

Little Falls Library Advisory Committee

Minutes of Meeting, October 7, 2021

1. Committee Chair Kathy Davies called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Secretary Dave Shumaker called the roll of committee members. Present were: Kathy Davies, Chair; Dave Shumaker, Secretary; Hannah November, Robert November, and Kathryn Scott, members. Also: Grace Manubay, liaison to the Montgomery County Library Board; Eric Carzon, Interim Branch Manager; Ari Brooks, Executive Director, Friends of the Library Montgomery County (FOLMC); and Mark Mitchell, a resident of the community. (Committee member absent: John Stodola.)
2. A motion to approve the agenda was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.
3. Branch Manager Eric Carzon gave his report, including the following:
 - Montgomery County Public Library's new library catalog and management system is up and running. This is the first catalog system conversion in about 20 years. It features an improved user interface and functions. The conversion has been smooth overall though some patron information has been lost.
 - An active slate of virtual programs is ongoing. Three Little Falls staff are involved in children's programming, and one staff member is leading a County-wide committee on future programs, including the exploration of hybrid virtual and in-person programs.
 - Staffing continues to be a concern, with five vacancies at Little Falls, including Branch Manager. (Since Carolyn Bogardus retired this summer, Eric has been splitting his time to cover Little Falls, as well as continuing as the Branch Manager of the Connie Morella Library. Moreover, there are 80-90 vacancies systemwide. However, there is much activity to recruit and hire staff. The good news is that the county-wide hiring freeze has been lifted.
4. Grace Manubay reported from the Library Board. There are currently four vacancies on the Board, so she encouraged LAC members to put the word out in the community and consider applying themselves. At its September meeting, there was a presentation by the Library's Data Team on services during the pandemic. As a first step toward in-person programming, especially for children, some branches have begun conducting programs outdoors. (Branch Manager Carzon

noted that this option has been ruled out for Little Falls due to the proximity to Massachusetts Avenue.) The next meeting of the Board will be Wed., October 13.

5. Chairperson Kathy Davies welcomed Mark Mitchell. Grace Manubay has submitted his application to the LAC to the Library Board and it will be considered at the October 13th meeting. Kathy also announced that Kathryn Scott is resigning from the LAC, and thanked Kathryn for her service.

6. Old Business

John Stodola conducted an interview with Eric Carzon. Since John was unable to attend tonight's meeting, discussion was deferred.

7. New Business

Friends of the Library, Little Falls Chapter. There was discussion of the chapter's status in the wake of the resignation of its president. Concerns were also expressed over the continued availability of Chapter funds dedicated for the use of the Little Falls Library. It was noted that although the Friends and the LAC are entirely separate organizations, it is ideal for both to work collaboratively with each other and with the library management, so the future of the Friends is important to the LAC.

8. Comments from Observers:

Mark Mitchell noted that he often visits the library with his small children, and is concerned about the area around a storm drain in the middle of the lawn, near the first floor entrance, where the ground has caved in. The area has been surrounded by yellow Caution tape for many months but no repairs have been made.

Additionally, he suggested that in the long run perhaps other improvements to the library grounds could be made to enhance their use by children and others.

Mark's comments were enthusiastically welcomed by committee members, and the Branch Manager offered to look into the status of the roped-off area and plans for its repair.

9. Adjournment: Adjournment was moved, seconded, and approved unanimously. Chair Davies adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m. Our next meeting is scheduled for December 2.

Summary of action items:

- Eric Carzon to follow up on the status and repair plans for the collapsed area around the storm drain.