Connie Morella Library Advisory Committee Meeting Notes
Date: March 11, 2025

Attendees: Claudia Deane (Chair); Ardie Bausenbach; Chris Sinsheimer; Jim Montgomery; Tannaz Rahman. Absent: Barbara Levine

Chair's Focus
The meeting was largely focused on welcoming the return of Kate Sweeney as Regional Branch Manager and hearing her thoughts about what LACs (including CM in particular) can and cannot do to effect change in their libraries.

LAC Priority Requests to the Regional Director

This is a list of on-going topics showing the latest status. See earlier notes for the history.

A. <u>Library Operations</u>

1. The LAC would like an in-person meeting with the new MCPL Director.

2. Library Organization chart: the LAC would like more information on the organization chart provided by the previous Regional Manager, Patrick. Specifically:
- the actual role of each member of the staff beyond the generic titles provided.
- add any key non-librarian staff: for example, facilities management.
- add the names of the MCPL System staff whose roles directly impact the operations of the library (e.g., Collection Manager), including a description of the role (not just the title).

B. <u>Library Data</u>
The LAC would like to have data for the other MCPL 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. Specifically: staffing; foot count; programming & types of programs; volunteer engagement; communication methods used; and the number of very young children (infant – age 5) visiting the libraries (including Connie Morella).

C. <u>Collection Development</u>

The LAC requests clearer communication with the library's patrons about the weeding of books which is creating an impression of the library "going out of business" with sections of barren shelves. The dwindling DVD collection is a vivid example.

D. <u>Facility Management</u>

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 MCPL libraries.

The previous Regional Director (Patrick) had said that any meaningful changes *are on hold until the new MCPL Director is in place.* **She is now in place, so the LAC looks forward to hearing her thoughts about plans for improvements at Connie Morella.**

LAC suggestions for items to address outside of the "refresh" process:

1. Vivid and engaging murals painted on the library walls, including in the main meeting room.
2. An action plan for maximizing potential use of the outdoor space so we can work toward changes no matter which season we are in.
3. Additional "porter hours" for routine spot checks during the week to maintain the bathrooms which are too small for the number of people who pass through thus requiring more frequent maintenance. The previous Regional Director (Patrick) had noted that CM's level of foot traffic has been bigger than Silver Spring's and requires increased maintenance.
4. The teen "area" is essentially a few chairs and a table and should be expanded when the empty shelves are eliminated.
5. The Circulation and Reference desks layout/footprint could be streamlined.
6. What is the plan for the now vacant shelving where print publications used to be?

E. Library Programming

1. Now that the library is fully staffed, the LAC would like to see the schedule/plans for increased programming in 2025, not only during the week but during the weekend when the library is most utilized thus a prime time for programming. Noting the challenge of fewer staff on weekends, the LAC suggested staffing could be adjusted throughout the week, moving staff from less busy weekday periods to the weekend.

2. Publicizing events: community and school listservs are the most effective way to reach the local community. MCPL chooses whether to post an event on social media. The LAC would like to understand the criteria for choosing which events to post and requested that the person responsible for technology and social media attend a future LAC meeting to discuss.

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, while also noting that volunteer support cannot replace paid work.

1. The LAC would like to develop a roadmap for increased volunteer involvement at CM