources manager "Felicity" attend a future LAC meeting.

D. Facility Management

The LAC recommends 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.

10/8: The LAC discussed potential to have vivid and engaging murals painted on the library walls. A volunteer would be able to do it.

9/10 The LAC would like 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.

9/10: The LAC shared thoughts about facilities improvements that do not or should not require waiting for a formal "refresh."

9/10 The bathrooms are too small for the number of people who pass through thus requiring more frequent maintenance.

9/10: Patrick noted that despite its smaller size, CM's level of foot traffic has been bigger than Silver Spring's. The usage of CM's facilities warrants additional attention ("porter hours") such as routine spot checks during the week.

9/10: 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?

9/10 LAC requests a meeting with the library's facilities manager to better understand issues and to establish a timeline for proposed improvements.

Patrick said that while he knows the changes he would like to make, and shared those with the LAC, ***changes are on hold until the new MCPL Director is in place.*** The Council looks forward to meeting CM's facilities manager "Patricia" at a future LAC meeting, when the time is right.

E. Library Programming

10/8: Now that the library is fully staffed, the LAC would like to see the schedule/plans for increased programming in the coming year, ideally including the 2024 end of year holiday season.

10/8 LAC discussed how the role of libraries is overlooked by the Children's Opportunity Alliance in its mission to improve kindergarten readiness.

The Council suggested the library could be a location for training to caregivers & parents on how to read to children.

9/10: 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. The LAC suggested perhaps staffing could be adjusted throughout the week, moving staff from less busy weekday periods to the weekend.

9/10 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.

9/10 LAC asked what is the criteria for choosing which events to post?

Patrick said someone at CM ("Mattie") is responsible for technology and social media. The Council requested that Mattie attend a future LAC meeting.

F. Volunteer Engagement & Outreach

The LAC believes the capability and resources of the Bethesda community are not being sufficiently tapped to help the library achieve its full potential for patrons.

Note: Volunteer support can't replace paid work.

10/8 LAC continued discussion of potential for partnering with the redeveloped Caroline Freeland Urban Park next door which will have a grand opening on November 9.

11/12 LAC was very happy to hear about the library's presence at the reopening of the park next door and the prospect of collaboration (e.g., the "story walks" idea Patrick shared).

10/8 LAC asked if the Volunteer Coordinator could also liaise with childcare organizations. Patrick said they could.

9/10 LAC requested a roadmap for increased volunteer involvement at CM.

9/10 Patrick said that "Patricia" is the Volunteer Coordinator for CM. The Council requested that Patricia attend a future LAC meeting.

9/10 Event collaboration; LAC suggests CM seek opportunities for collaboration with other libraries, to both amplify and co-produce programming.

9/10 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.

10/8 LAC recommended that the Volunteer Coordinator ascertain the ESL needs in the Bethesda public schools and suggested listservs might be the easiest way.

9/10: Patrick said Joe is the CM staff person responsible for reaching out to the local schools. He and Angela plan events three months out and post them on a digital platform (shared with the schools?) and Kirstra reports out quarterly. *The Council requested that Joe (etc.) attend a future LAC meeting for a focused discussion about this.*